

Sunderland Carers' Centre



**Satisfaction Survey Report
2013**

1. Introduction

Sunderland Carers' Centre offers a confidential information, advice and support service to carers looking after ill, disabled or frail family members or friends in the City of Sunderland.

Sunderland Carers' Centre wants to give as good a service as possible to carers and in order to improve the work we do we conduct an annual Satisfaction Survey to obtain carers' views on the services we provide.

This year **226** carers took part in the survey and this report provides some of the main findings.

2. Advice, Information & Support

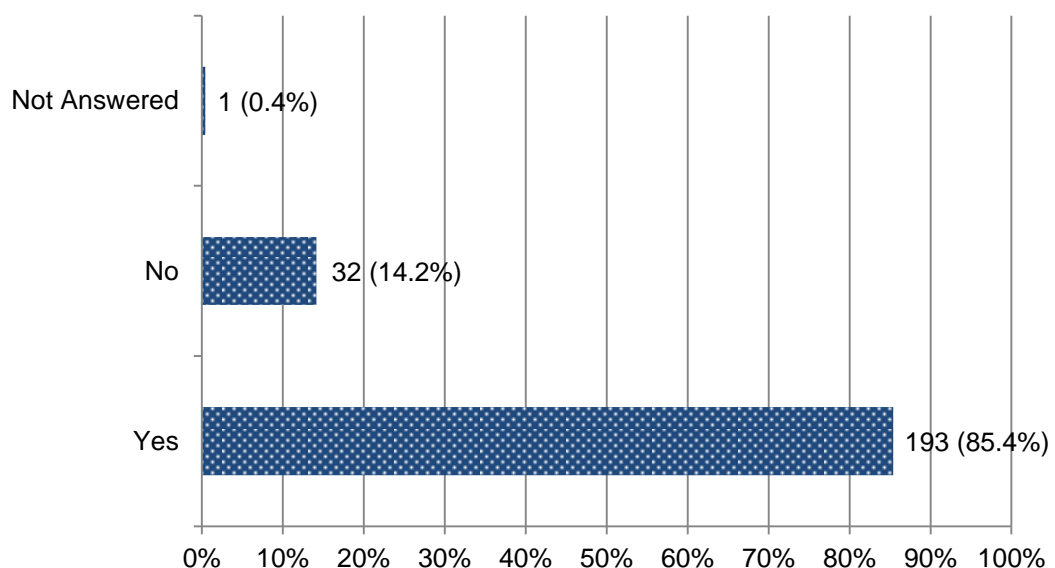
Sunderland Carers' Centre can provide information and advice to carers to help them in their caring role. As everyone's caring situation is different, we can give carers information relevant to their particular needs. This may be information about a specific illness or condition, or information about local services available for both carer and the person they care for.

As a carer you can sometimes feel alone and need someone to talk to about your caring situation. Sunderland Carers' Centre can offer one-to-one support and a listening ear to carers. Workers can speak to carers over the phone or meet them at the Carers' Centre, in the carer's own home or at another convenient meeting place. If carers work during the day, workers can arrange appointments outside normal office hours.

Sunderland Carers' Centre can accompany and provide support to carers at meetings with health, social care services and other agencies. Examples of such meetings include carers' assessments and reviews and assessments for the cared-for person.

2.1 Have you received advice, information or support from a member of staff or volunteer?

The following chart shows the number of people that received advice, information or support from a member of staff or volunteer:

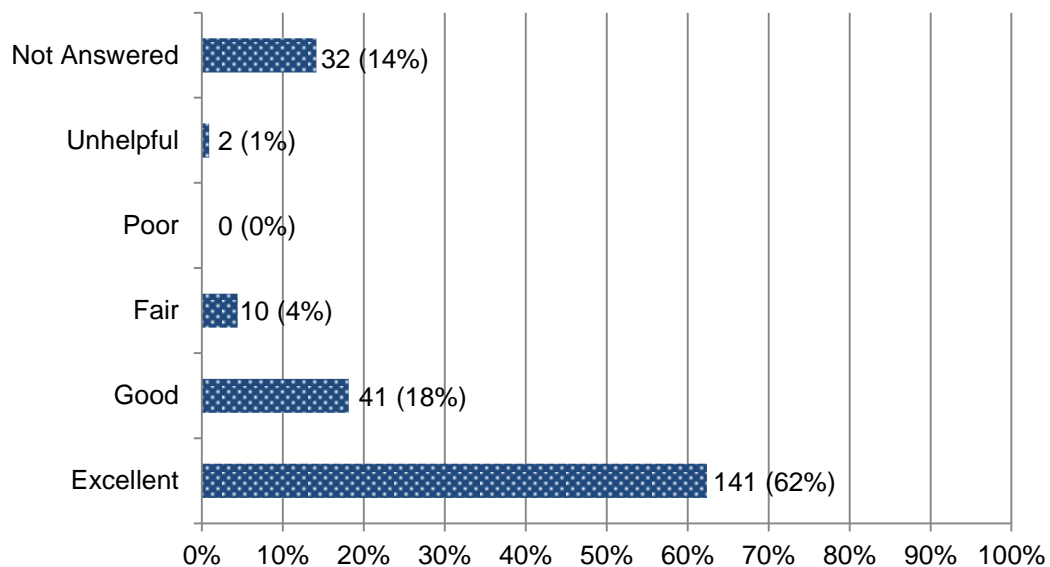


It is encouraging that **85.4%** of carers responding to the survey have received advice, information or support from a member of staff or volunteer.

Sunderland Carers' Centre will further raise awareness of these services so carers are fully aware of this aspect of our work.

2.2 Please tick the word that best describes the advice, information or support you received

Carers were then asked their opinion of the advice, information or support they received. The chart below outlines the results:



84% of carers responding to the survey felt the advice they received was excellent, good or fair. This has remained consistent with previous years' figures.

2.3 Please tell us why you think this:

The majority of people who felt the advice, information or support they received was to a high standard highlighted the quality of service they received but also the empathy shown to their caring situation by staff and volunteers:

"The information was clear, precise and informative. It pointed me in the right direction."

"The advice and support I've received from Sunderland Carers' Centre has meant that I've never felt alone in my problems and the staff will always go above and beyond"

Due to the nature of caring, Sunderland Carers' Centre understands the importance of being able to provide carers with impartial, quality advice in a timely manner. Sunderland Carers' Centre will endeavour to improve this area of work despite the already positive feedback we have received.

3. Carers' Groups

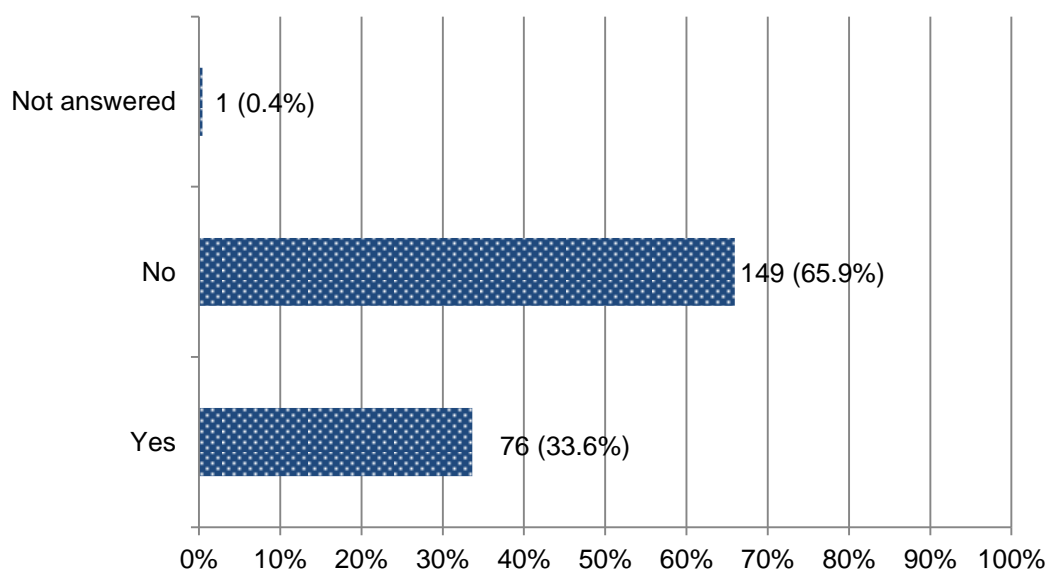
When you are a carer it is easy to become cut off from your friends and outside interests and often you feel that you are the only person in this situation. To help reassure carers that they are not alone Sunderland Carers' Centre runs a number of carers' groups to give carers the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation.

Some groups are for carers living in a particular area of the city; others are for carers looking after people with similar illnesses or conditions, for example, parent carers of disabled children or carers of people with mental illnesses or addiction problems. There are also groups specifically for male carers or female carers. Some groups take place during the evening for carers who find it difficult to attend during the day, for example, working carers.

Groups can be weekly or monthly. Some groups have speakers, presentations or social activities; others have discussions on specific topics or have no set agenda other than giving carers an opportunity to chat over tea and coffee.

3.1 Have you attended a regular group run by Sunderland Carers' Centre?

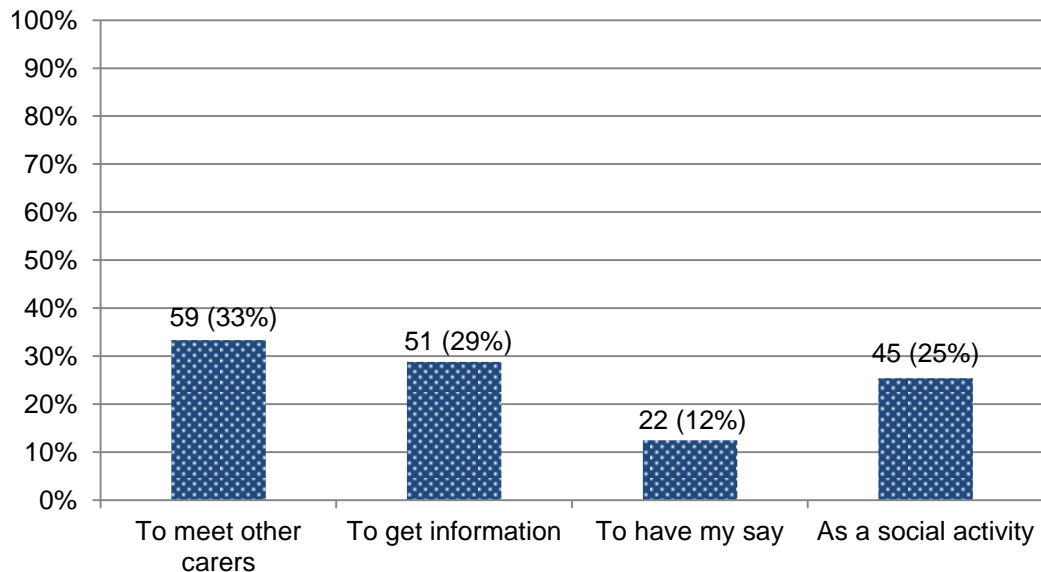
The below chart shows the number of carers responding to the survey that regularly attended a group run by Sunderland Carers' Centre.



As a high proportion (65.9%) of those responding to the survey had not regularly attended a group run by Sunderland Carers' Centre further efforts will be made to publicise these to carers.

3.2 If you have answered yes, please tell us why you attend the group

Those who regularly attended a group were asked why they attended. This was a multiple choice question where carers were invited to give more than one answer if they felt appropriate. The below chart outlines the reason carers regularly attended groups run by Sunderland Carers' Centre:



3.3 How do you think the group could be improved?

Carers' groups are focused around the needs of the carers who attend and therefore Sunderland Carers' Centre encourages input and feedback. Common suggestions on how to improve groups included more speakers, meet more frequently and for more carers to attend.

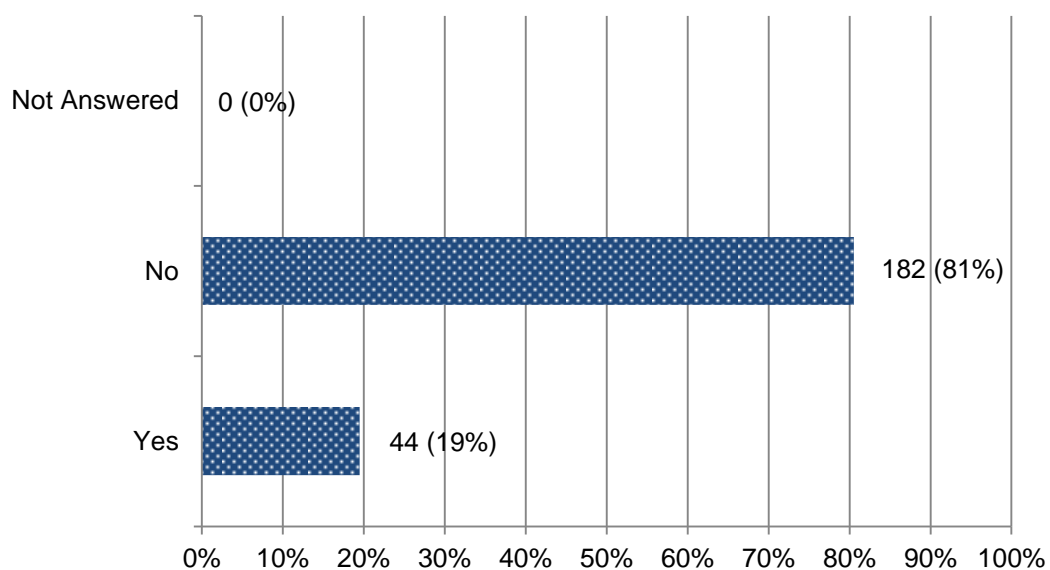
As Sunderland Carers' Centre has over 19 groups that meet regularly carers interested in meeting more frequently could enquire about attending other groups. Staff members who facilitate groups will regularly consult with those attending with regards to guest speakers and the overall direction of the group. Finally Sunderland Carers' Centre will further promote groups using the website, social media (Facebook & Twitter) as well as continuing to provide all carers who are in receipt of the newsletter with a quarterly group programme.

4. Courses

Sunderland Carers' Centre runs a variety of free courses for carers to give them the opportunity to develop their skills and to learn about things that may help them in their caring situation, for example, Caring with Confidence. Caring with Confidence is a series of free local group sessions for carers aged over 18. The sessions help carers make a positive difference to their life and that of the person they care for. Themes range from handling emotions and looking after your own health to dealing with professionals and service providers.

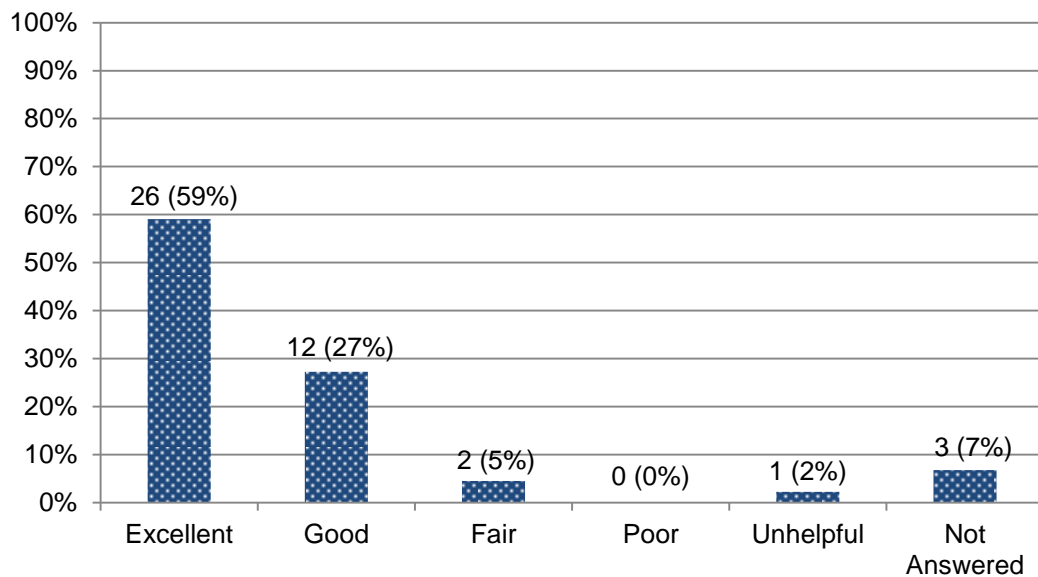
4.1 Have you attended a course run by Sunderland Carers' Centre e.g. Caring with Confidence?

The chart below shows the number of carers responding to the survey that attended a course run by Sunderland Carers' Centre:



4.2 If you have answered yes, please tick the word that best describes the course

In order to gauge the quality of the courses run by Sunderland Carers' Centre we asked carers that had attended a course to choose a word that best described their experience. This is detailed in the chart on the following page.



91% of carers who attended a course were happy with the content describing it as excellent, good or fair.

4.3 Please tell us why you think this. Do you have any suggestions for future courses?

Comments received regarding courses run by Sunderland Carers' Centre were largely positive. Carers felt their confidence had improved from attending the course and that they gained a lot of valuable information which they could apply to their caring role. Many carers felt the course was a great way to meet other carers in similar situations who may themselves be able to provide valuable information and support.

"I have got a lot of confidence and information from attending these courses."

"Made me feel a whole lot better and provided practical ideas for coping, met other carers who also had suggestions and advice."

Despite the majority of carers finding the courses run by Sunderland Carers' Centre to be a very positive experience some felt that the courses were too rudimentary and that more advanced courses for more experienced carers should be offered:

"Very good for new carers but we need courses for experienced carers as well."

This is something Sunderland Carers' Centre will further look to develop if there is great enough demand.

5. Newsletter

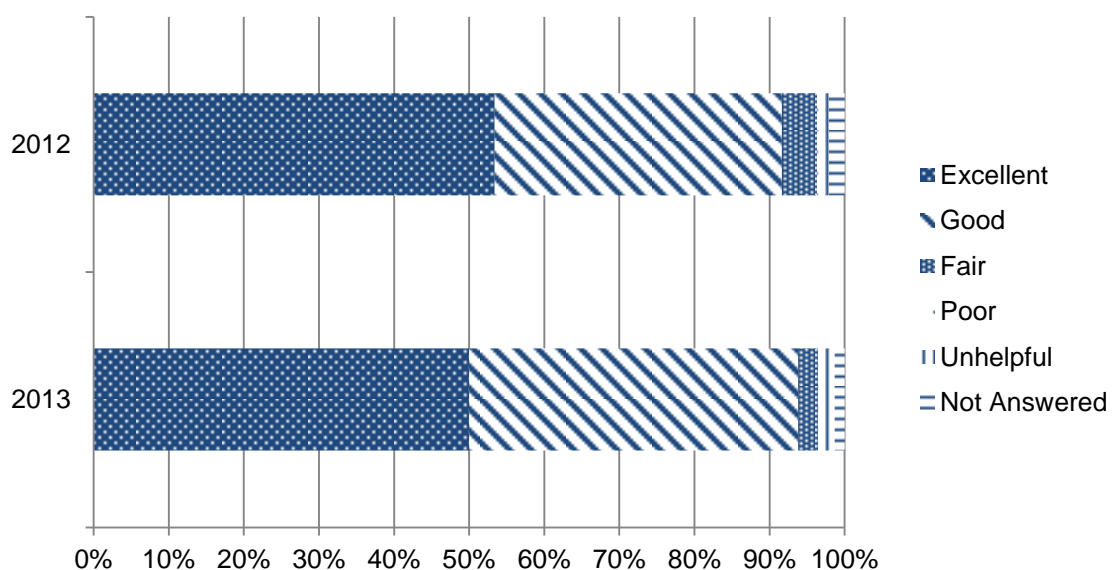
Sunderland Carers' Centre produces a free newsletter every two months to keep people up-to-date with services for carers and to tell them about carers' groups, social activities and courses. For many carers the newsletter is the main, and sometimes, the only contact they have with the Centre. Some carers may not need regular advice and support or may be unable to attend carers' groups or social activities because of work or their caring responsibilities. The newsletter can keep them informed about what is happening locally and nationally.

5.1 Please tick the word that best describes how useful you find the Carers' Centre newsletter:

As you can see from the table below the majority of people who received the newsletter found the content to be of a high standard:

Description	Total	Percentage
Excellent	113	50.0%
Good	99	43.8%
Fair	6	2.7%
Poor	2	0.9%
Unhelpful	3	1.3%
Not Answered	3	1.3%
Total	226	100%

The chart below compares the newsletter feedback we received in 2012 with the 2013 responses.



93.8% of carers responding to the survey described the newsletter as excellent or good.

5.2 Please tell us why you think this:

Carers felt that the newsletter's main strength was its level of information on anything pertaining to carers in Sunderland. The presentation and design also received lots of positive feedback with some carers highlighting it as a necessity for carers without access to the internet etc..

"Up to date information for carers including support groups, more importantly changes in policies with local councils and government."

"Very useful, keeps me updated with all you do, I look forward to receiving it."

"Still a means of providing information and guidance when not computer literate."

"Clearly presented and packed with information."

5.3 How do you think the newsletter could be improved?

Despite the largely positive feedback we received for the newsletter Sunderland Carers' Centre would still like to hear ways in which the newsletter could be improved. Carers would like to see more carer input as well as hearing from different staff and volunteers within the Centre. Sunderland Carers' Centre does publish articles they receive from carers in the newsletter and will publicise this in future to encourage further carer input.

In addition to the newsletter Sunderland Carers' Centre has a website which publishes up to date and more in depth articles / information. Sunderland Carers' Centre now has a social media presence (Facebook / Twitter) where carers can receive up to date information and interact with staff and other carers. Sunderland Carers' Centre would like to encourage carers to access the website and social media but will continue to provide a newsletter as not everyone has access to the internet.

6. Website

Sunderland Carers' Centre has its own website - www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk – which not only contains information for carers already in contact with the Centre, it also allows us to reach many new carers, particularly those who are isolated or working.

People visiting the website can find out how the Carers' Centre can help carers; how carers can meet other carers; receive the latest information on new services, courses, social activities and other special events for carers; and take part in carers' surveys, petitions and consultations. There are also links to other useful websites, including Carers Trust, Carers UK, Sunderland City Council and the local NHS trusts. The site is continuously updated.

Sunderland Carers' Centre also has a Facebook page which can be found via our website and a Twitter feed on the website home page:

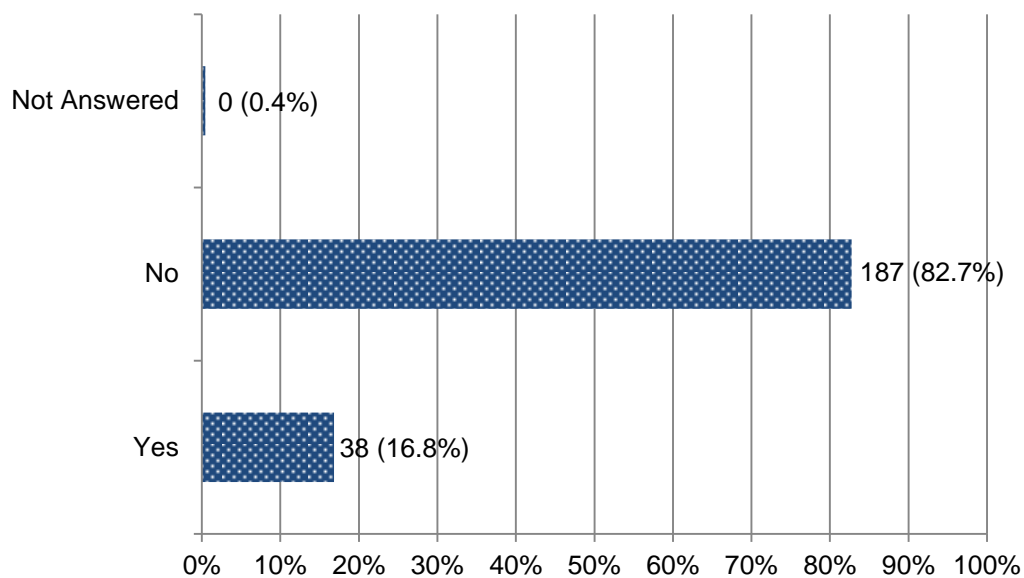
Facebook: www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/facebook

Twitter: www.twitter.com/@sunderlandcarer



6.1 Have you visited the Sunderland Carers' Centre Website?

The chart on the following page shows how many carers responding to the survey have accessed the Sunderland Carers' Centre website:



6.2 If you have answered no please tell us why you have not visited the website

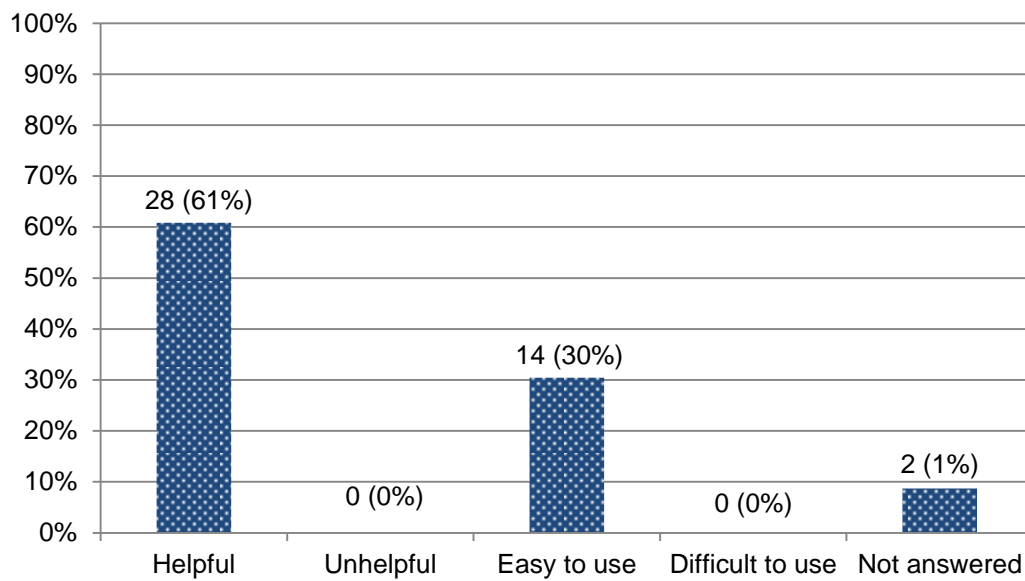
The majority of carers responding to the survey that have not accessed the Sunderland Carers' Centre website commented that they simply did not have time to do so. As caring for someone can be extremely time-consuming it is understandable that carers may not be able to access the website frequently. From Sunderland Carers' Centre's perspective it is important that carers are made aware of the wealth of information available online as this can be accessed at any time.

Another common theme was the lack of access to the internet or computer equipment. Sunderland Carers' Centre has a computer specifically for carer use available in the reception area of the Centre which can be used to access the internet. This will be promoted via the newsletter and social media to make carers aware of this available resource.

Many carers responding identified themselves as not being computer literate. The Centre could look to develop a computer course for carers which could aim to teach them basic computer skills if there is enough demand. Failing this computer courses which run within the community could be sourced to signpost carers to where they can develop these skills.

6.3 If you have answered yes, please tick the words which best describe the website:

The chart on the following page breaks down how carers responding to the survey would describe their experience with the Sunderland Carers' Centre website:



0% of carers responding to the survey found the website to be unhelpful or difficult to use.

6.4 What do you like about the website?

Carers that had accessed the website and indicated that they had liked it felt that the website was informative and unambiguous.

“You can access information easily and quickly if you need to.”

6.5 How do you think the website could be improved?

As the percentage of people that had accessed the Sunderland Carers' Centre website was relatively low we received very few responses on how to improve the website. It may be worth exploring the possibility of hosting a focus group to gather more carer feedback regarding the website.

7. Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme

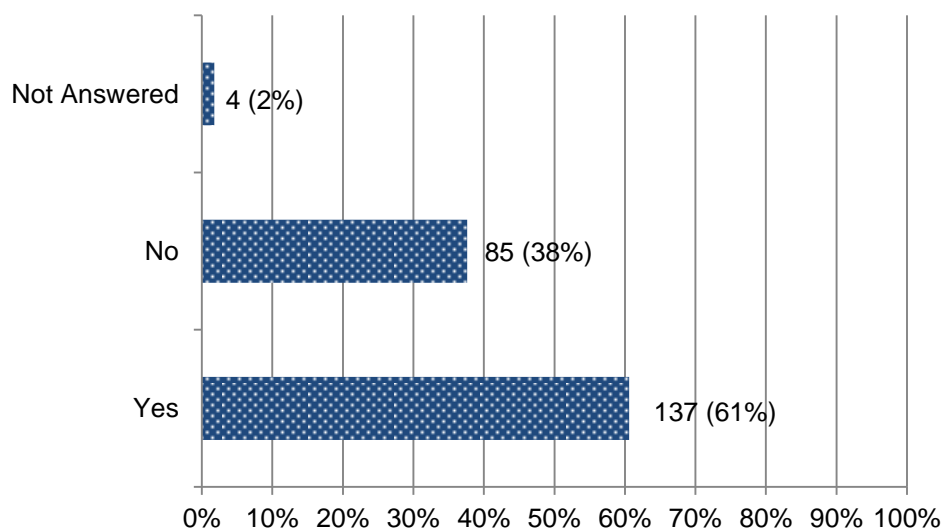
The Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme offers carers the chance to take a break from their caring responsibilities and take part in opportunities or activities that they would like to do and that will help to maintain or improve their quality of life. It can also provide care to the person cared for while the carer is away from their caring responsibilities. Examples of the types of breaks or opportunities that carers can apply for include:

- Funding to enable the carer and person they care for have a break together but where help is provided with caring, so the carer has a break from their caring responsibilities
- Funding to enable the carer to try something new, for example, courses for leisure or learning, gym membership and even help with the costs of driving lessons to enable the carer to meet the needs of their caring role
- Funding to help groups of carers to try something new or take a break together

The scheme is open to adult carers, parent carers of disabled children, young carers and group applications. It is a free service and the decision to give funding is based on the carer's individual caring circumstances, not their income.

7.1 Have you accessed the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme?

The chart below shows the amount of carers responding to the satisfaction survey that have accessed the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme:



7.2 If you have answered no, please tell us why you have not accessed the Scheme

A variety of reasons were given from carers as to why they had not accessed the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme. Many carers were concerned that there would be nobody available to look after the person they cared for if they applied to the Scheme. Carers should be made aware that the Scheme places a big emphasis on the opportunity aspect. For example carers have received funding from the Scheme for computer equipment, driving lessons, garden furniture, relaxation therapies etc.. Some carers have even used the Scheme to fund replacement care so they can look forward to an hour or two to themselves each week.

“Do not have anyone to look after my son to get a break.”

“I am reluctant to leave my mother.”

Carers who do apply for funding for a holiday often take the person they care for. In this instance the carer must be able to provide evidence that they will receive a break from their caring role and not just transfer their caring role to a different location. Further work needs to be undertaken to promote the varying ways in which the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme can be used.

Another common theme was carers feeling as if they were not deserving of applying to the Scheme. This is a prime example of carers undervaluing their contribution to society and more work should be done by Sunderland Carers' Centre to reach these carers.

“We manage and I think others are more deserving.”

7.3 How do you think the Scheme could be improved?

The survey shows that carers are happy with and value the Scheme and would like it to continue. They also benefit from the support the Carers' Centre gives to guide them through the process.

Carers have suggested that the scheme be better advertised to allow more people to access the Scheme.

Carers felt the process was too slow and that by the time the carer has received confirmation of their funding they may not be able to access the break or opportunity for the originally agreed price.

8. Sunderland Carers' Centre

In addition to the services mentioned above Sunderland Carers' Centre arranges social activities and events throughout the year to give carers a break from their caring responsibilities and enjoy some leisure time with other carers.

Sunderland Carers' Centre enables carers to work together to give carers a voice to influence policy and service development for the people they care for and for themselves as carers. Carers are invited to give their views to the Centre as individuals, through groups or specially arranged meetings.

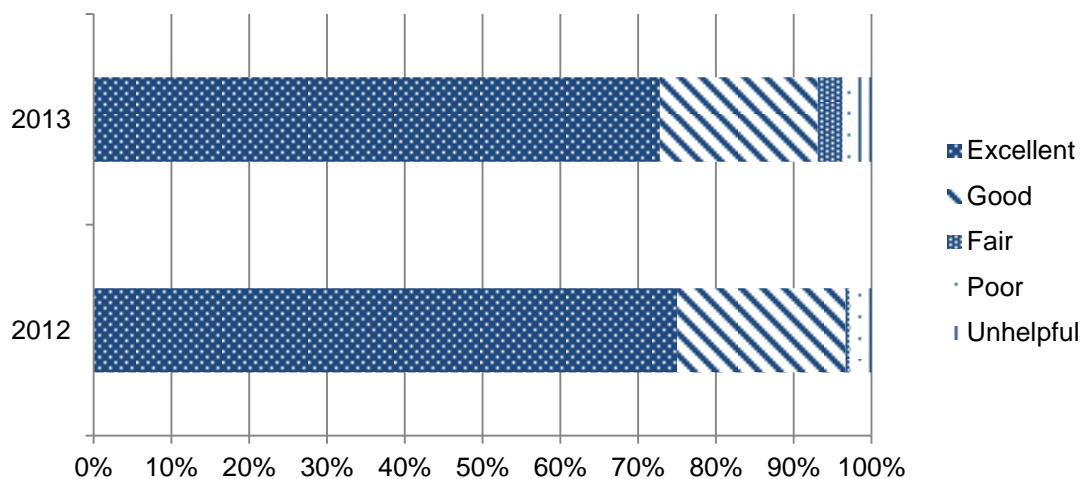
Sunderland Carers' Centre provides support and activities to young carers aged between 5 and 25 who look after a family member with an illness or disability.

8.1 Please tick the word which best describes overall the services of Sunderland Carers' Centre

The table below shows how carers responding to the survey would describe the services of Sunderland Carers' Centre:

Description	Total	Percentage
Excellent	158	70%
Good	44	19%
Fair	7	3%
Poor	3	1%
Unhelpful	5	2%
Not Answered	9	4%
Total	226	100%

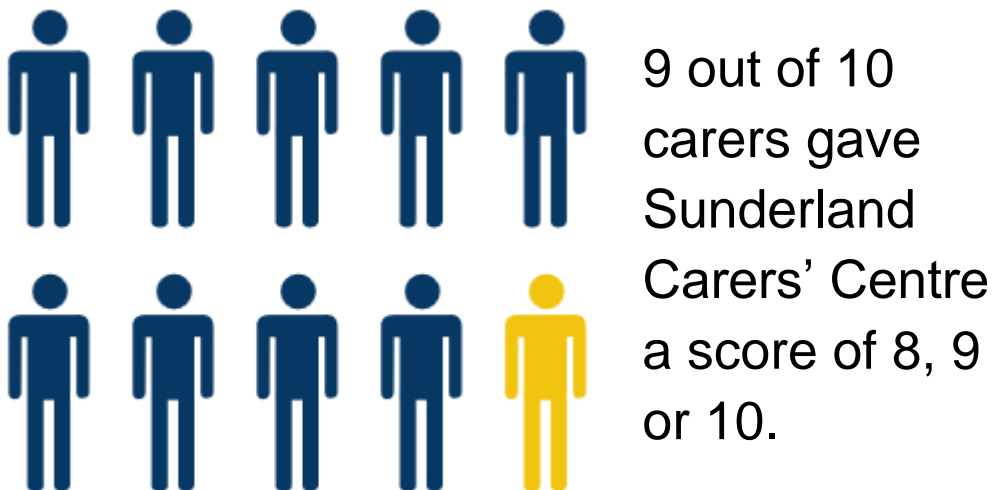
The chart below compares feedback we received in 2012 with the 2013 responses.



93% of carers felt that the services provided by Sunderland Carers' Centre were excellent or good.

8.2 Out of 10 how much do you value Sunderland Carers' Centre

The average rating received from carers responding to the survey was **9/10**.



8.3 Please tell us how Sunderland Carers' Centre has made a difference to your life

Carers felt that Sunderland Carers' Centre **had** made a difference to their lives. Most highlighted the fact that they felt help was just "a phone call away" and the quality of the advice, information or support they had received as positively impacting on their lives.

"I know that if I need help or information you are there for me."

"Gave me back my independence and part of my own life. Being a carer, you can easily forget you have a life."

"I know I can get all the help, advice and support I need with just a phone call. I cannot praise you all enough. THANK YOU!"

"Was dealing with my son's needs for 10 years alone. I now feel I've got someone there when I need it which is great as I don't feel lonely anymore."

"Sunderland Carers' Centre helped to support me when I was in the deepest darkest place of despair some five years ago. They made me

feel welcome and I have made new friends. I feel that without them my life would have taken a different direction.”

However some carers were unaware of the services the Centre provides. Many responding to the survey were only aware of the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme and further efforts should be made to promote other services.

9. Conclusion

The Satisfaction Survey has identified that not all the carers we are in contact with may be fully aware of the range of services we provide.

Sunderland Carers' Centre is committed to carrying out more awareness raising of the different services available to carers. For example, carers accessing the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme will be given further details about the other services available to them.

We will report on any progress made as a result of changes following this survey via the newsletter, website and social media.

Sunderland Carers' Centre would like to thank all the carers who participated in this year's survey.