



Mystery Shopper survey

“Giving people with disabilities and Deaf people a stronger voice.”

Report produced by Living Options Devon

**For the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
(Devon and Cornwall)**

April 2015

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1 Introduction | Page 3 |
| 2 Process overview | Page 3 |
| 3 Key findings | Page 5 |
| 4 Summary and recommendations | Page 9 |
| Appendix 1- results in full | Page 11 |
| Appendix 2- the scenarios | Page 16 |
| Appendix 3 -feedback form | Page 22 |

1. Introduction

Living Options Devon (LOD) is a Devon based user-led organisation which works to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people (for whom British Sign Language is their first or preferred language) can live the life they choose.

In 2013 LOD was successful in its application to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for a small grant. The grants were available to community and other local organisations which were undertaking actions that could have a positive impact in helping people feel safer and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

LOD's proposal was to support two of the Police and Crime Plan priority areas: 'giving victims and witnesses a stronger voice' and 'listening and responding to the public'. Disabled people were recruited to carry out a mystery shopping survey, enabling them to comment on the quality of local policing services and have their views and experiences listened and responded to. This would strengthen the voice of disabled and Deaf people who may be a victim of crime or a witness in the future and help local people make a difference to the quality of service that disabled and Deaf people receive from Devon and Cornwall Police.

The LOD mystery shopping survey would not duplicate the valuable work that has been undertaken with people with a Learning Disability. The focus would be on Deaf people for whom British Sign Language is their first language; people with physical and/or sensory disabilities and elderly frail people.

LOD has used a Mystery Shopping approach to support other public sector providers with significant success (including Health, Social Care, District Councils, Fire Services). This is a proven powerful and meaningful way to engage with the local disabled and Deaf community, working in partnership to improve the services they receive.

2. Process overview

2.1 Establishing the focus and agreeing scenarios

Following discussions between Police representatives and LOD, it was agreed that the mystery shopping exercise should focus on the non emergency 101 service.

LOD and Police representatives worked in coproduction to develop an agreed set of scenarios for the mystery shoppers to use when calling the non emergency phone line (see appendix 2) and to develop an outcome based framework which would enable the mystery shoppers to feed back on their experiences in a focused constructive way (see appendix 3 – feedback form).

A process was put in place for the use of a code word to prevent any police action being taken following the mystery shopping phonecalls.

2.2 Training

With the support of Police representatives, LOD provided training for people with physical and sensory disabilities to carry out the mystery shopping (and understanding the code word process) and complete the framework consistently and accurately.

2.3 Mystery shop

A session was held at LOD offices for the mystery shopping phone calls to take place. The mystery shoppers were supported by LOD and Police representatives who remained present during the phone calls.

In addition, for those mystery shoppers who felt comfortable to do so, some phonecalls were made from peoples' homes. This enabled some calls to take place at busier times of day (e.g. first thing on a Monday morning) to establish whether this affected the quality of service.

2.4 Scenarios

There were twelve scenarios in total, delivered by seven mystery shoppers. Some of the scenarios were repeated by different callers.

The scenarios were developed to cover a range of issues and a range of disabilities and were designed to draw out levels of awareness and knowledge of disability and Deaf issues; and the quality of service provided to disabled and Deaf people.

The scenarios included:- information requests; access issues, disablist incidents; incidents of abuse; feelings of vulnerability due to age or disability; and complaints. See appendix 1 for the scenarios in full.

3. Key findings

Overall the feedback overwhelmingly suggests that the 101 service provides people with sensory and physical disabilities and older people with a high quality, sensitive, respectful service with awareness shown to their particular needs and concerns.

A summary of the findings is presented below with the full results provided in appendix 2.

NB: Percentages given are of the total number of calls.

3.1 Customer service

The majority of call handlers were reported to be: polite and courteous (83%); to treat people with respect (72%); and to genuinely want to help (78%). In 78% of calls, the mystery shoppers felt that they were listened to and that the call handler responded appropriately. Example comments:-

“The lady operator was polite and reassuring”

“She was very efficient, very 'warm' and very, very nice.”

“He seemed to really care about my situation and only asked the questions he needed to, in a very nice manner.”

“They were very nice and made me feel my call was welcome.”

For those calls that did not result in a positive response to these questions, the mystery shoppers either were ‘not sure’ or left the response blank (but in no cases did anyone answer ‘no’).

The scenarios resulting in a less positive response were:-

- Information request regarding mobility scooter rules
- Call regarding repeated verbal abuse due to a facial disfigurement
- Call reporting an incident of offensive language (due to Terets)
- A caller showing signs of confusion. Lost keys and locked out (and then in the house)

Comments were made suggesting a possible lack of knowledge of disability and Deaf issues and an occasional insensitivity to the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities or older people. Comments suggested that in some cases, call

handlers did not listen or fully understand; used an abrupt manner and made the caller feel they were calling unnecessarily (although it must be highlighted again that this is in a very small number of cases).

The less favourable experiences were of particular concern in two of the mystery shopping calls: a person experiencing repeated verbal abuse due to a facial disfigurement; and a person who had lost their keys showing signs of confusion and anxiety, both of which would require high levels of sensitivity and understanding. Example comments:-

“Call handler seemed rather distant and at first didn't seem to understand what I was asking – could have been quite off putting for some people.”

(Scenario: information request re mobility scooter rules)

“I'm not sure that she did not feel I was calling unnecessarily.”

(Scenario: disablist incident. Person repeatedly experiencing verbal abuse due to facial disfigurement)

“I was put on hold and recorded information cut a few times. I would have become more confused and agitated in real life situation.”

(Scenario: A caller showing signs of confusion. Lost keys and locked out and then in the house)

3.2 Time

In 83% of calls, the mystery shoppers felt that they were given enough time to explain their concerns fully and did not feel rushed. Call handlers were said to be patient and attentive. Comments:

“He repeated what he read to me, and asked if this was ok and did I need any further help.”

“Allowed time for me to explain and didn't interrupt.”

“She understood my concern and gave me time to finish what I had to say, without giving me the feeling that she was looking out of the window or filing her nails.”

“I needed time and was given time as I need to explain the bottle throwing first in order to set the scene for the real point of my call.”

However, there was one case where the caller did not feel she was given time:

“No, felt very rushed, as soon as she grasped what I was asking she went off the line because she said she would ask a police officer for the answers to my query. I was left for quite a while before she got back on the line with complete silence so I could have thought that I had been cut off.”

(Scenario: information request re mobility scooter rules)

The mystery shopper who called in a confused manner worrying as she had lost her keys was ‘unsure’ if she had been given enough time to explain herself fully, which highlights a concern that the operative may have shown less patience than would be expected in such a situation:

“I felt questions were a bit abrupt considering I was ringing in a worried style.”

The second mystery shopper who was ‘unsure’ she had been given sufficient time, had called with a concern about a suspicious character on the street which had resulted in an unsatisfactory conversation with a police officer, where she didn’t feel she was treated with respect:

“I was complaining about the officer calling me love and not taking my concerns about a suspicious character seriously. The handler seemed to want me only to report one thing - either the suspicious character or the officer’s attitude.”

It may be significant that two of these phonecalls took place in the morning, with the mobility scooter information request happening first thing on a Monday, which is a busy time of day for the 101 service.

3.3 Disability and Deaf awareness

In 83% of calls the mystery shoppers felt that the call handler understood their query. In 28% of calls the mystery shoppers strongly agreed and in 39% they agreed that the call handler showed an awareness and understanding of disability and Deaf issues. Mystery shoppers commented on the helpful and sensitive way they were dealt with and how they felt reassured and understood. In 94% of calls, the operatives spoke clearly and audibly and did not use jargon or inaccessible language.

The call handlers responded sensitively to a range of scenarios including witnessing disablist incidents (repeated verbal abuse of a person with a facial disfigurement and verbal abuse of a person with a speech impairment and physical disability); a visually impaired person being afraid to answer the front door; concerns about a house key safe; and financial and physical abuse of a person with a physical disability.

“She even had a conversation with me briefly about helping friend to build confidence and practice speech. She said they have contact with people with speech impairments and that they are patient and give people the time they need to speak.”

“The lady operator was polite and reassuring, explaining that the key safe was very safe, also said if I still felt unsure talk to the supplier of key safe as well as the council and my family, as all had my welfare to be safe and easy way to help me stay independent.”

“The operator certainly listened and understood the issue of the officer not allowing for the fact that the husband relied on lip reading together with his hearing problem, BUT the first issue (the youths throwing bottles) took precedence over the hearing problem.”

“She not only answered my questions but also gave me further advice and put my mind at rest.”

However in a small number of cases the call handlers did not demonstrate this awareness and sensitivity:

“I was put on hold and recorded information cut a few times. I would have become more confused and agitated in real life situation.”

(Scenario: confused caller who has lost keys)

“I think it could have been handled better but i did become an angry customer.”

(Scenario: complaint about manner of police officer)

72% of calls the mystery shoppers felt that they were provided with relevant information and advice (how to contact Police if you have a hearing impairment or are Deaf and rules for using a mobility scooter).

“She was very clear about how people are serviced if they can't use a phone in the usual way. She used 'hard of hearing' and 'speech impairment' (correct terms)”

“Operator was very alert to my needs and gave me information swiftly and confidently.”

However, there was less confidence with regard to levels of working knowledge of disability and Deaf issues (11% strongly agreed and 17% agreed that call handlers showed good working knowledge with 61% responding that they neither agreed nor disagreed). In 22% of calls, the mystery shoppers felt there was not a good level of working knowledge.

“She didn't seem to understand at all at first but eventually she seemed to grasp what I was asking but I don't think she really knew anything about mobility scooters.”

There was concern expressed by some of the mystery shoppers that an assumption is often made that the caller could access information online.

“Did come back after talking to the police officer and told me I could ride at 4 m.p.h on the pavement and 8 m.p.h on the road, for more information I could look on the DLVA website. I asked what I should do if I didn't have access to the internet and she said I could go online at a library.”

4.0 Summary and recommendations

The mystery shoppers, who all have disabilities themselves, were given the opportunity to comment on the quality of local policing services. Feedback from the mystery shoppers strongly suggests that the 101 service operators are providing a high quality service, showing understanding and awareness of disability and Deaf issues, displaying empathy and sensitivity.

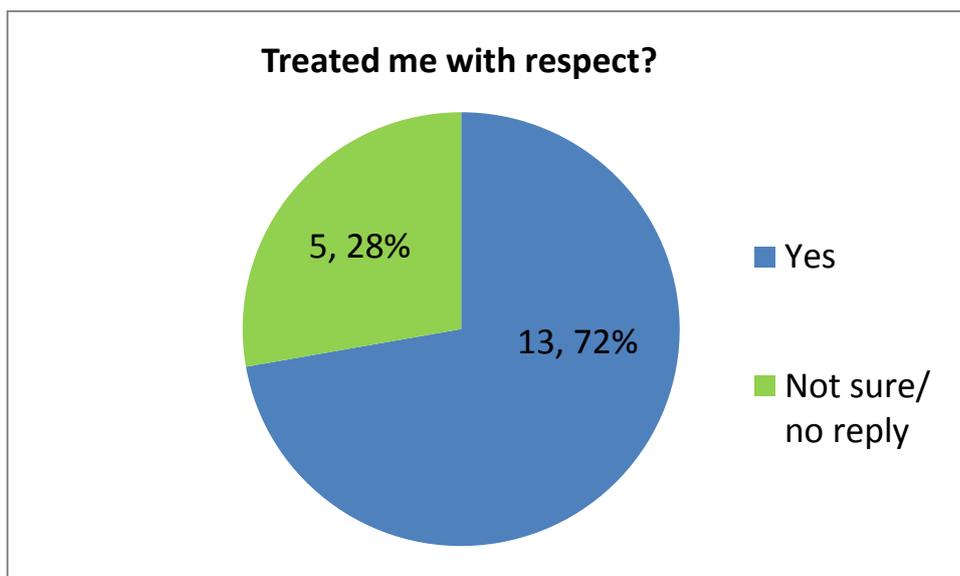
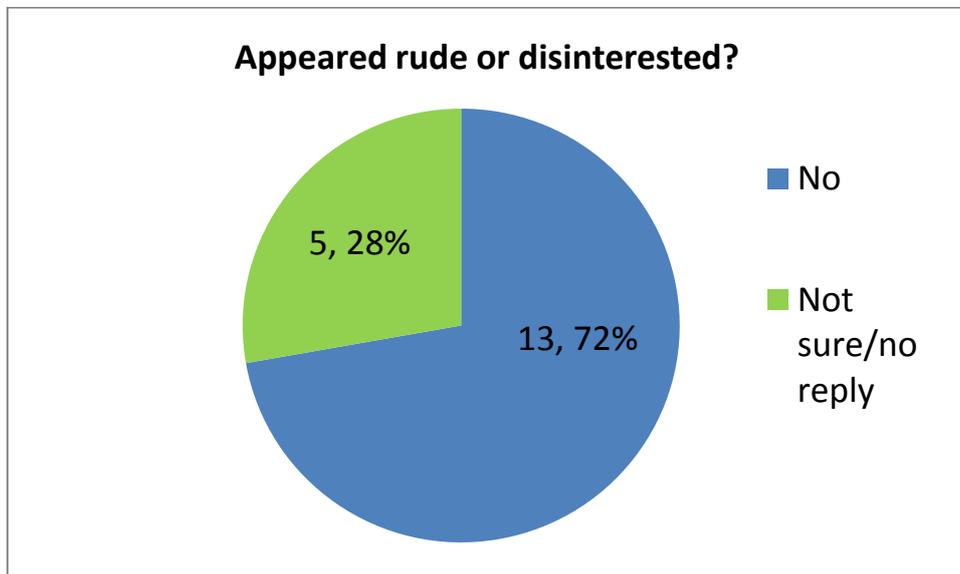
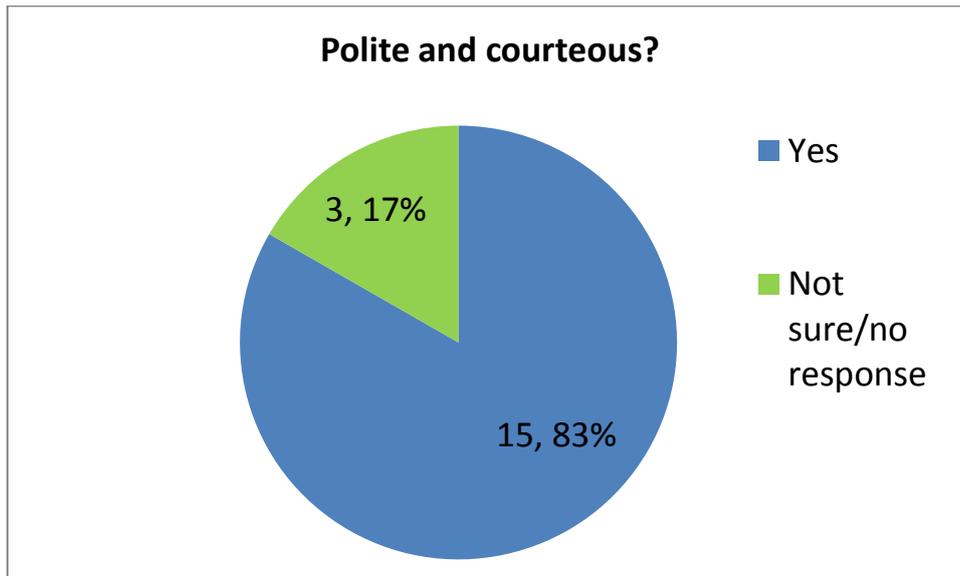
It is hoped that this process indicates that disabled and Deaf people who may be a victim of crime or a witness to crime in the future will experience the same positive outcomes.

For 78% of calls, the mystery shoppers either strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the outcome of their call. However, a small percentage of calls did not result in such a positive outcome (scenarios: call requesting

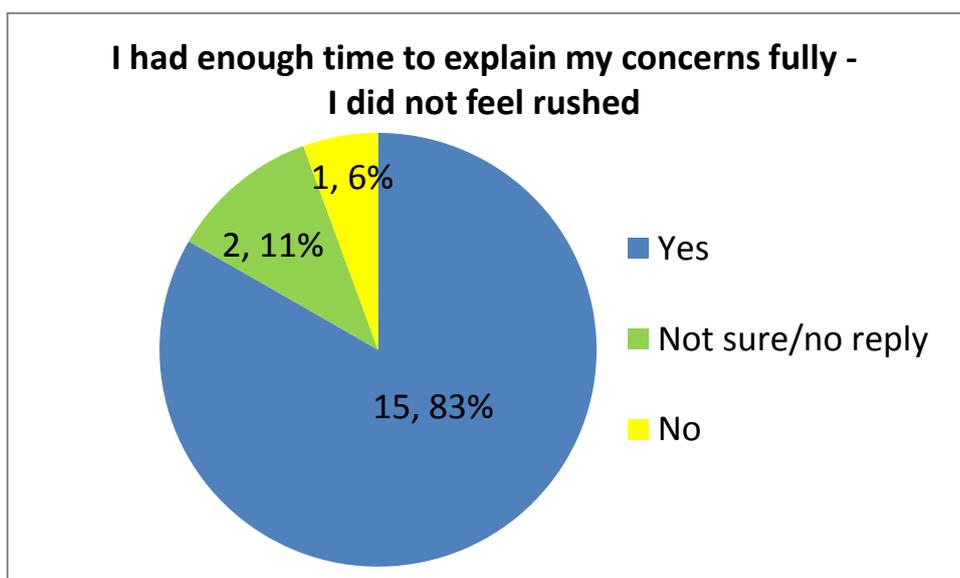
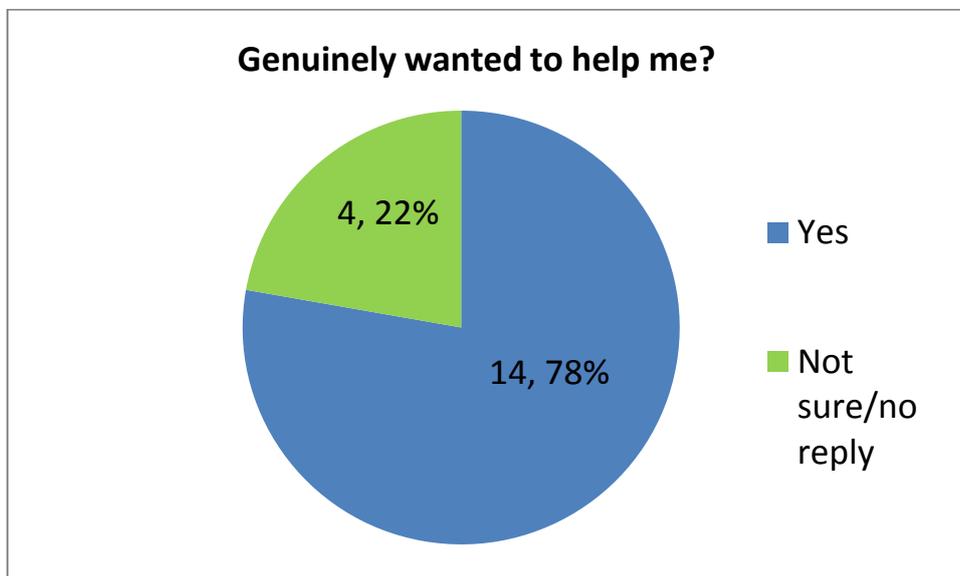
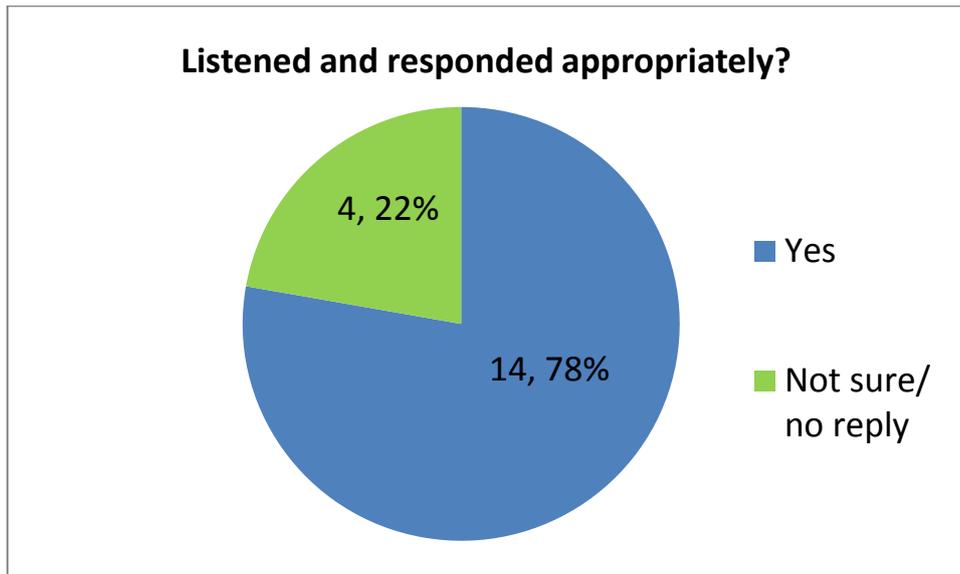
information about rules for mobility scooters; call from an elderly confused person who had lost keys and call from a person complaining about a lack of understanding shown by a police officer about the needs of a hearing impaired person relying on lip-reading). The findings therefore suggest that there is room for improvement in the following areas:-

- Increasing the working knowledge of disability and Deaf issues and concerns amongst 101 service operatives, in order to be able to answer common queries/signposting calls (not only internet based signposting)
- Bespoke disability awareness and Deaf awareness training with a focus on the kinds of experiences, vulnerabilities and concerns which many people with disabilities, older people and Deaf people often have.

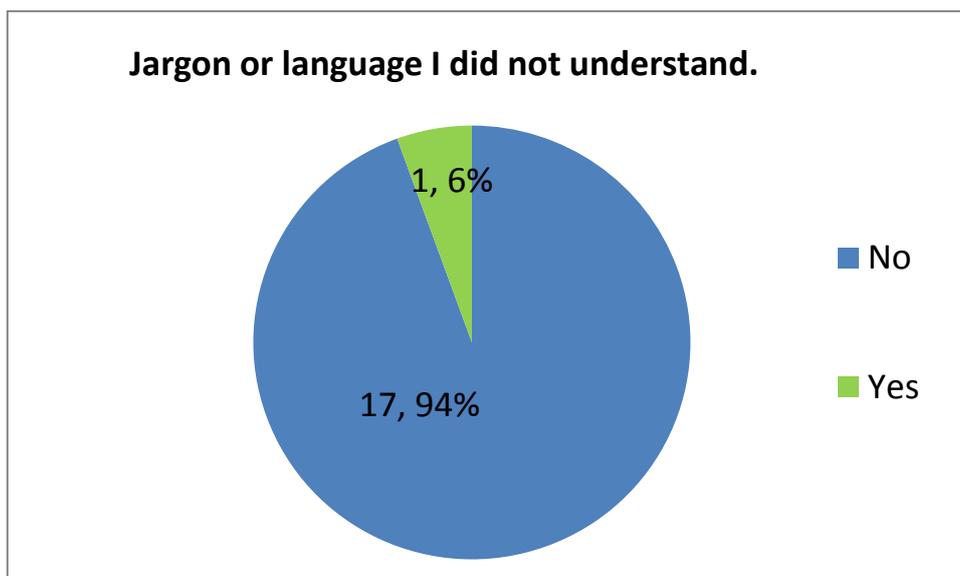
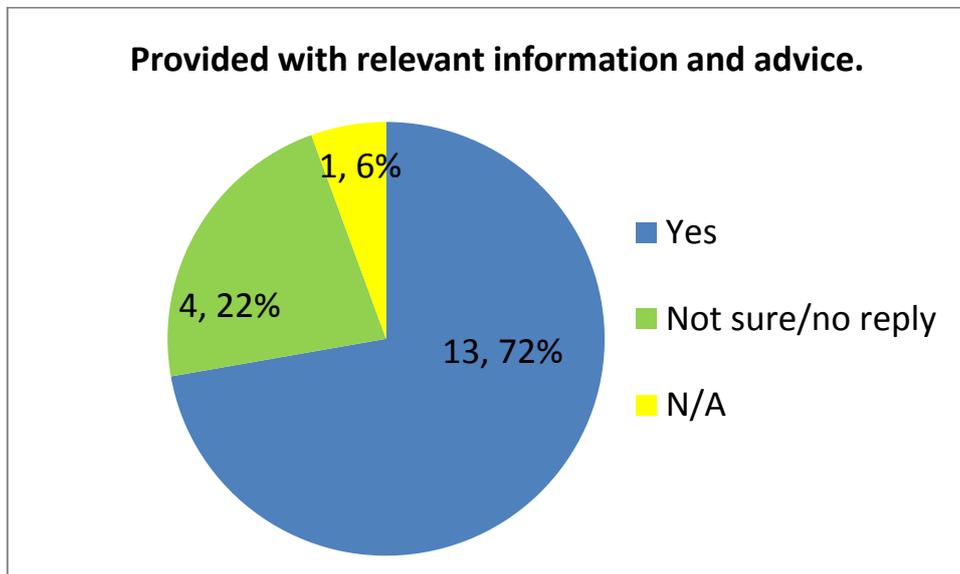
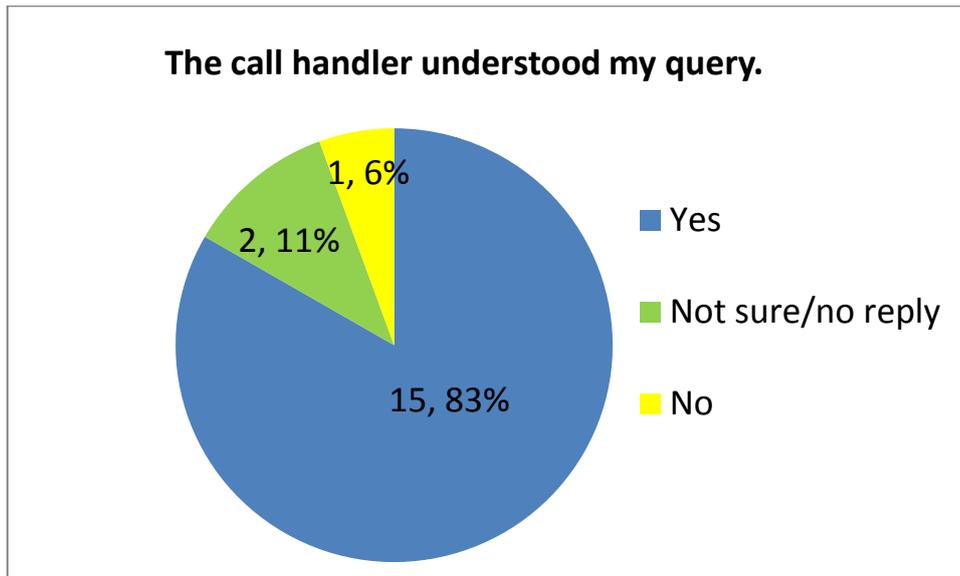
Appendix 1 –results in full



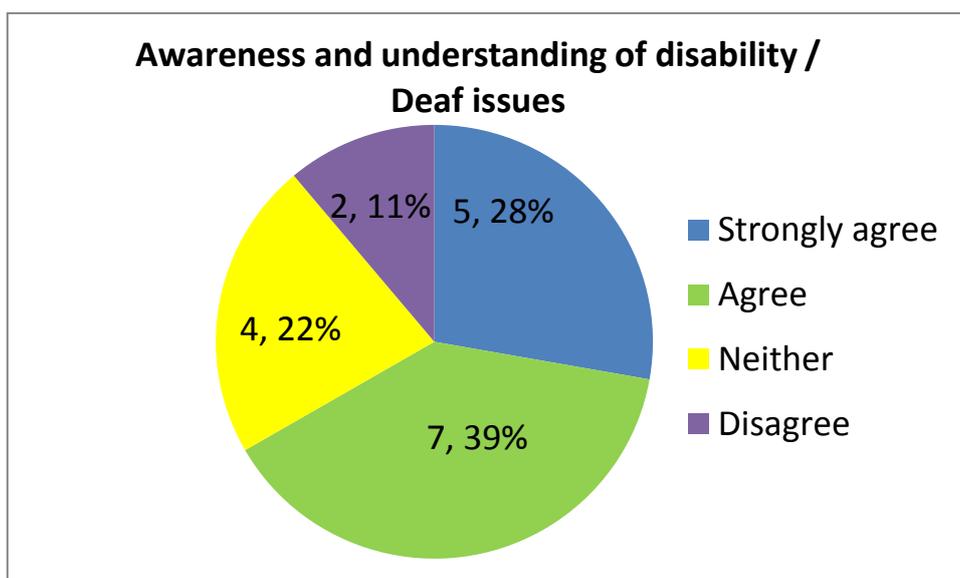
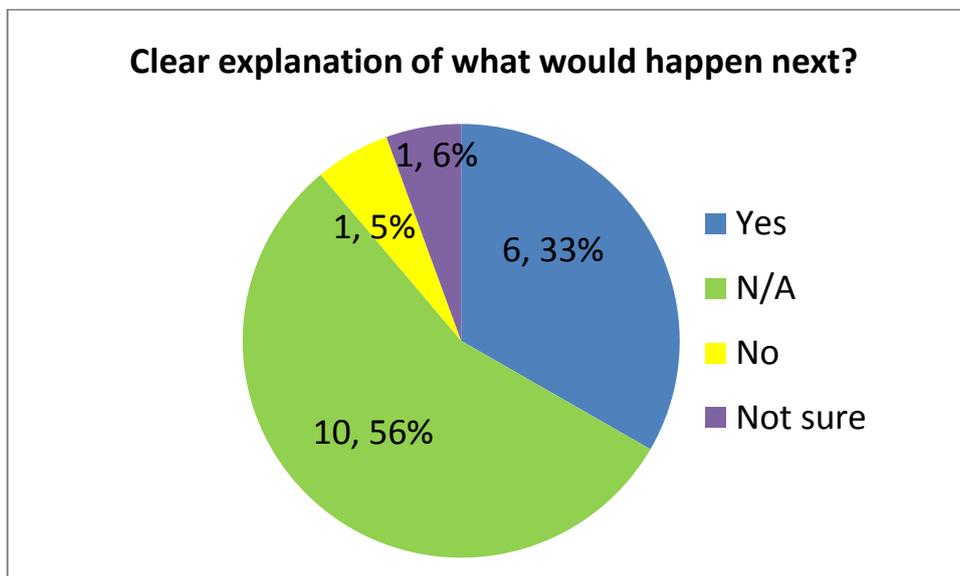
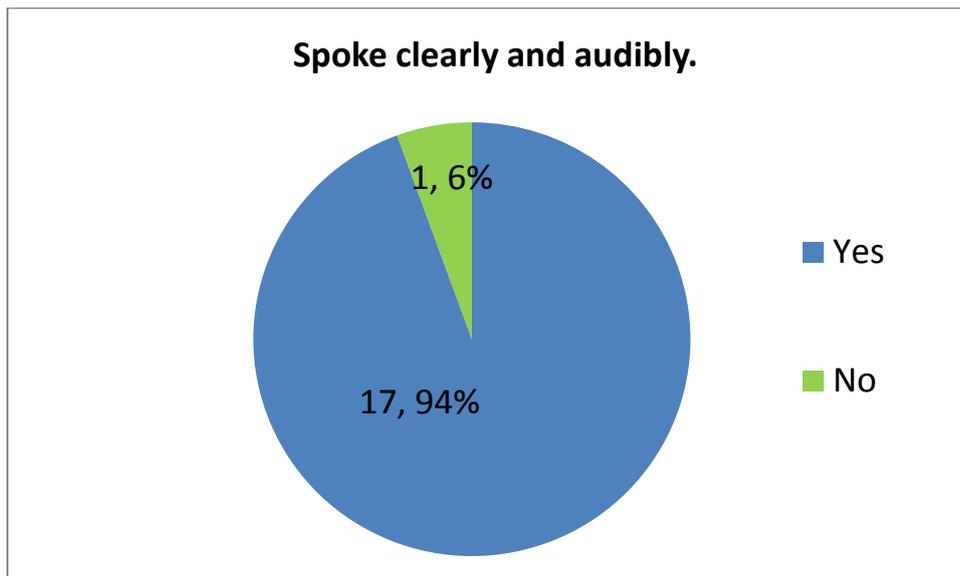
Appendix 1 –results in full



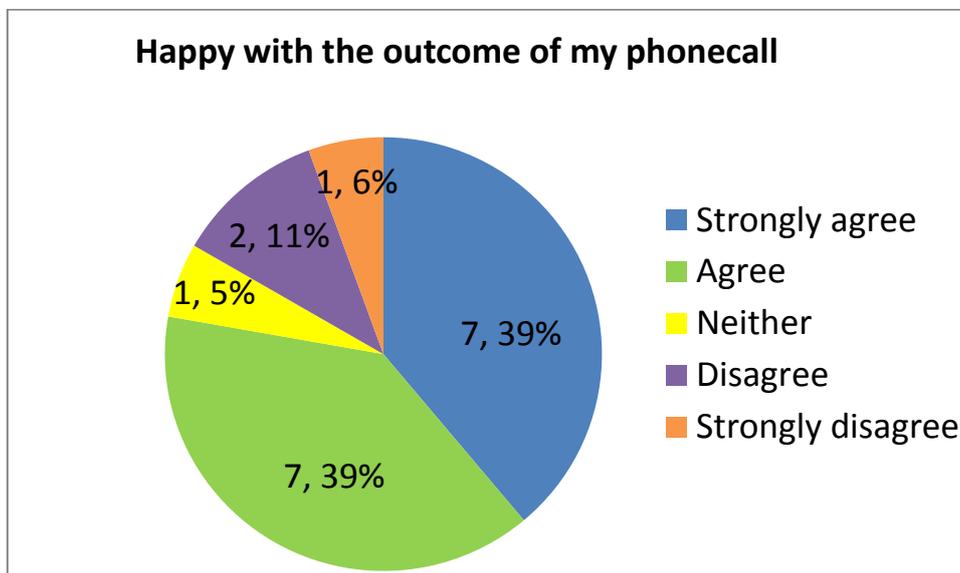
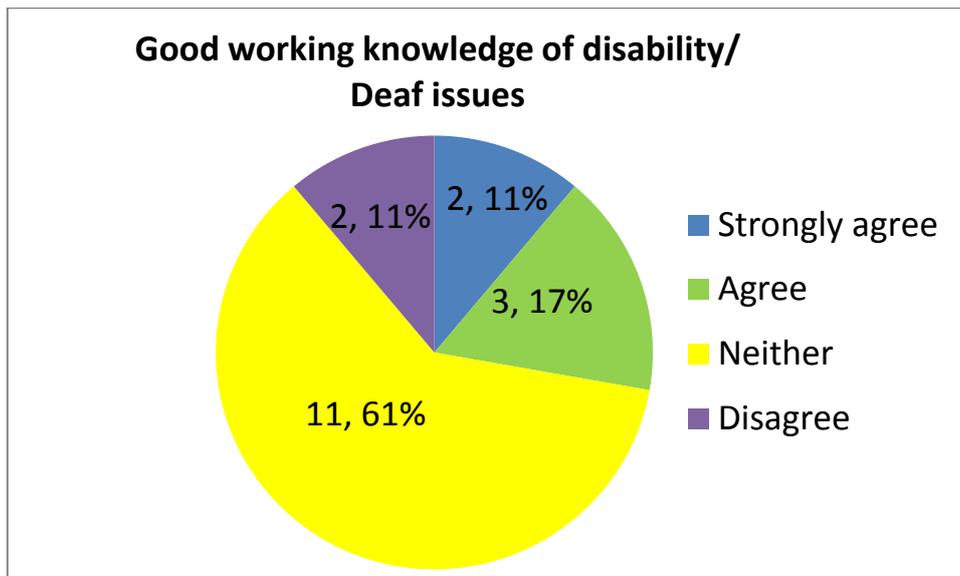
Appendix 1 –results in full



Appendix 1 –results in full



Appendix 1 –results in full



Appendix 2 – the scenarios

Devon and Cornwall Police

Non-Emergency 101 service Monitoring

(Mystery Shopper exercise)

Scenarios March 2015

1) Mobility Scooter Rules

We have recently bought a second hand class 3 mobility scooter for my husband. The seller told us that it can be used on both the road and the pavement. When we were in town a pedestrian told my husband he should be on the road and a neighbour who has a mobility scooter told us that he should only go on the road if there is cycle lane to use. Please can you tell us what the rules are for class 3 motor scooters- we don't want to break the law.

This call should be dealt with by the switchboard

Extra info – class 3 means top speed of 8 miles per hour.

2) Deaf Sign Language Users – how to contact the Police

I help to run a local social club for Deaf Sign Language users. In this month's meeting the issue of how to make a 999 call came up if you can't use a phone in the usual way. I promised to look this up online but my laptop is playing up at the moment so I thought I would ring your non-emergency number instead which I saw advertised somewhere or other recently. Sorry if I am calling the wrong department.

3) Blind – door to door enquiries safety

Yesterday someone rang my doorbell and said they were a community police officer making house enquiries. I am blind and was afraid to open the door so I shouted to them to go away through the glass and drew the door curtain over. I didn't sleep very well last night thinking about it and was worried that you might think I am against the people and unhelpful. If the officer comes back would it be alright to ask them to call again later so that I can phone you and

Appendix 2 – the scenarios

ask if you have an officer making house calls? Should I use this 101 number or a different one?

4) Speech Impairment - witnessing disablist incident

I have just had coffee in the Café and a young man came using 2 walking sticks. He had a significant speech impairment and the lady behind the counter couldn't understand him. She was clearly embarrassed and I don't think she knew what to do and he repeated himself a couple of times and then got louder and pointed at the blackboard behind the counter with his walking stick. The lady told him to calm down or he would have to leave. Suddenly a man came from out the back and told the young man to get out and shouted "I'm not having spastics in my café." I was really shocked! The young man left straight away and I followed him out and told him he should report the café to the council or the police. I think he responded that he was used to it and just walked away.

I suppose pointing his stick up in the air could feel a bit menacing but surely the café owner, cook or whatever he was shouldn't be allowed to get away with treating people like that?

You will be given a café name and location

5) Hearing Impairment – how to report a crime / incident

I am phoning on behalf of friends who recently moved near us from a country village. They are not used to street life at night here in the city and I think made them nervous when I told them we had to call the police a few nights ago because a very nasty fight broke out in the park opposite our house. They can see the park from their flat and wondered how they summon the police if they witness a similar incident when neither of them can hear on the telephone. They never had to consider this sort of thing when they lived in the country. What should they do in an emergency?

You will be given a location for this.

Appendix 2 – the scenarios

6) Physical Disability – house key safe

My family have just had one of those key safe things outside by my front door. I didn't want them to get one because I don't want people to be able just come in whenever they want just by tapping in a few numbers – it makes me feel unsafe. My daughter told me not to be silly and that it is for the best because it takes me a long time to get to the door these days and my home carers can't afford to waste time. Am I at a risk of getting burgled because my key is out there? Are they really safe?

7) Bedridden – financial abuse

Please can you help me? My sister has been stealing from me for a few months now. She just asked me to lend her some money the first few times and then just started coming round and taking it out of my purse. She knows my Carer gets cash out for me every couple of weeks and she just comes round and helps herself. I did think about getting the locks changed to stop her coming in uninvited but this morning when she called round I had my purse hidden under the bedclothes and she got angry because I wouldn't tell her where it was. She grabbed my arm and twisted it which really hurt because of my osteoarthritis so I handed it over. She took the money and got really close to my face and said I'd better not tell anyone or else. I don't want her coming again, I'm really scared but I don't know what to do.

8) Facial Disfigurement - repeated disablist Incidents

I have to pass the bus stop on my way to work and most days there are a bunch of boys waiting for their school bus. They make fun of me and call me names. It is very upsetting and there is no other route to my work. I have asked if I can change my shift time but there is no other space at the moment and looking for another job is impossible. It was hard enough to find this one because I have a really severe facial disfigurement and could tell what some employers were thinking when they interviewed me - more often than not they wouldn't even look at me – I can't go through that again. I want it to stop as I am finding it harder and harder to face the walk to work because of those boys and I think they will be at the school for a couple more years but I'm also afraid that if anything is actioned as a result of my complaint it may make them even worse towards me. Can you help somehow?

Appendix 2 – the scenarios

You will be given a date and time for this incident

8a) Witnessed – abuse

I was visiting a friend on and 4 young boys on school bus stop were being very mean to a lady passing by – she had a badly deformed face and they were laughing, pulling faces and calling her names, she ignored them and kept on walking but I was upset by it. I told the boys they should be ashamed of themselves and inevitably of course they told me to ‘F off’ I wanted to contact the school and report the boys but don’t know if I should because I don’t know what the outcome of that could be. Should I contact the school?

9) Complaint

I reported a suspicious character hanging around our street yesterday and you sent a policewoman round. I really do believe he was behaving very suspiciously walking up and down the road taking a good look at every house. Our front doors are straight onto the pavement most houses are divided into several flats. He was dressed very oddly too – his clothes didn’t fit: he was wearing a suit jacket that was several sizes too big and was very scruffy. He went up and down the street several times.

Anyway I didn’t like the attitude of the police woman who called about it. She kept calling me ‘Love’ which I don’t think is acceptable. She made me feel like a silly old woman who was imagining things. It is the first time I have reported anything in my life and I am intelligent enough to see when someone is acting suspiciously. I felt I wasn’t being taken seriously.

Extra info: lives alone in a ground floor flat and can’t walk very well. Wears an SOS pendant that contacts her daughter but she doesn’t live close by and would take about 30 minutes to get there at the soonest.

Extra info: officer didn’t introduce herself.

10) Housebound – physical abuse

Please listen quickly my husband has just stormed out of the house I have never seen him so angry and I am scared that he is going to be drunk when he comes back – he often hits me when he is drunk but I have never seen him this angry before. I’m very scared, I can’t get away. He won’t let anyone else look

Appendix 2 – the scenarios

after me and he gets very tired having to do so much for me all the time and then he gets angry and drinks and that seems to bring his anger out more.

11) Hearing Impairment – not making reasonable adjustment

My wife saw a community Police Officer in the town on Saturday and asked him if there was anything that could be done to stop a small group of youths gathering in the alleyway at the back of our house to drink and who throw their empty several bottles over the wall into our garden. On one occasion recently a bottle just missed hitting her when she was coming out of the shed. She said the policeman was constantly looking around when he was talking to her and she told him twice that she relies on lip reading in noisy environments but he didn't seem to take it on board and carried on looking around, so she just thanked him. She didn't really get the answer – so I am calling to find out.

You will be given a location for this

12) Medical Condition – offensive language / complaint

I was in the supermarket this morning and all the time a schoolboy was shouting disgusting language. I can't bring myself to repeat what he was saying but mostly it was vulgar slang words for private parts of the body.

I spoke to the Store Manager and he said the boy called in most mornings on his way to school to by his lunch and didn't mean any harm and told me to just ignore him. I said it was impossible to ignore him and I don't think I should have to put up with that sort of thing when I'm shopping. I'd use the other supermarket but I can't carry my shopping and they don't do home deliveries. It's not good enough - surely the Manager should ban this lad from the shop and his parents be told to take their son in hand!!

NB: At some point during the response to this scenario the caller will mention that the store manager told her the boy has Terets – whatever that is - but that she doesn't think there is any excuse for such disgusting behaviour in public.

You will be given a location and store name for this

Appendix 2 – the scenarios

13) Confused

Call to say locked out of house – and can't get to the phone to call son for help
(you are using your mobile phone)

Then change and say you are locked in and can't out

Details in this scenario will develop during the call but it will hopefully lead to
the caller finding their keys in the lock.

Appendix 3 – Mystery shoppers feedback form

Devon and Cornwall Police Mystery Shopping

Mystery Shopper Feedback Form

- 1) Gender (please tick) Male Female
- 2) Please select (tick) which of the following applies to you:
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf (BSL user) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acquired Brain Injury | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Mystery Shopper Scnario: (give a brief outline)

End call password:

Code:

Did you use the password/code?

Yes

No

When did you make the call?

Date:

Time:

Please give the number you used to make the call from: Landline..... Mobile.....

Appendix 3 – Mystery shoppers feedback form

How do you feel the call handler dealt with your call?

- 1) They were polite and courteous Yes No Not sure
- 2) They appeared rude and/or disinterested Yes No Not sure
- 3) They treated me with respect Yes No Not sure

Please write any comments here:

- 4) They listened and responded appropriately Yes No Not sure
- 5) They genuinely wanted to help me Yes No Not sure
- 6) I had enough time to explain my concerns fully-
I did not feel rushed. Yes No Not sure

Please write any comments here:

Appendix 3 – Mystery shoppers feedback form

7) I felt the call handler understood me and my query Yes No Not sure

8) I was provided with relevant information and advice. Yes No Not sure

Please write any comments here:

10) They used jargon or language that I did not understand Yes No Not sure

11) They spoke clearly and audibly Yes No Not sure

Where relevant:-

12) Were you given a clear explanation of what would happen next and how the Police would deal with the information or report you have given ? Yes No Not sure

Please write any comments here:

Appendix 3 – Mystery shoppers feedback form

13) Please rate the following statements

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Overfall, the call handler showed an awareness and understanding of disability and / or Deaf issues | | | | | |
| The call handler had a good working knowledge of disability and/or Deaf issues | | | | | |
| I am happy with the outcome of my phonecall | | | | | |