Staffordshire County Council

Summary of responses to the annual discretionary fee review for 2026/2027

Appendix 2a: care services in people's homes and the community

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Methodology and responses

1. A survey was sent out to all 260 providers of care services in people's homes and the community who are contracted by Staffordshire County Council. This included 11 types of services.

2. The survey went live on the 03/11/2025 and closed on the 30/11/2025. The response rate was regularly reviewed throughout this period. Further reminders were sent as required and to align with the Chancellor's autumn budget announcements. Alongside this, reminders were sent out by Staffordshire Care Association (SARCP) to their members.

3. 94 individual responses were received, and overall response rate of 36%. Responses by type of service are shown in Figure 1, with the response rate by type of service in Table 1.

Figure 1: responses by type of service

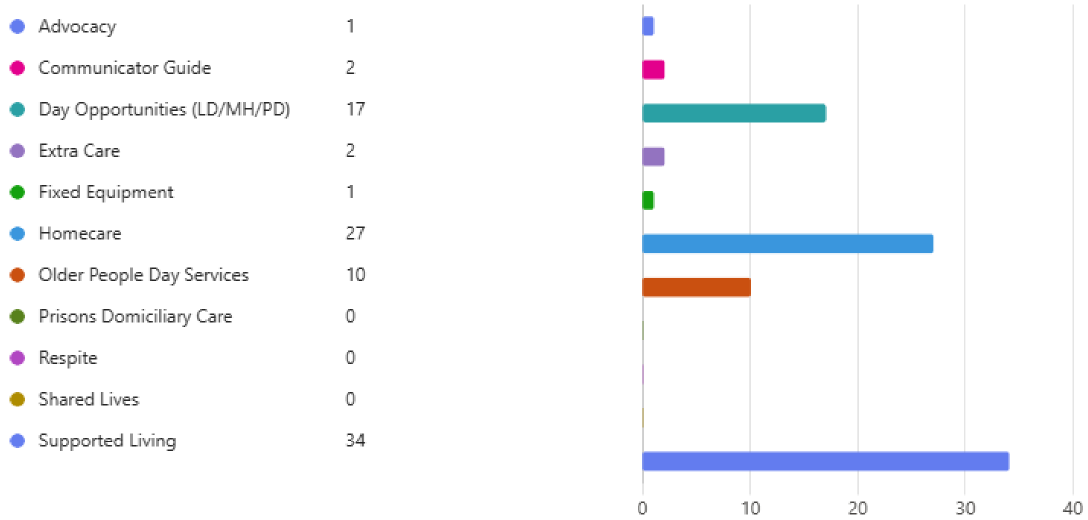


Table 1: response rate by type of service

Type of service	Response rate
Advocacy	100%
Communicator Guide	100%
Day opportunities - working age adults	48%
Extra care	67%
Fixed equipment	100%
Home care	28%
Day opportunities – older people	29%
Prison domiciliary care	0%
Respite	0%
Shared Lives	0%
Supported Living	40%

4. The client group and district served by the care providers who responded is shown in Figures 2 and 3, noting that care providers may serve more than one client group or district.

Figure 2: client group served by responding care providers

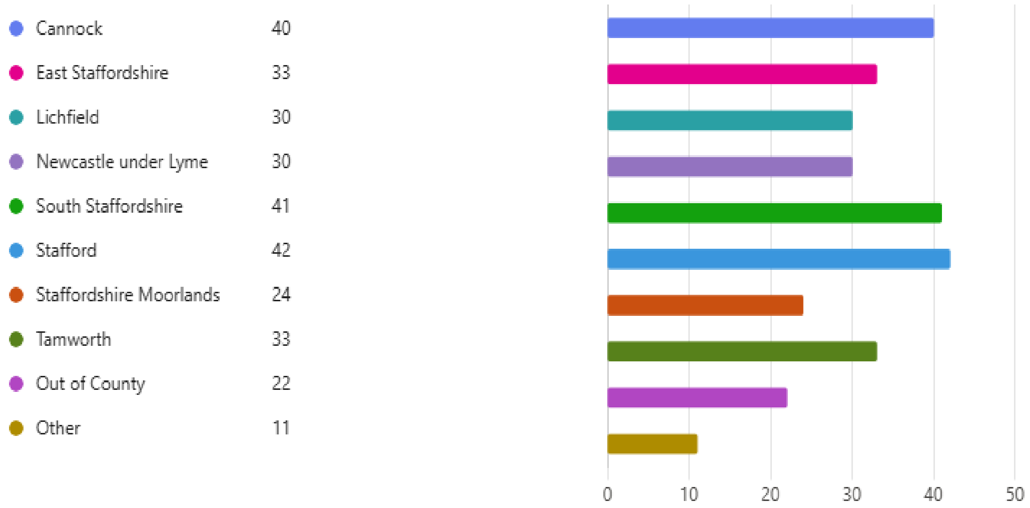
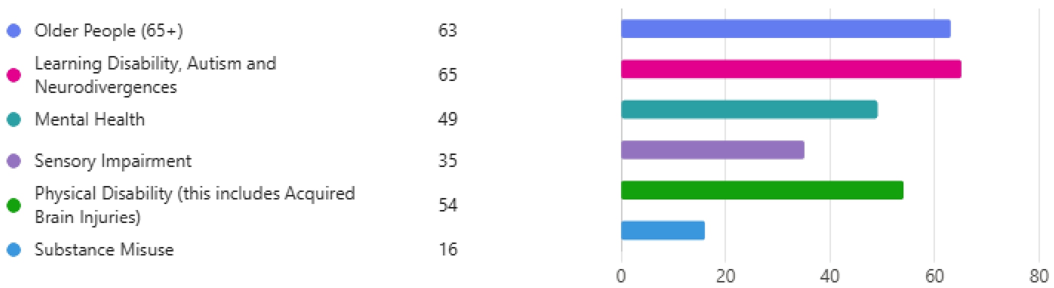


Figure 3: district served by responding care providers



Funding of services

5. Care providers were asked how their services were funded. The overall results are shown in Table 2, with further details of the source of funding by type of service in Figures 4-6. These indicate that the Council is the principal source of funding for most types of service.

Table 2: source of funding

Source of funding	Proportion of clients with this source of funding		
	Average	Highest	Lowest
Staffordshire County Council	58%	100%	0%
Self-funders	10%	80%	0%
NHS or other local authority	20%	99%	0%

6. Note that care providers may not be aware where clients are funded by both Staffordshire County Council and the NHS and therefore the share of Staffordshire County Council funding may be an overestimate. The Extra Care proportion of clients funded by the NHS or another local authority is influenced by one out of county care provider who returned a figure of 48%.

Figure 4: proportion of clients with Staffordshire County Council funding by type of service

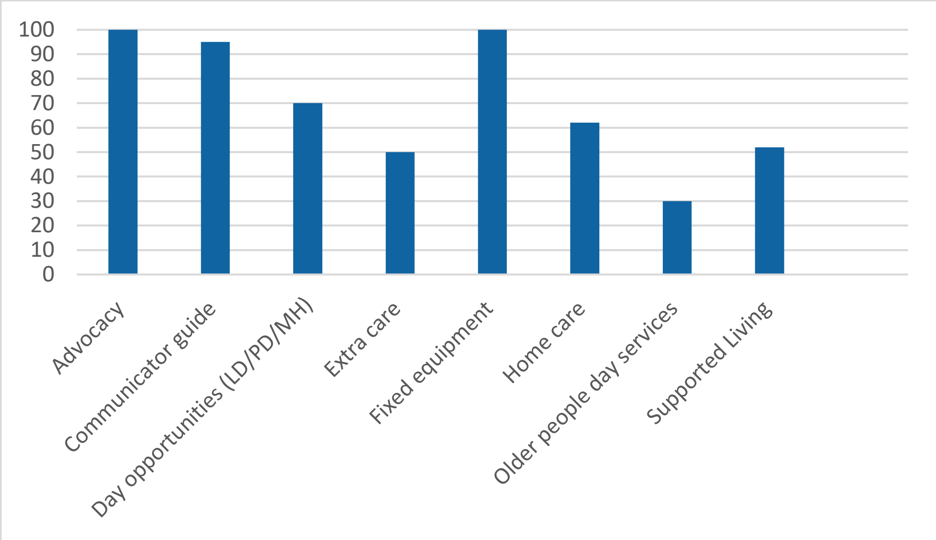


Figure 5: proportion of clients self-funding by type of service

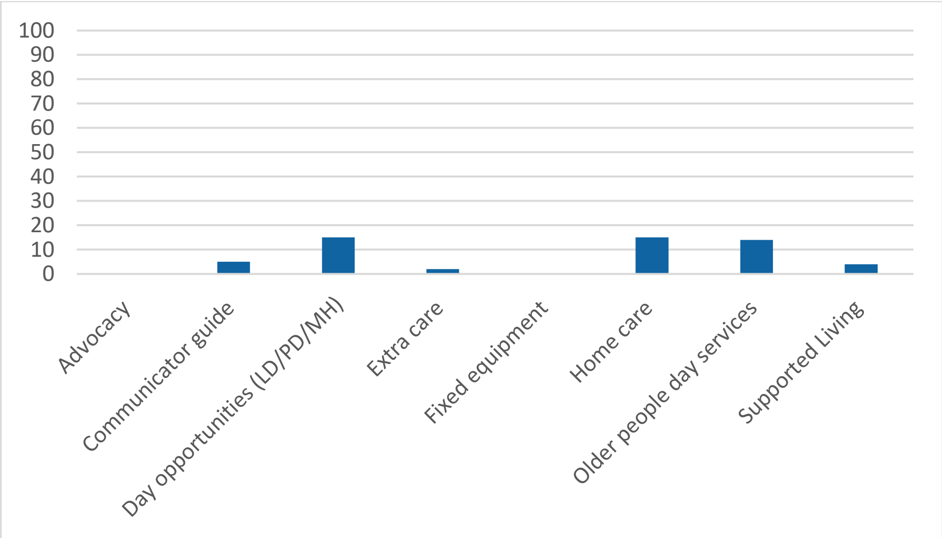
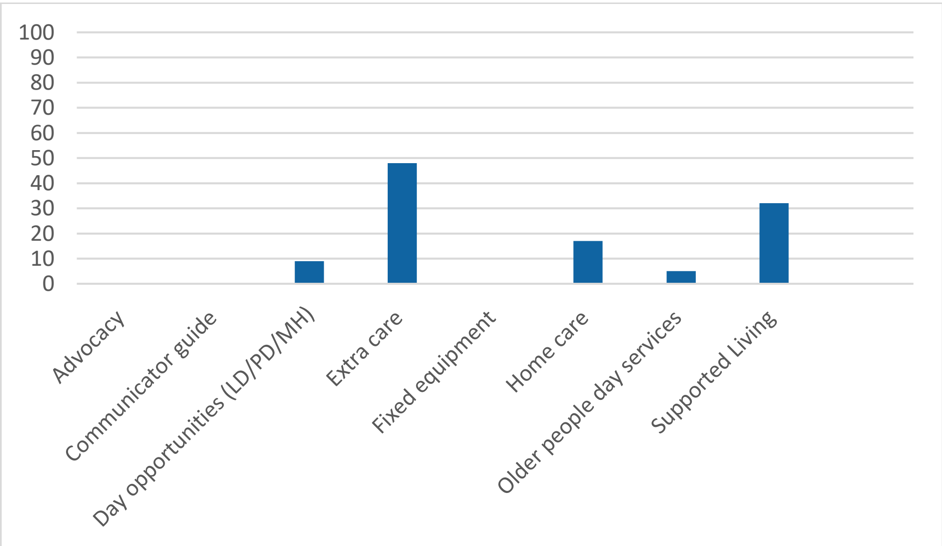


Figure 6: proportion of clients with NHS or other local authority funding by type of service



Business model

7. Care providers were asked about their profit margin assumptions. The results indicated an overall average profit margin assumption of 15% across the 8 types of service. 63% of all care providers responded that their profit margin was 10% or below; 24% that their profit margin was 20% or over.

Financial pressures

8. Care providers were asked to rank their financial pressures for the 2026/27. The results indicated that National Living Wage and National Insurance contributions were the top two concerns, followed by recruitment and retention, inflation, insurance, auto enrolment (pensions) and the use of agency staff, as shown in Figure 7. Note that unlike 2025/26 there will be no changes to National Insurance thresholds or rates for 2026/27 so the basis of these concerns is unclear.

Figure 7: financial pressures ranked by care providers

Staffing

9. Care providers were asked how many staff they employed. The results, as shown in Table 3, may reflect the whole organisation rather than the number of staff specifically working in Staffordshire. Outliers were excluded from the calculation of averages.

Table 3: number of staff employed

Type of service	Average number of staff (headcount)	Average number of full time equivalent
Advocacy	39	39
Communicator guide	126	78
Day opportunities - working age adults	16	9
Extra care	77	70
Fixed equipment	60	58
Home care	83	34
Day opportunities – older people	42	27
Supported living	530	393

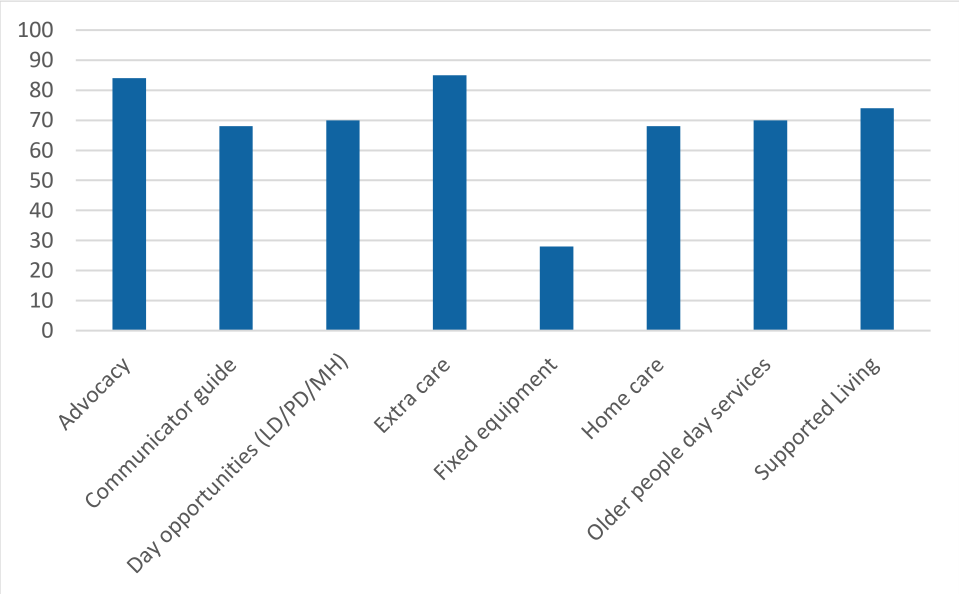
10. Care providers were asked what proportion of staff are paid between £12.21 - £12.71 per hour. The results showed a wide range between individual care providers and types of service with an overall average of around half. Responses by type of service shown in Table 4. The assumption is that no staff are paid below £12.21 as this 2025/26 National Living Wage.

Table 4: proportion of staff earning between £12.21 and £12.71

Type of service	Proportion of staff paid between £12.21 and £12.71 per hour
Advocacy	5%
Communicator guide	24%
Day opportunities - working age adults	63%
Extra care	70%
Fixed equipment	0%
Home care	51%
Day opportunities – older people	62%
Supported living	54%

11. Care providers were asked what proportion of their total costs were staffing costs. Again the results showed a wide range between individual care providers and types of service with an overall average of around three quarters. Responses by type of service shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: proportion of total costs that are staffing costs



Other issues reported to the survey

12. Care providers also offered the following feedback:

- Adequate fees are important to ensure the quality and consistency of services and positive outcomes for the people they support.

- Sustaining workforce recruitment and retention remains challenging due to wage competition with other sectors.
- Day opportunities care providers highlighted that the increased cost of maintaining buildings should be considered within the fee review process.
- One home care provider felt that the Council's fee uplifts in recent years have been relatively generous and have allowed the sector to offer competitive pay for staff.
- One Supported Living reported concerns that the hourly rate and sleeping night rates were unsustainable.

Care provider letters

13. In addition to the survey the Council received 26 letters from care providers. These requested fee uplifts ranging from 3.9% - 38.5% across services in people's homes and the community as well as care homes.

Risk, issues and next steps

Identified risk/issues	**Next Steps**
No responses to survey from shared lives, prisons domiciliary care or respite services.	Council to work with and continue to communicate with the market to increase future engagement and participation.
Lower response rate from home care providers and a higher response from Supported Living providers.	Council to work with and continue to communicate with the market to increase future engagement and participation.
Increased cost of maintaining buildings.	Council to continue to work with day opportunities care providers to understand and where possible mitigate property costs.