

Feedback from Orkney Opinions Survey 2: October / November 2017

Our second survey issued in October asked for thoughts about residential care and care at home services, ideas on making careers in care services more attractive, development in the countryside, imagining life in Orkney in the future, island-proofing and the islands deal. The survey was issued to 151 members, of whom 56 responded, representing a return rate of 37.1%.

We hope you find some of the following information arising from the survey interesting.

Question: Why do you think that residential care for older people appeared as the highest priority?

- Majority of respondents felt this was high on the priorities because people believe Orkney has a large ageing population.
- A further common theme was that people felt that families were less able (for a variety of reasons including space in the home, financial, work commitments) to care for relatives.
- Interestingly, there was almost equal opposing opinion on the interaction and contact available in residential care versus remaining at home.

Question: How do you think that we can make a career in care services more attractive?

- Many respondents believe that increasing or ensuring a decent rate of pay for carers would make the sector more attractive.
- The majority of respondents believed that there should be increased training and qualifications available for staff and prospective staff.
- Job satisfaction was on many people's minds – and having enough time to see their clients and not feel rushed.
- General working conditions, benefits and the culture within the sector were thought to be an important factor – and alongside this, the management and administration of the staff and facilities were felt to be an important factor.

Question: How do you feel about more care services being delivered by other providers?

- Overall the feeling was a neutral one – with most respondents agreeing that if the service and care provided was at least the same (if not better) than that provided by OHAC it would not be a problem – however a number of respondents would prefer that the service was controlled by OHAC.
- Concerns were of course raised, particularly in relation to the quality of care that would be provided by a company attempting to raise a profit.

Question: In Orkney, do you think we have the right balance between allowing new development in the countryside (housing and business), and maintaining the open countryside (farmland and natural environment)?

66% Yes, 34% No.

When asked to imagine life in Orkney in 2028, and what you might like to see happen by that time:

- Top desire was improved management of tourism, to get the best out of Orkney's sites of interest in a way that is beneficial for the local economy and residents and gives tourists a good experience.
- Next top was broadband or digital communication provision and services.
- Other items with multiple respondents were better integrated transport links, fixed links between the isles, low cost travel and enough home carers.

On the proposal of merging the Council and NHS Orkney into a single public authority:

There was a leaning towards the proposal being worth investigating although a number of respondents felt they didn't know enough about it to form an opinion. The protection of services and search for efficiency was top of the wishlist in relation to this proposal, with some feeling that the larger the organisation the less efficient it tended to be.

Progress from Orkney Opinions Survey 1

In the first Orkney Opinions Survey, group members were asked for their views as part of a project to improve the Council's website. The aim is to modernise the current design, enable more online interaction with the Council, and ensure the site is readily accessible on a wide variety of devices.

We put forward two designs for consideration by the group. Both are aimed at making the user experience simpler, clearer and faster – and making it as easy as possible to access the information and services people need. One of the designs includes a moving banner of images to give it a distinctly Orkney feel, and this was favoured by the majority of group members who responded to the survey.

OIC staff then took part in a similar survey – which produced similar results. The Council's senior management team has decided to approve the option preferred by the Orkney Opinions group and staff as the new design for the Council website. The new-look website should be in place later this year – many thanks to everyone who took part in the survey.