

# Improving Client Experience During START Assessments

Robert\* is a local resident who has complex health issues which now requires him to have assistance when travelling.

Robert applied to Wokingham Borough Council to see if he was entitled to any funding for a carer to assist him when he had to travel on public transport. He was told he would have to be assessed by the 'START' team. He found the subsequent experience to be stressful and lacking in information.

*I found the whole process was lacking in information to me as the client, it didn't focus on my primary issue which is support when travelling alone. The experience didn't feel person centred at all. In fact, I found it very stressful because I didn't fully understand what was going on and at times I found the assessment demeaning.*

*Robert*

Healthwatch met Robert to discuss his experience. The START team called Robert and arranged a day to visit. Robert requested they only send one person as he would find it stressful if there were several people in attendance. Robert did not receive a letter saying who would be visiting or explaining the process or how long the process would take. On the day of visit a lady arrived and said they would be assessing him in the home doing various tasks, 4 times a day for 4 days. Robert challenged this and it was subsequently reduced to twice a day for 3 days. Robert also didn't understand why the assessment was focussed solely on his home when his real difficulty was travelling alone on transport. During the initial visit another member of the START team knocked on the door and when opened walked through to living room without introducing himself. When challenged the person identified himself as manager at START. He was reminded that they had agreed only one assessor at a time would be present, this was accepted and the manager left. On the next visit a different assessor came and a family member of Robert saw they ticked a box stating 'OK with Glasses'. Robert is registered as blind as he only has partial vision. They assessed him cooking a microwave meal amongst other things. Some of the questions he was asked were very 'closed' in nature, rather than 'open' questions where he could explain his full experience when doing a task. Robert didn't fully understand why he was being assessed in that way. At the end of the process Robert was not given any information about what would happen next other than the START team would be in contact at some point with a decision.

\* note - not individuals real name



enquiries@  
healthwatchwokingham.co.uk



@HW Wokingham  
Borough 61



0118 418 1 418



Healthwatch  
Wokingham Borough

This page is intentionally left blank