

# Ending 15-minute care



# 1.

## Key findings



- **60% of local authorities** now commission 15-minute visits.\*
- The proportion of visits which lasted 15 minutes or less has **risen by 15% over the past five years.**
- Some local authorities deliver **more than three quarters of their care visits in 15 minutes.**
- 15% of councils deliver more than a quarter of all of their care visits to disabled and older people in 15 minutes or less.
- **96% of those who expressed an opinion agree** that disabled or older people have the right to receive social care visits that allow for enough time for care workers to give the appropriate support to do everyday things.
- Of those who expressed an opinion, **93% of people agree that a 15-minute visit is not long enough** to support a disabled or older person to do everyday things like wash, dress and get out of bed in the morning.
- Of those who expressed an opinion, **78% agree that 15-minute care visits deprive disabled and older people of their dignity.**
- Of those who expressed an opinion, **67% of people disagree that 15-minute care visits are an effective way of providing social care** to a great number of disabled or older people.\*\*

**75%**

Some local authorities deliver more than 75% of their care visits in 15 minutes.

\* Based on 63 authorities that were able to tell us how many 15-minute visits they delivered

\*\* ComRes polling of 2,025 British adults, conducted between 6 and 8 September 2013. Data were weighted to be representative of all adults aged 18+. For each statement, the base does not include people who selected “Don’t know”

## 2.

# Foreword



## Every day, over a million disabled and older people in the UK receive personal care.

Without this care, many wouldn't be able to eat, go to the toilet, wash or get dressed. Good care helps people with the very fundamentals of life.

None of us want to imagine what life would be like if we couldn't wash, eat breakfast or go to the toilet. But tragically, that is the reality for some in today's Britain.

More and more of our councils are now buying flying 15-minute visits for people who need this fundamental care.

Yet it is clear that 15 minutes simply does not allow enough time to deliver good quality care.

If those of us who don't have a disability take 40 minutes to get up, get dressed, eat and go the toilet, how can we justify 15-minute visits for others?

Disabled people shouldn't be going thirsty just so they can go to the toilet.

The government has a once in a generation opportunity to get people the support they need. The Care Bill currently going through Parliament is the biggest change to care in 50 years. But as it stands, it will do nothing to end the scandal of flying 15-minute visits.

At Leonard Cheshire Disability, we have done what we can to help end these short visits.

We have committed to stop bidding for contracts that require them, except in very limited circumstances - for example where a person requests a short visit to receive a daily injection.

It is now time for government to use the Care Bill to stop this practice. In five years we want to see a decrease in the number of short visits and an increase in real, quality care. It is the least that disabled people deserve.

We hope you agree.

Clare Pelham  
**Chief Executive**

### 3.

## Research methods



### The findings of this report are based on the following research methods:

- A request for information made to 152 English local authorities, one English Primary Care Trust, and one English Clinical Commissioning Group under the Freedom of Information Act. We received 137 responses which form the basis of all Freedom of Information related findings in this report.
- A nationally representative ComRes poll of 2025 British adults, including 456 adults with a disability or health condition. The full tables for these results will be available from the ComRes website in line with British Polling Council guidelines.
- A number of qualitative interviews and brief surveys undertaken with care workers, disabled and older people in receipt of 15-minute care visits, and family members of those in receipt of 15-minute care visits.

## 4.

### What are 15-minute visits?

---

Every day, many disabled and older people receive personal care. Without this care, many of these people wouldn't be able to wash, go to the toilet, eat or get dressed. Good care helps people with the very fundamentals of life.

But all too often, people are not getting the help they need. Recent research found that 40% of disabled people receiving care said that social care services don't meet their basic needs like washing, dressing or getting out of the house.\*

Some local authorities are now buying flying 15-minute visits for people who need this care. Yet it is clear that 15 minutes simply does not allow enough time to deliver good quality care.

If a carer doesn't even have time to take off their coat, how can they possibly have time to support a disabled person with any kind of dignity through their morning routine of washing, dressing, preparing breakfast and getting ready to face the day?

Local authorities have legal duties to provide personal care to disabled and older people who need it. But more and more are providing these short visits even when they have assessed someone as in need and where they have a legal duty to provide care.

### How many 15-minute visits are there?

**60% of local authorities\*\*** who answered our FOI request used 15-minute visits, and the proportion of visits which lasted 15 minutes or less has **risen by 15% over the past five years.\*\*\***

At the most extreme end of the scale, some local authorities deliver **more than three quarters of their care visits in 15 minutes**, and 15% deliver more than a quarter of all of their care visits to disabled and older people in 15 minutes or less.

\*\* Freedom of information research. 62 local authorities were able to provide the proportion of 15-minute visits, including those which provided no 15-minute visits.

\*\*\* Freedom of information research, based on responses from 62 local authorities.

\* The Other Care Crisis: Making Social Care Funding Work for Disabled Adults in England, Leonard Cheshire Disability, National Autistic Society, Mencap, Scope and Sense, 2013.

# 60%

60% of local authorities who answered our FOI request used 15-minute visits.

## 5.

### What does the public think?



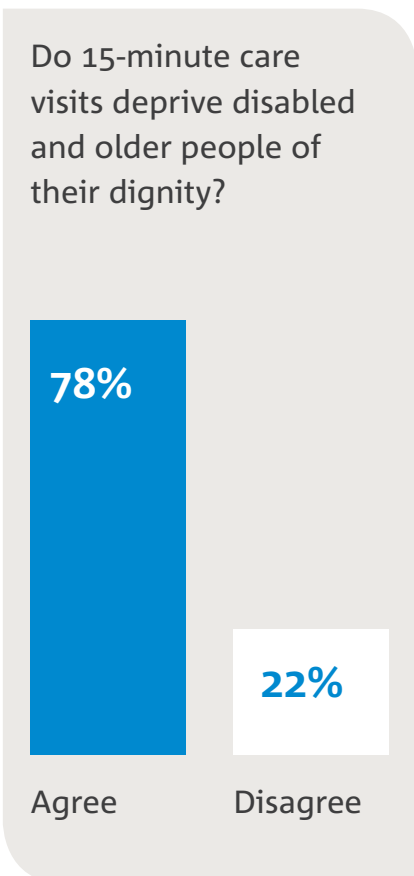
According to our recent ComRes Survey, **96% of those who expressed an opinion agree** that disabled or older people have the right to receive social care visits that allow for enough time for care workers to give the appropriate support to do everyday things.

The case for the government is clear – there is strong evidence to suggest that the public would support an end to short visits which deprive disabled and older people of their dignity, and it is up to the government to make that change.

- Of those who expressed an opinion, **93% of people agree that a 15-minute visit is not long enough** to support a disabled or older person to do everyday things like wash, dress and get out of bed in the morning, and **67% strongly agree**.

- Of those who expressed an opinion, **78% agree that 15-minute care visits deprive disabled and older people of their dignity**, compared with only 22% who disagree.

- Of those who expressed an opinion, **67% of people disagree that 15-minute care visits are an effective way of providing social care** to a great number of disabled or older people.\*



\* ComRes polling of GB 2,025 adults, conducted September 2013. For each statement, the base does not include people who selected “Don’t know”.

## 6.

### The impact of 15-minute visits



Flying 15-minute care visits can mean that care workers are asked to provide personal care, including supporting people to dress, bathe, eat and go to the bathroom, in a timeframe that does not allow dignity or respect.

“ It is unreasonable to expect care workers to do toilet visits, medications, meals and more in 15-minutes”

*Care worker*

To find out how long these activities take the average person, we asked 2025 adults in Great Britain how long it took them to make a cup of tea, prepare a meal, go to the toilet, get dressed, wash themselves and make the bed – all activities that some disabled people and care workers are asked to squeeze into 15 minutes – on an average day.

Not only were none of the adults able to complete all of the activities in 15-minutes, but also the average time taken to complete all of them was **at least 40 minutes and 10 seconds**.

Even for the three activities people rated as having the biggest impact on their lives – going to the toilet,

washing themselves and getting dressed – the average time taken to complete those activities was at least **17 minutes and 40 seconds** for non-disabled people, and at least **19 minutes and 54 seconds** for disabled people.\*

That people in need of support are expected to choose between going thirsty and going to the bathroom in their 15-minute care slots is shocking – and cannot be reconciled with disabled and older people’s right to dignity and respect.

“ In 15 minutes, I have to get a frail older person into their nightwear, give them a cup of tea, give them their appropriate medication, turn the bed back, lights on and all curtains closed.”

*Care worker*

We are calling for an end to 15-minute care visits, to ensure that disabled people receive the support they need to live with dignity, and it is a call that the public strongly support.

\* ComRes polling of GB 2,025 adults, conducted September 2013. For each statement, the base does not include people who selected “Don’t know”.

“

*In 15 minutes, I have to get a frail older person into their nightwear, give them a cup of tea, give them their appropriate medication, turn the bed back, lights on and all curtains closed.”*

## 7.

# What do disabled people think?



As part of our research we asked 456 people with a disability or a health condition – those who are most likely to have experience of home care, and to be familiar with the realities of 15-minute visits – what their views were on the issue.

Unsurprisingly, being familiar with the additional challenges posed by being disabled, the endorsement for more investment in personal care, and an end to 15-minute care visits, was even louder:

- **98% of disabled people who expressed an opinion agree that the government should do more to support disabled or older people.**
- **87% of disabled people who expressed an opinion disagree that the government is spending too much on disabled or older people.**

- **94% of disabled people who expressed an opinion agree that 15-minutes isn't long enough for care visits.**

- **96% of disabled people who expressed an opinion agree that disabled or older people have the right to receive social care visits which allow for enough time for care workers to give the appropriate support to do everyday things.\***

We also spoke to disabled people in receipt of 15-minute care visits, and they re-emphasised all of these messages:

“ 15-minutes is not enough for people to do their job properly, leaving...people at risk.”

“ It is not long enough. What needs doing may be met, but no social interaction at all. You feel let down and deflated.” \*\*

*Disabled people*

# 94%

94% of disabled people who expressed an opinion agree that 15 minutes isn't long enough for care visits.

\* ComRes polling of 2,025 GB adults, conducted September 2013. For each statement, the base does not include people who selected “Don't know”.

\*\* Disabled people from the Derbyshire Community Support Services, and Derbyshire Individual Support Services, Chesterfield.



## 8.

### What do care workers think?

Of those who expressed an opinion, **94% of British adults agree that 15-minute care visits must be frustrating for care workers**, as they cannot do their job properly.\*

When we spoke to care workers who were delivering 15-minute care visits, they strongly agreed – and raised many concerns about the impact 15-minute visits could have on disabled people’s quality of life.

They described 15-minute care visits as:

“  
**15-minute ‘flying’ visits generally confuse and upset people with mental and physical problems. There is no time to reassure them and ensure they know we are only there to help”**

“  
**I do not believe we are caring for anyone at this time scale”**

“  
Very unfair on service users, feels they are being rushed and mistakes could be more likely to happen. [We] can’t give the care and attention they deserve.”

“  
Insufficient time to do anything properly, cannot talk – which many people need more than other help in some ways.”

“  
I do not believe we are caring for anyone at this time scale.”

“  
15-minute ‘flying’ visits generally confuse and upset people with mental and physical problems. There is no time to reassure them and ensure they know we are only there to help.”

#### **Care workers**

Care workers also had to choose on a day-to-day basis whether to stay longer and provide the care that disabled people need, or whether to be on time to their next appointment:

“  
[I] frequently go over, as 15 minutes to help someone change, give meds, help to bed, possibly empty commode and change pad is clearly impossible.”

“  
I feel pressured not to run over the time and the person is not getting long enough as I’m rushing about to try and fit everything in. I normally run over 15 minutes.”

“  
[I ran over time] on many occasions, people are not robots and neither are staff. Service users need respect and dignity and not every morning or every visit goes the same.”

\* ComRes polling of 2,025 GB adults, conducted September 2013. The base does not include people who selected “Don’t know”.

## 8.

### What do care workers think?

*continued*



“ It is not possible [to do the job in 15 minutes]. You run over time and have to go in early to get the job done properly. In effect, do the job in your own time.”

*Care workers*

When we asked what things the government should do to provide better care to older or disabled people, care workers told us government should:

“ Get rid of the 15-minute call.”

“ Minimum call out of 45 minutes for care at home.”

“ Would like the government to give the residents and care workers better support.”

*Care workers*

It is clear that everyone – from the general public, to disabled people, to care workers with experience of 15-minute visits - can see the problems with 15-minute care.

That is why we are calling for the government to act now, and ensure that 15-minute care visits are ended.

## 9.

### What about the money?



**Given the current public finances, governments need to understand the cost of any proposed policy change.**

What is crucial is for government and the public to recognise that money spent on care is an investment, not just expenditure.

One third of disabled people who use social care are of working age\*. Many of them would be able to work, avoid frequent visits to hospital and participate more fully in society if they received the right kind of care.

So the government and local authorities are likely making false savings by cutting down on the support they provide to disabled people, and in many cases they will end up paying more – in lost tax revenues, increased hospital bills, and more judicial reviews – as a result of reducing the available care.

It makes both economic and social sense to make a real sustained investment in care - and to bring to an end 15-minute care visits, which deprive disabled people of their dignity and do not provide the support people need to fully engage with their community and play an active part in the world.

\* The Other Care Crisis: Making Social Care Funding Work for Disabled Adults in England, Leonard Cheshire Disability, National Autistic Society, Mencap, Scope and Sense, 2013.

## 10.

### What has the government said so far?

---

**The Care Bill is currently working its way through Parliament, and will bring with it the most comprehensive overhaul of the social care system in the UK since the 1940s.**

The Care Bill is an important and welcome piece of legislation that should help make care simpler, easier to navigate, and more accessible for the disabled and older people who need it the most.

However, we are deeply concerned that despite supportive words from Norman Lamb MP, the Care Services Minister, the bill as it stands will do nothing to reverse the increasing tendency to commission ever-shorter home care visits, many only 15 minutes long.

“As we set out earlier this year, we want to put an end to undignified care by the minute. We want care that is judged by the outcomes that matter to people receiving the care.”

“We know that some councils and care providers are leading the way, but there is still a long way to go. We will continue to work with care providers and people who use the services to bring an end to providing care that undermines people’s dignity and choice.”

“I am determined that collectively we develop commissioning skills so that providers are rewarded for improving health and well-being, promoting independence and increasing mobility.”

*Norman Lamb MP, Minister of State at the Department of Health*

These are all welcome words of support. But the government needs to act.

The Care Bill will be entering Report Stage in the House of Lords on 9 October, which will provide an excellent opportunity to amend the bill, and bring flying 15-minute care visits to an end.

That is why we are asking you to go to [www.lcdisability.org](http://www.lcdisability.org) to add your support to our campaign.

**11.**

## **What will happen next?**



### **7 October**

- We are handing in more than 2,500 postcards at Downing Street from disabled people and care workers from across the country, including many residential, supported living and home care support services run by Leonard Cheshire Disability.

### **9 October onwards**

- Report Stage and Third Reading in the House of Lords.

### **December 2013**


- Care Bill enters the House of Commons.

### **January 2014**

- Committee stage of the Care Bill in the House of Commons.

## 12.

### What you can do to help



#### You can help end 15-minute visits.

Go to [www.lcdisability.org](http://www.lcdisability.org) It will take a couple of minutes to pledge your support for the campaign.

Over the next couple of months our supporters will be contacting ministers and MPs to urge them to end these flying care visits.

If you or someone you love is suffering because of 15-minute visits, please send your story to [campaigning@lcdisability.org](mailto:campaigning@lcdisability.org). We all need to speak out about this scandal.

Leonard Cheshire Disability, and tens of thousands of disabled people across the UK would like to thank you for any support you can give to this campaign to bring an end to 15-minute care visits.

If you have any questions about the research, or would like any more information, please get in contact at [campaigning@lcdisability.org](mailto:campaigning@lcdisability.org) and we'll be happy to help.

Disabled and older people deserve decent care.

## 13.

### About us

---

#### At Leonard Cheshire Disability, we support thousands of disabled people every day.

We work in the UK and in 54 other countries across the globe. We know the value of good care – it can transform the lives of people who might otherwise feel their lives are hardly worth living.

With the right support, disabled and older people can play a full part in their communities, sometimes re-enter the workforce, and always live with dignity.

We support people with physical disabilities and long term health conditions, as well as their carers, families and friends.

We work for a society in which every person is equally

valued. We believe that disabled people should have the freedom to live their lives the way they choose - with the opportunity and support to live independently, to contribute economically and to participate fully in society.

We know that you can't provide real care in 15 minutes. That's why we are calling for an end to these flying visits.

Go to [www.lcdisability.org](http://www.lcdisability.org) to find out more about our work and support us with a donation.