

CABINET
22 OCTOBER 2020**A REVIEW OF DAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr A Hardman

Relevant Chief Officer

Strategic Director for People

Local Member(s)

None

Recommendations:

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care recommends that Cabinet:**
 - a) Notes the current day opportunity offer for people with a learning disability following changes made in consequence of Covid-19 pandemic;**
 - b) Approves commencement of a review of day opportunities for people with a learning disability which will take account of learning in response to the challenges presented by Covid-19, to ensure the offer is equitable in accordance with assessed eligible need, promotes independence and meets individual outcomes in the most efficient and cost effective way;**
 - c) Receives a report before April 2021 to update on the outcome of the review detailing the identified options for the delivery of building-based day op services; which support individuals with high/complex needs; and**
 - d) Receives a further report in Summer 2021 on the conclusion of the review detailing the identified options for the long-term delivery of community-based day opportunities.**

Background

2. As part of its duties under the Care Act 2014, the Council must meet the care and support needs of adults and the support needs of carers who are assessed as eligible under the Act's eligibility criteria. Eligible needs may be met by the provision of day opportunities to meet the adult's outcomes as identified in their needs assessment and will be recorded in their care and support plan.

3. There is a mixed market of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities within Worcestershire. Currently 207 people attend internally provided day opportunities

while around 300 people attend services provided by the external market. This equates to a split of 60% external / 40% internal although these numbers do include some people who attend a mixture of both internal and external services. An increasing number of people also access external day opportunities by arranging their own care using a Council-funded direct payment.

4. The Council has directly provided internal day opportunity provision for over 25 years through Resource Centres and Connect Services. Resource Centres operate Monday to Friday and provide a variety of activities for people with complex learning disabilities. Many of these activities are building based with some community-based activities planned according to individual needs and preferences. Support for individuals includes personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language support, behaviour support, psychology support and support to access the community.

5. Connect Centre Services operate Monday to Friday and they provide mainly community-based day opportunities to adults with less complex learning disabilities. This service provides support such as: access to employment/work experience, education and volunteering, personal care, meeting friends, computer/IT literacy support.

6. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there have been various developments in the provision of day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. This included Cabinet on the 15 November 2018, agreeing to close Wyre Forest Long Term Learning Disability Connect Service, permanently relocating Droitwich Long term Learning Disability Connect with Bromsgrove Long Term Learning Disability Connect and to separate out the Short Term Connect service from the Long Term Learning Disability Connect and moving it into alignment with the 3 Conversation Model social work approach. There was also a restructure within the teams aligned to these changes.

7. Following this decision, internal day opportunities have continued to operate with requests for support being made by the learning disability social work teams. The services have been well utilised, with only a small amount of capacity remaining in services: In Connect services there were 55-day placements available in the week across all of the services, with 292-day placements being used (meaning occupancy of around 84%). In Resource Centres there were 15-day placements available in the week across only 2 of the services, with 430-day placements being used (meaning occupancy of 97%). However, all practice changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and there is now a need to look at things afresh.

Following Covid 19

8. Council-provided Day Opportunities had to temporarily close in March 2020 due to the reduction in demand and the updated government guidance relating to Covid-19. This was in line with external providers who took the same approach. Despite having to close centres, staff continued to provide welfare checks, stayed in touch with families, provided support by collecting shopping and supported people out in the community. Day Centres, both internal and external have slowly began to reopen, albeit with limited capacity due to the Covid-19 protective measures requirements and social distancing restrictions.

9. It was decided to commence engagement, in early July, with a small cohort of individuals who use Council run day opportunities to learn from the experiences

throughout lockdown and consider more fully formed options for the future delivery of Day Opportunities. The engagement was individual based, to understand how changes as a result of Covid-19 have impacted on service users personally, and how to best help them to adapt and access relevant support as well as how day opportunities need to adapt in order to support them effectively. A summary of the engagement is below with a full report available in Appendix 1.

- Feedback was received from 43 people.
- Most feedback was via Parent/ Family Carer or support staff/carer.
- Overwhelming majority enjoyed their day service and could not think of any changes they would like to make.
- Most wished to return. However, approx. 15% expressed concern over safety issues for the service user and/or other vulnerable members of their family in respect of infection risks. These carers were happy for the person to remain at home for at least another month or more.
- Respite for Carers provided by day service was a major factor. Approximately 10% of carers had experienced severe difficulty during closure.
- Lack of physiotherapy input for some users was identified. This has caused deterioration in muscle tone and flexibility.
- Almost all service users have missed the company of friends and staff.
- They like the variety of opportunities offered and the chance to get out of the house.
- For some, day opportunities provide more autonomy and improve self-esteem.
- Many identified opportunities to be out in local communities as their most enjoyable pastime and the thing they missed most.
- Lack of stimulation in home setting has been a problem for approximately 40% of service users. This can be due to loneliness, isolation, difficulty in engaging, lack of support available to undertake activities, depression.
- Mental stimulation through opportunities for social interaction are extremely important for most service users.
- Physical activity is important for some but less so than mental stimulation.

10. As a result of this engagement with service users, a decision was made to re-open Resources Centres to prioritise supporting adults (and their carers) who have higher or more complex needs. Covid-19 restrictions have meant that the service hasn't been able to offer as many places as they could prior to the pandemic and it has worked closely with individuals, their families/carers to confirm arrangements.

11. For those people who receive support through our Connect Services, these buildings have not reopened. This is because there are limitations on the number of spaces due to Covid-19 restrictions and there is more potential to meet individuals' needs with external providers including through direct payments. In the meantime, the Council continues to work closely with service users and their carers to find solutions to best support their eligible needs.

12. Worcestershire County Council also provides day opportunity provision for a small number of individuals who reside in the County of Herefordshire. For these individuals, the Council will work their counterparts in Herefordshire Council to identify appropriate support in accordance with assessed need.

Day Opportunities Review

13. Following the changes to the Council's Day Opportunities provision, as a result of Covid-19, there is need to review the Council's long-term position in providing access to day service support both internally and externally in order to continue to meet assessed need. This will help meet the ambition of the Council's People Directorate to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible

14. The purpose of the Day Opportunities Review is to consider how the Council may continue to meet assessed eligible need in the most efficient and cost-effective way that promotes independence, social inclusion and positive outcomes for individuals and carers. The Council's preferred approach is to move to the position where internal day opportunities will only be provided where there isn't the capacity or capability within the external market to meet eligible need. The proposed review will explore and test this approach. Any proposals affecting the long-term future of internal day opportunities will be consulted upon with all stakeholders before Cabinet is invited to make the final decision. There will be several stages to the review all underpinned by engagement with service users and their families/carers.

- Review individuals and their carers assessed need to focus on how day service support can best improve outcomes
- Ensure access to day opportunities is focused on meeting eligible need and applied equitably
- Assess the capacity and capability of the external market, taking account of the impact of Covid-19 to meet individuals' assessed need and improve outcomes
- Work with external providers to increase the availability of provision to meet need and improve outcomes
- Promote and encourage the take up of direct payments to access day service support
- Develop recommendations for the future delivery of day opportunities to inform a future report to Cabinet.
- The review will also take into account financial and value for money implications

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

15. As part of its duties under the Care Act 2014, the Council must meet assessed eligible needs for those people in Worcestershire with a Learning Disability who are eligible for care and support. The Council funds a wide range of day services and opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, currently commissioned from two types of provision – from external providers, through a Dynamic Purchasing System contract and services provided internally by the Council's Adult Social Care Provider Services.

16. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown both internal and external day services were required to temporarily close in March 2020. To date, the Council has not been required to exercise its powers and implement Care Act easements as set out in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in respect of any of its duties, including its duty to meet eligible need. This means that the Council has a duty to continue to meet eligible needs during the Covid-19 pandemic until such time as a decision is taken to implement any of the easements. With the temporary closure of day opportunities and the limited reopening of some Resource Centres due to Covid-19 restrictions, this has meant that the Council has been required to look at different ways

to meet eligible needs during the pandemic and it now wishes to take stock and review its internal provision to ensure that services can continue to be delivered, to meet eligible needs during the pandemic and in the longer-term.

17. The Council's 2020/21 budget for the provision of internal day opportunities is £3.768 million, of which c£0.6 million relates to central recharges including costs such as HR, Legal and Finance support. In addition to the spend on internal provision, the Council funds the costs for transporting individuals at an annual value of c£1.5 million. The Council also has a budget of £2.8 million for provision within the external day service market. All aspects of spend are included in scope of this review.

18. There are 121 full time equivalents currently working within the Council operated Day Opportunities (148 headcount).

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

19. A **joint impact assessment (JIA)** screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations and a full assessment will be completed to form the recommendations for longer-term plans for the delivery of day opportunities. Although there may be changes to the provision for current service users, the focus will still be on meeting assessed care needs so impact will be minimalised. The screening report is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Day Services Engagement - July 2020

Appendix 2 – Joint Impact Assessment

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for People) In the opinion of the proper officer there are no background papers in support of this report.