

**CABINET**  
**4 FEBRUARY 2021****A REVIEW OF DAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS WITH  
LEARNING DISABILITIES**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr A I Hardman

**Relevant Chief Officer**

Strategic Director for People

**Recommendation:**

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care recommends that Cabinet:**
  - a) notes the findings of the first phase of the day opportunities review as summarised in paragraph 12 and outlined in detail in the full report in Appendix 1;**
  - b) approves the commencement of the second phase of the review as outlined in paragraph 15; and**
  - c) receives a further report later in 2021 which will make recommendations on proposals for the future service delivery model and the commencement of any formal consultation if required.**

**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. Council-provided Day Opportunities temporarily closed in March to July 2020 and again during November 2020 due to the reduction in demand and the updated Government guidance relating to Covid-19. 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. Resource Centres have since re-opened, albeit with limited capacity due to the Covid-19 protective measures requirements and social distancing restrictions.

7. Following the changes to the Council's Day Opportunities provision, as a result of Covid-19, Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 22 October 2020 the 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.

8. 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 is not the capacity or capability within the external market to meet eligible need. The review aims to explore and test this approach. There will be several stages to the review all underpinned by engagement with service users and their families/carers. This report provides an update on the first phase of the review which focused on provision for individuals with more complex needs.

## **Day Opportunities Review**

9. The first phase of the review focused on the current offer for people using Council provided Resource Centres. The aim of this first phase was to inform the potential development of future day opportunities for people with complex needs, across the portfolio of community opportunities for people with learning disabilities in Worcestershire.

10. The review reiterates the importance of recognising that people with learning disabilities have a wide range of abilities and complexity of needs. It is for this reason that the review acknowledges that a service which meets the needs of one individual with a learning disability, may not meet the needs of everyone with learning disabilities and that all services should be delivered in line with the guidance contained within the Care Act 2014, as well as delivering the best outcomes for people with a disability promoting key principles:

- People should be treated as individuals

- People with learning disabilities should have equality of opportunity and be able to use the same services as other people
- People should have choice and be able to have some control over the services they use
- People should be part of the community where they live
- People should feel safe.

These principles should apply to all services irrespective of the level and complexity of need of the people using the services.

11. The review was managed by a project group that included a wide cross section of stakeholder representation. The activities carried out included in the review are listed below and a copy of the review report can be found at Appendix 1:

- Stakeholder engagement which took place with:
  - Council staff including; the Resource Centres Manager, the 4 Resource Team Leaders and the senior support workers.
  - Carers representatives from WAC Carers Group Meeting
  - Speakeasy Now who carried out an engagement exercise with service users and carers
- Two desktop exercises which included a review of all current service users in receipt of Resource Centre Day opportunities, to assess need and identify potential best-fit services for each individual. The desktop exercises were completed by staff within the Resource Centres and from information extracted from the Council's Learning Disability database, completed by commissioning and operational colleagues
- Analysis of the impact of Covid-19 and the temporary closure of internal day services, looking at occupancy levels and alternative service provision delivered throughout the pandemic
- Analysing the responses to engagement to capture potential new ways of working for further exploration
- Completion of a report capturing all the above information and identifying recommendations for next steps.

## Summary of findings

12. The section below summarises the findings from the review so far:

- There is a large proportion of service users (72%) using Resource Centres that are over the age of 40 and have been within the service for over 10 years highlighting several issues and considerations:
  - a) That the service user journey is limited and for some individuals the Resource Centre offer may become seen as a "service for life"
  - b) That the Council may be "over-providing" for some individuals calling into question whether the Council's practice is truly a strengths-based approach i.e. do all the individuals in the Resource Centres really need a full comprehensive specialist/complex provision with high staffing levels?
  - c) Due to the ageing profile of current service users, this proportion will ultimately reduce over the next few years and with low levels of younger people coming into the service, this will likely make the service financially unviable over the longer term

- d) There is a significant risk posed and a need to ensure that carers, who are older, are supported to plan for the future life arrangements of their family member
- There is a significant variance on the numbers of service users attending the 4 Resource Centres
- In terms of younger adults with a Learning Disability:
  - a) 127 individuals who are seventeen years old, and currently transitioning into Adult Services, have been identified as potentially requiring some sort of Day Care Opportunity
  - b) Currently there is a small proportion of younger adults within the Resource Centres, only 6 % are under twenty-four years old and 13% below thirty years old
- Through the review and desktop exercises it is quite clear that some individuals within the Resource Centres are deemed as being within the wrong service and whereby needs could be better met with either a combination of alternative services, maybe community-based or through the Connect Services, or through a designated provision more tailored to meet individual needs i.e. Growing Older with Learning Disabilities (GOLD). Only 14% of individuals were identified as being suitable for just a Resource Centre service and 45% of people were identified as being better supported through attending both the Resource Centres and the Connect services or a combination of services, meaning a more flexible approach may be required in ensuring individual needs are met in a person-centred way
- There is still a blurring of the service offers between the Resource Centres and Connect Centres due to referral processes and a lack of clarity about the service offers. This has identified that maybe the staffing levels and ratios of staff to individuals within the two types of provision are incorrect. Resource Centres and Connect Services have similar unit costs when you would expect the Resource complex/specialist service to have the higher costs due to the complexity of care and support needed
- The impact of Covid-19 has been extremely challenging for all concerned. However, this has had a significant influence on services being delivered in different ways throughout the pandemic. The positive side from the pandemic has meant that new ways of working have been explored and implemented meaning a shift in attitudes from key stakeholders, in considering new ways of working in the future, especially around potential new models for the building-based services
- Through the market analysis exercise it is clear that there is a lack of provision for individuals with a Profound and Multiple Learning Disability (PMLD) or complex needs in the external market. Only two external providers have been identified who specialise in supporting people with high needs and only in the Worcester and Droitwich area
- There is a heavy reliance on transport from individuals attending the Resource Centres, with an annual cost to the Council of approximately £632,000. There is a significant variation around costs of transport, per individual, ranging from; £11.67 per person per week to £135.00 per person per week. 28 of the Resource Centre

service users share transport with Connect service users, which again reinforces that there is a potential blurring between the two services, when you would expect a different level of transport provision to be required due to higher complex needs of those attending the Resource Centres

- A large proportion of the service users (99%) within the Resource Centres were identified as having health needs, yet only 5% of these individuals are receiving Continued Health Care Funding.

## **Recommendations and next steps**

13. This first phase of the review demonstrates that there is clearly a need for the Council to continue to provide a Resource Centre/building-based offer that meets the needs of individuals with more complex needs. However, there is evidence that improvements and changes need to be made to ensure that individuals are receiving the most appropriate services to meet their assessed eligible needs in line with the Council's Statutory Duty. There is also evidence that the Council needs to plan for the longer term taking into account the needs of young adults moving into the service and the ageing population of both service users and their families/carers.

14. Therefore, it is recommended that Cabinet endorses the focus of the next stage of the review as summarised in paragraph 15 and a further report is received later in 2021 which will make recommendations for the future service delivery model and the commencement of any formal consultation if required.

15. The next stage of the review will consider in more detail the following:

- To agree an approach in engaging with service users and their families/carers to consider, in a co-productive way, the long-term and future "offer" of the Resource Centres in ensuring an equitable and fair approach i.e. accessible to all ages across Worcestershire and a service that is fit for the future
- The difference between the Resource Centre, Connect Service offer and those offered within the external market, including referral processes, criteria and social worker practices
- Understand the make-up of the Connect Service users to further understand the blurring of services across the two types of services (Resource and Connect)
- A deeper understanding of why there is a significant gap in external providers being able or wanting to support individuals with higher needs/complex needs within a day service provision
- To review and consider the Growing Old with Learning Disabilities (GOLD) cohort of service users in both the Resource and Connect services to identify potential future service delivery options which could be more suitable and person-centred
- The variances across the four Resource Centres i.e. numbers of service users, unit costs etc
- Alternative/complementary options for specialist and complex services including a hub and spoke model, location of centres and transport options.

16. As identified, there is a clear need to understand the overall breakdown of the service users that are currently using the Connect Services to form a strategic overview

of all of the Council's internal day opportunity provision and to start identifying cohorts of individuals across the two services i.e. GOLD individuals.

17. Having the overall breakdown of all individuals across both services will allow the Council to start addressing the future "offer" of the Resource Centre, whilst ensuring the practice is strength-based for each individual, both presently and in the future.

18. Processes and practices will need to be explored to start understanding how the two internal Council services have become blurred over time in having individuals in potentially the wrong service due to the initial referral into the service and then how individuals have remained in services for a long time.

19. Future engagement will be critical in reassuring stakeholders their views will be listened to and in continuing with a co-design approach in considering potential future options.

20. Throughout the pandemic, staff, service users and carers have adapted and have started providing and receiving services in different ways which has been captured within the report. Many suggestions and ideas have been identified which would form the basis of the next stage of engagement in exploring those ideas further with staff, service users and carers themselves. The engagement would consider a variety of methods as identified within the report and be closely monitored and reviewed through the Communications and Engagement sub-group, already established in the initial phase of this review.

## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

21. 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.

22. 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 and November 2020 and again more recently in January 2021, due to national lockdowns. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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**

25. 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 minimised. The screening report is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

### **Supporting Information (available electronically)**

Appendix 1 – Day Services – Review of WCC Resource Centres  
Appendix 2 – Joint Impact Assessment

### **Contact Points**

County Council Contact Points  
County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report  
Name. Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director: Communities & People  
Tel: 01905 843658  
Email: [hperrott@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hperrott@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for People) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of Cabinet held on 22 October 2020