

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Review of Day Opportunities for Adults: Evidence Session 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This summary sheet is designed to support the first evidence session of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's review of day opportunities.

2. Accessing day opportunities

Referrals into services

- 2.1. Day opportunities that are run by, or commissioned by, the Council can be accessed following an assessment and referral by a Social Worker.
- 2.2. Alternatively, individuals with an assessed need will be offered the opportunity to access their personal budget as a direct payment. This allows people to use their budget to directly purchase opportunities from independent providers.

Travel

- 2.3. If, as part of their assessment, a social worker identifies that a person will need help to travel to and from a day service they can make a referral to the Community Transport team for support where appropriate.
- 2.4. Day services commissioned by the Council also have access to vehicles allowing them to provide transport for individuals where this is required.
- 2.5. People using a direct payment can use their budget to independently purchase transport.
- 2.6. Where appropriate the STEPs team offer travel training to individuals, helping them to develop skills and confidence with using publicly available transport options.

3. Information and promotion

- 3.1. Individuals with an assessed need will be supported by their social worker to consider what they want to gain through their use of day opportunities and review the available options to achieve this.
- 3.2. The Stockton Information Directory (www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org) provides information about local services including Council run day opportunities, services commissioned by the Council and opportunities provided by independent providers.
- 3.3. The Council's website provides some information about Council run services.
- 3.4. Most independent providers also manage their own websites and social media accounts (links to these can be found on the Stockton Information Directory).

4. User involvement and consultation

- 4.1. Service specific feedback is frequently collected by individual providers. Although approaches vary, this commonly includes using annual questionnaires, feedback boxes and discussions that take place as part of an individual's annual review.

- 4.2. Between September and November 2020 the Council completed a consultation with people who access day opportunities, their families/carers, social care professionals and service providers. This consultation found that among individuals who use day opportunities, half of the respondents expressed a preference for doing more things in their communities.¹
- 4.3. The Council are currently working on a strategy to ensure that individuals who use Adult Social Care can be actively involved in the design, development and review of its work. This includes an ambition to establish co-production groups that can support the future development of day opportunities.

5. Impact of COVID-19

- 5.1. In-light of Government guidance, access to day opportunities was reduced at the start of the first national lockdown. As a result, the Council worked with individuals to determine their needs and arrange alternative support where this was required.
- 5.2. Places within day services continued to be provided to individuals who would be at risk if the provision was withdrawn.
- 5.3. Throughout the pandemic services run by or commissioned by the Council remained in contact with people who would, under other circumstances, be accessing their venues. These teams developed new approaches to remotely support the wellbeing of individuals, this included offering online groups, wellbeing calls and in some instances face-to-face contact in the community.
- 5.4. People using a direct payment to purchase day opportunities were contacted by the Council during the pandemic to determine their needs. Individuals were advised that where their usual day services were closed, they could use their budget to access alternative social interactions. As a result, some people chose to use their budget in a way that would allow them to engage in activities with friends, family or other providers.
- 5.5. Appendix A provides more detailed information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on services that are run by or commissioned by the Council.

6. Alternative approaches to delivering day opportunities

Day Centres

- 6.1. Day centres have traditionally been central to the delivery of day opportunities. Research by Community Care in 2018 suggested that day centres played an important role in *“promoting wellbeing; preventing/delaying deterioration; supporting people to retain independence; supporting carers; providing information, and ensuring people in receipt of care and support have a positive experience”*.²
- 6.2. A growing body of national guidance has however emphasised the benefits of alternative approaches and the potential limitations of day centres. In particular, it has been suggested that day centres:
 - 6.2.1. Offer limited opportunities for promoting social inclusion or for people to develop relationships with people in their communities

¹ People accessing the Halcyon Centre were asked a different set out questions during the consultation which didn't include any questions about accessing more opportunities in the community. Further work is needed to identify if this response is representative of the views of people using the Halcyon Centre.

² Available at: [Day centres are important to older people - lack of money shouldn't jeopardise this \(communitycare.co.uk\)](http://communitycare.co.uk)

- 6.2.2. Have limited capacity to deliver personalised activities that support a person to live the life they want to live, relying instead on a 'menu' of options that can be practically delivered in a day centre setting
- 6.2.3. Can require people to travel outside of their local community potentially increasing reliance on community transport

Community-based models

6.3. Over recent decades national guidance has promoted the adoption of community-based models for delivering day opportunities.³ Under-pinning the community-based model is an emphasis on moving away from specialist day centres and instead prioritising approaches that:

- 6.3.1. Enable individuals to access community-based activities that are meaningful to them and which allow them to live the lives they want to live
- 6.3.2. Enable people to establish and grow relationship in their communities and support people to be active and valued members of their communities (whether this is a geographical community or community of interest)
- 6.3.3. Support people to develop the confidence, skills, relationships and abilities that can maximise their control over their lives and access to opportunities
- 6.3.4. Empower people who benefit from day opportunities to be equal partners in co-producing the design and delivery of local opportunities

6.4. Maximising the use of community resources, rather than running specialist buildings, can support efforts for greater sustainability but, more importantly, it offers a number of benefits for individuals, including:

- 6.4.1. Opening up a wider range of opportunities than can be provided in day centres, offering individuals more flexibility and choice
- 6.4.2. Creating opportunities for people to develop connections with other members of their community, enhancing personal networks and sources of natural support

6.5. Central to this approach is an emphasis on supporting people to access the mainstream and universal opportunities that are already available in their community and adopting a 'whole-life approach', moving away from only offering opportunities 9-5, Monday to Friday.

6.6. This model prioritises the Council's role as a facilitator, working in partnership with the wider community to unlock assets across our communities and build barrier free access to local opportunities.

6.7. Personalised solutions and individualised funding are key enabler for delivering community-based opportunities. By offering individuals control over how their personal budget is used, direct payments can play an important role in delivering more personalised options for people.

³ See for example [SCIE Knowledge review 14: Having a good day? A study of community-based day activities for people with learning disabilities](#); [SCIE Guide 16: Community-based day activities and supports](#); [Modernising day services toolkit \(peterbates.org.uk\)](#); [WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MODERNISING DAY SERVICES \(peterbates.org.uk\)](#)

- 6.8. Research by the Social Care Institute of Excellence has also recommended that, for people with learning disabilities, it is beneficial to move funding towards employment support.

Examples of community based day opportunities

- 6.9. The Council's STEPs team works with people with a range of disabilities to help them access mainstream and universal opportunities across the Borough. After identifying what opportunities are meaningful to a person, the STEPs team will support individuals to develop the confidence and skills that will enable to maximise their independence when accessing opportunities in the community.
- 6.10. Outlined below are examples of how projects in other areas have also worked to support the further development of community based models for delivering day opportunities:
- 6.10.1. **Gig Buddies:** Gig Buddies enables people with learning disabilities and/or autism to enjoy all the things going on in their community, especially live music. Gig Buddies is a project that pairs up people with and without learning disabilities (and/or autism) to be friends and to go to events together. For further information please see www.gigbuddies.org.uk
- 6.10.2. **Grapevine:** Grapevine works to unlock the pre-existing resources in communities as well as people's capabilities to help themselves and those around them. The Connecting for Good (CfG) movement is a community led 'bottom-up' project that supports multiple isolation tackling initiatives led by hundreds of Coventry people. For further information please see: www.grapevinecovandwarks.org
- 6.10.3. **Community Circles:** Community Circles are facilitated by volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported by Circle Connectors. They bring together family members, friends, community members and (in some cases) service staff to support individuals. They use person-centred methods and tools to identify the things that are important to people and then plan and act to achieve these things. For further information please see: www.community-circles.co.uk
- 6.10.4. **GoodGym:** GoodGym aims to connect people in their local community by providing opportunities to combine getting fit and doing good. Weekly group sessions run or walk to local community projects to help them with a physical volunteering task, connecting members with isolated older neighbours. This can involve building in a regular social visit as part of a weekly run or sending two to three members to an older person's home to help with a small task that supports their safety, independence and confidence. For further information please see: www.goodgym.org

Appendix A: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local day opportunities

Service details	Service closures / reductions	Alternative support offered to individuals unable to attend	Re-opening	Next steps
Services run by the Council				
<p>Allensway (Stainsby Hill ward)</p> <p>The service supports people with learning disabilities who have more complex health and care needs. The service is primarily building based.</p>	<p>Between March 2020 and Summer 2021 the number of people attending Allensway was reduced to around 10 people per day, compared to a maximum of 50 places per day pre-pandemic.</p>	<p>The team provided weekly welfare calls, sent out activity packs and ran online group sessions.</p>	<p>The number of people attending Allensway gradually increased during the summer of 2021 with face-to-face support being offered to 20 people by August 2021 (providing around 14 places per day)</p>	<p>The service is supporting the continued re-opening of Allensway and are working with social work teams to produce individual risk assessments and support plans to identify how they can safely meet the needs of individuals returning to the service.</p>
<p>Community Based Options,</p> <p>The service predominantly supports people with learning disabilities who have moderate health and care needs.</p> <p>Activities are delivered from the following community bases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wheeldale (Village ward) – The Youthy (Mandale and Victoria ward) – Stockton Business Centre (Town Centre ward) – Ragworth Community Centre (Newtown ward) 	<p>The service closed all their community bases between March 2020 and September 2020.</p> <p>During this time individuals who would be at risk if the service was withdrawn were supported at Allensway.</p>	<p>The team provided virtual groups and activity packs for individuals who were not able to access face-to-face sessions.</p> <p>While face-to-face activities were reduced, staff members were redeployed to support the Council's COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>Between September 2020 and May 2021 the service gradually re-opened their community bases.</p> <p>Activities at Wheeldale re-opened in September 2020.</p> <p>Activities at The Youthy re-opened in November 2020.</p> <p>Activities in the units at Stockton Business Centre re-opened in January 2021.</p> <p>Activities at Ragworth Community Centre re-opened in May 2021</p> <p>As of August 2021, 37 people were attending regular face-to-face session across all their bases. Prior to the pandemic the team were supporting up to 75 people per day across all their bases.</p>	<p>The service is continuing to support individuals to return to the service where appropriate.</p>

<p>Halcyon Centre Thorntree Road (Mandale and Victoria ward)</p> <p>Supports people with mental health needs, sensory impairment, physical disabilities and dementia. Individuals using the Halcyon Centre are predominantly over the age of 55. The service is primarily building based.</p>	<p>Between March 2020 and July 2021, the number of people attending the Halcyon Centre was reduced to between 6-10 people per day, compared to around 70 people per day pre-pandemic.</p>	<p>The team provided weekly welfare calls to individuals who were not able to access the Centre.</p>	<p>In July 2021 the service began the phased re-opening of the Centre and offered all individuals on their register an initial place for 1 day a week.</p> <p>As of August 2021, the service was offering around 25 places per day however the numbers attending have been slightly lower due to some individuals choosing not to return to the service yet.</p>	<p>The service is working on plans to safely increase the number of days people can attend each week.</p>
<p>STEPS (Supports people across the Borough and is not building based)</p> <p>Community based service supporting people with a disability to develop skills and maximise independence.</p>	<p>The STEPs service provided no face-to-face support between March 2020 and early Summer 2021.</p>	<p>The team provided regular phone calls and on-line groups throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>While the face-to-face activities were reduced, staff members were redeployed to support the Council's COVID-19 response.</p>	<p>In May 2021 STEPs started to run 'walk and talk' groups as the first stage of re-introducing face-to-face support.</p>	<p>The service is working with Tees Active to re-start Sporting STEPs in September 2021.</p>
<p>Services commissioned by the Council</p>				
<p>Shaw Trust (Newtown ward)</p> <p>Work focused activities for people with learning disabilities hosted within in a garden centre, plant nursery and café.</p>	<p>The site was closed between March 2020 and July 2020.</p>	<p>The team provided regular phone contact with individuals as well as online social events.</p>	<p>Since July 2020 the service has been supporting the phased return of more people to the site.</p> <p>As of August 2021, 28 people were regularly attending the service compared to 38 prior to the pandemic.</p>	<p>The service are working to support the return of more people on site.</p>
<p>Tees Ability Support Centre (Located in Middlesbrough)</p>	<p>The service closed its buildings between March 2020 and September 2020.</p>	<p>The team provided regular telephone calls and small community outings when the</p>	<p>Since September 2020 the service has been supporting the phased return of more people to the site.</p>	<p>Some pre-pandemic activities are still unavailable and the team are looking at how these can be re-introduced safely.</p>

Supporting people with disabilities. The service has contracts with three Local Authorities, with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council purchasing a set number of places.		guidelines allowed this.	As of August 2021 7 people were accessing the service using the places commissioned by the Council, there were 20 people accessing these places prior to the pandemic	The service is expecting an additional 9 people to start using the service in September 2021.
Tees Alive (Billingham Central ward) Supporting people with a learning disability. Delivered by Community Integrated Care. Based in the Forum (pre-Covid) with some community activities.	The service was unable to provide any face-to-face support between March 2020 and summer 2020.	The team provided phone calls, virtual group sessions and one-to-one support in the community where appropriate.	As the service was not able to access its usual base in the Forum the team have been providing activities in the community since summer 2020. As of August 2021 the team were providing support to 5 people, compared to 41 people prior to the pandemic.	The service is currently working on plans to safely return to the Forum and identifying how the service will operate in the future.
Ware Street (Town Centre ward) Supporting people with Autism. Delivered by Education and Services for People with Autism (ESPA). Building based with some community activities.	The service closed its building between March 2020 and July 2020.	The team provided weekly welfare calls and, when possible, offered community based support, such as going for walks, as an alternative.	In July 2020 the service began the phased re-opening of the building offering people a maximum of 3 days a week. In April 2021 the service was able to support the return of all individuals who had previously been accessing the building, offering the same number of places they had prior to the pandemic.	

