



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Big plans, bright future

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Day Opportunities for Adults

**Final Report
April 2022**

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
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- Lucy Owens (Volunteer Manager) – Catalyst
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- Sarah Gill (Head of Adult Learning Disability Services, Tees Locality) – Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Jennifer Addison (Chief Executive) – Vision 25
- Paul Walmsley (Service Manager) – Vision 25

Also, to all those staff and individuals accessing services for their input during the Committee's virtual visits, and to the families / carers who responded to the survey issued after those visits were undertaken.

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Foreword

On behalf of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee, we are pleased to present the final report and recommendations following our review of Day Opportunities for Adults.

This scrutiny topic has long been associated with day centres, building-based settings which have previously been established or commissioned by Councils to fulfil their statutory duty to provide services to people with eligible or assessed needs. However, as has been the case with most areas of Council activity, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and continuing impact on the way in which such services are accessed and delivered. This review therefore comes at a timely juncture, allowing for a reflection on these developments and a direction around a future offer.

A key feature of this work was the growing recognition that day opportunities need not be limited to a building-based arrangement, but can, and should, involve community-based options which enable individuals to access activities that are meaningful to them, support them to be active and valued members of the community, and help develop confidence, skills and relationships. Indeed, through our engagement with those using services and their families / carers, it was emphasised that, rather than a provider merely being a destination, 'it's about seeing it as a journey', and that day opportunities should not just be about habit and routine but should involve a focus on individual growth and development.

We would like to express our thanks to all those who contributed to this review and are particularly grateful to those providers who, despite having to manage ongoing COVID restrictions, allowed us to virtually visit and engage with staff and individuals accessing their setting. Input from families and carers of those using services was also extremely valuable and gave a direct insight for the Council and its relevant partners into how the local day opportunities offer should be shaped. We hope our recommendations can further contribute to ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people within the Borough can continue to access life-enhancing activities which they and their loved ones deserve.



Cllr Evaline Cunningham
Chair
Adult Social Care and Health
Select Committee



Cllr Clare Gamble
Vice-Chair
Adult Social Care and Health
Select Committee

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2021-2024 key objectives (and associated 2021-2022 priorities):

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm

- Develop more services to help people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and to make sure that they are not lonely.
- Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults to ensure as many services as possible are provided within the Borough.

A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed

- Increase skills and employment prospects including a new Employment and Training Hub to support people back to work and through programmes that target those furthest from employment or employability.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Day opportunities for adults has its origins in legislation introduced under the National Assistance Act 1948 and was further developed under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the National Health Service Act 1977 (now superseded in the 2014 Care Act).

Through Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) duty to provide services to people with eligible and assessed needs, day opportunities services have constantly evolved to meet local requirements and meet national guidelines. This includes services provided by the Council, commissioned through the independent or voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and those people who choose to purchase their own support through a Direct Payment.

Whilst the number of people directly impacted by this scrutiny topic is relatively low (less than 1,000) and is shared across a wide range of services offering different levels of support and engagement, the individuals affected are generally some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and very often have families and carers whose own wellbeing is directly impacted. Day services are largely utilised by individuals affected by old age, mental ill health, learning disabilities, dementia and autism, conditions which drive some of the greatest inequalities.

However, the profound and continuing impact of COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way the Council has been able to deliver this service during 2020-2021. In line with Government guidance, building-based day opportunities have been closed for extended periods throughout the pandemic, with building-based offers limited to individuals who have been prioritised by risk. As a result, the Council's day services have developed new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals – this has included offering online groups, wellbeing calls and other initiatives designed to help people stay connected. These changes have caused the Council, people who access its services, and key stakeholders to reflect and review what, who and how day opportunities are offered in Stockton-on-Tees.

This review provides an opportunity to consider and identify options for the remodelling of Day Opportunities Services, primarily to move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision to a 'needs-led' community-focused service which clearly articulates the role of the Council, independent / VCSE assets, stakeholders and

volunteering in delivering this model. Critical in any future planning will be the need to ascertain the views of service-users and their families / carers, particularly in light of the considerable impact that the pandemic-related changes to day services will have had on informal carers.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What are the principal needs of the different people who access day opportunities services (including young people who are transitioning to adult services)?
- What services currently exist across the Borough, and how are existing assets utilised across Stockton-on-Tees (including services offered by other departments of the Council, partners, VCSE and volunteers)?
- How are people made aware of these services? How do they access them?
- How has COVID-19 impacted upon local day opportunities provision (including how this has affected service-users and their families / carers)?
- What are the alternatives to a traditional building-based day opportunities offer with greater choice? How do / can providers maximise independence of the people who access services?
- How is the voice of service-users sought and responded to in order to continually improve the offer? What are the expectations and involvement of families and informal carers in delivering meaningful day opportunities?
- Where can technology be a key solution to enhance the experience of people who access day opportunities provision?
- What focus is given to inclusion, community assets and social enterprise?
- What national good practice exists around day opportunities and can this influence local provision?

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

This review can assist in identifying a day opportunities for adults offer that:

- Supports people to do the things that are meaningful to them and helps individuals to live the life they want to live.
- Enables people to establish and grow relationships in their communities, and supports people to be active and valued members of their communities.
- Is developed based upon the needs and views of the people it supports (and their families and carers), and provides people who access services with choice over how they want to meet their assessed needs.
- Supports people to develop the confidence, skills, relationships and abilities that can maximise their control over their lives and access to opportunities.
- Makes full use of existing community facilities and resources as well as opportunities that technology can offer.
- Promotes collaborative working across communities and sectors to deliver outcomes that individuals have identified as important and can act as a signposting mechanism to other services.
- Enables early intervention and preventative services and reduce levels of isolation.
- Is mindful and responsive to national best practice.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's scrutiny review of Day Opportunities for Adults.
- 1.2 Day opportunities for adults has its origins in legislation introduced under the National Assistance Act 1948 and was further developed under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the National Health Service Act 1977 (now superseded in the 2014 Care Act, particularly in relation to the Council's duties around the promotion of wellbeing, developing the market, providing information, personal budgets and direct payments and carers support).
- 1.3 Through Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) duty to provide services to people with eligible and assessed needs, day opportunities services have constantly evolved to meet local requirements and meet national guidelines. This includes services provided by SBC, commissioned through the independent or voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and those people who choose to purchase their own support through a direct payment (personal budget paid by the Council allowing greater flexibility on how this is spent).
- 1.4 Whilst the number of people directly impacted by this scrutiny topic is relatively low (less than 1,000) and is shared across a wide range of services offering different levels of support and engagement, the individuals affected are generally some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and very often have families and carers whose own wellbeing is directly impacted. Day services are largely utilised by individuals affected by old age, mental ill health, learning disabilities, dementia and autism, conditions which drive some of the greatest inequalities.
- 1.5 However, the profound and continuing impact of COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way the Council has been able to deliver this service during 2020-2021. In line with Government guidance, building-based day opportunities have been closed for extended periods throughout the pandemic, with building-based offers limited to individuals who have been prioritised by risk. As a result, the Council's day services have developed new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals – this has included offering online groups, wellbeing calls and other initiatives designed to help people stay connected. These changes have caused the Council, people who access its services, and key stakeholders to reflect and review what, who and how day opportunities are offered in Stockton-on-Tees.
- 1.6 The Committee's main aims for this review were threefold. Firstly, it sought to understand the current model used by SBC to deliver day opportunities, including their purpose, accessibility and promotion. Secondly, it wanted to ascertain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which, in light of the development of new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals, had prompted an understandable reflection on what and how day opportunities are offered in the Borough. Finally, the Committee was keen on learning about alternative methods of delivery from a community-based perspective which could potentially herald a move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision.

- 1.7 Evidence received indicated that day opportunities have multiple purposes for individuals and their families / carers – they facilitate social connections, activities which promote wellbeing, skills development and greater independence, as well as respite / breaks for the loved ones of those accessing services. As of March 2020, the Council supported around 900 individuals with a range of needs (principally people with learning disabilities and those requiring personal care assistance and support with memory and cognition) to access both in-house and SBC-commissioned services, in addition to those accessing opportunities using a direct payment.
- 1.8 The Committee heard of several factors impacting upon demand for existing, and potentially future, SBC in-house and commissioned services. These included a larger proportion of younger adults (18-24) accessing alternative opportunities through a direct payment (perhaps reflecting what this demographic wants to experience in the community rather than a traditional building-based environment), and ongoing investigations into access to opportunities as part of a residential placement. The existence of a larger number of educational pathways (as an alternative to day opportunities) for people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided young people with further choice. It is therefore important for the Council to think carefully about how many individuals still want to be supported within the present model (which constitutes a significant budgetary pressure for SBC) so the appropriate level of resource is in place.
- 1.9 A key aspect of this review was around transitions (younger people moving into Adult Services), something SBC officers acknowledged required further work when considering day opportunities. To this end, the Committee urge a more joined-up approach between the Council's Adults and Health and Children's Services directorates to identify and support opportunities that are most meaningful to younger people, and to strengthen the dissemination of information about existing services. The level of interest in Vision 25 from younger adults, a service which has fostered links with Abbey Hill and uses its social media presence to market itself, provides food-for-thought in terms of how other providers reach out to those individuals with eligible and assessed needs.
- 1.10 The importance of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in light of the increasing number of people using a direct payment to access a wider range of activities should not be underestimated, and the Committee was encouraged to learn of the 50+ VCSE organisations which already exist to support members of the community who may come under the remit of 'Adult Day Services'. The Committee heard several ideas from the VCSE sector on future service delivery, and SBC should consider how it links those with an eligible / assessed need to these opportunities, and how it can work in partnership with Catalyst and the wider sector to potentially unearth funding streams (e.g. community transformation programme) to build on existing provision within the community, including the promotion of volunteering possibilities.
- 1.11 In terms of bolstering the day opportunities offer across the Borough, the Committee welcomed Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust's (TEWV) desire to expand on its current Middlesbrough provision. Both TEWV and SBC should initiate work to identify how this could look given the views of people who access services (existing and potentially future) and their families / carers, including those currently placed outside the Borough – possibly as

part of a wider Forum involving VCSE / Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group input which could further reflect on the Trust's experiences of the Amsterdam model which the Committee was informed about.

- 1.12 Like many aspects of life, the COVID-19 pandemic had significant repercussions for day service providers. Social restrictions led to the need to adapt the way services were offered, and the Committee commends providers for the demonstrable efforts to maintain contact / support using innovative practices over the last two years. As evident in other aspects of health and social care provision, the pandemic has necessitated the implementation of alternative means of delivery, and the Committee welcome the intention to continue with those elements which have been embraced by people who access services and their families / carers, as well as the staff themselves.
- 1.13 The terms 'day centres' and 'day opportunities' are often used interchangeably and indistinguishably, and although the former had traditionally been central to the delivery of the latter, this review heard of several alternative community-based day opportunities delivery methods which enabled individuals to access activities that are meaningful to them, support them to be active and valued members of the community, develop confidence, skills and relationships, and empowers them to be equal partners in the design and delivery of local opportunities. However, whilst enabling a wider range of choice is to be embraced, there was also much evidence of the satisfaction of, and indeed reliance on, existing building-based provision from people who access services and their families / carers (as demonstrated in views expressed via pre-review and review consultation).
- 1.14 Critical for any service design / development, ensuring the views of users / families / carers are sought, collated and reflected upon was key, something the Committee remains a very strong advocate for. In addition to the submission of previous consultation summaries, this review actively engaged with several providers as part of its wish to hear directly from those involved in existing services. One of the most striking messages was the feeling that day opportunities should not just be about habit and routine, but should involve a focus on individual growth and development (building confidence and skills) – as one individual who was accessing a service stated, rather than a provider merely being a destination, 'it's about seeing it as a journey'. From a family / carer perspective, the development of their loved one's social (friendships / networks) and personal growth (independence and skills development) within a comfortable, safe environment which treats them with respect and meets all their needs was the principal requirement.
- 1.15 The last two pandemic-impacted years have undoubtedly focused minds when it comes to how services are delivered by SBC and its partners. In reflecting on previous models of provision, required changes due to COVID-19, and considerations around future demand and preferences, the Committee support the Council's ambition to establish co-production groups (with those who use Adult Social Care) that can aid in the future development of day opportunities, and would also urge the creation of a day opportunities peer group to enable the sharing of ideas / resources. The potential for building-based providers to develop a new / existing community-based programme as part of its offer to foster a wider range of activity and increased integration within the Borough should also be considered, as should further

possibilities for the Council and VCSE partners to assist with identified transportation needs.

1.16 As part of initial discussions around this scrutiny topic, several key elements of a good day opportunities for adults offer were identified, including:

- Supports people to do the things that are meaningful to them and helps individuals to live the life they want to live.
- Enables people to establish and grow relationships in their communities, and supports people to be active and valued members of their communities.
- Is developed based upon the needs and views of the people it supports (and their families and carers), and provides people who access services with choice over how they want to meet their assessed needs.
- Supports people to develop the confidence, skills, relationships and abilities that can maximise their control over their lives and access to opportunities.
- Makes full use of existing community facilities and resources as well as opportunities that technology can offer.
- Promotes collaborative working across communities and sectors to deliver outcomes that individuals have identified as important and can act as a signposting mechanism to other services.
- Enables early intervention and preventative services and reduce levels of isolation.
- Is mindful and responsive to national best practice.

The Committee widely supports all the above, though is also conscious that identifying and facilitating individual preferences is not an insignificant task and may have possible resource implications. There is likely to be a wide range of views regarding what people want to do / experience, and whilst some of these may be possible using existing services (whether building or community-based), others may require the identification of new contacts (individuals / organisations) within public / private / voluntary sectors to potentially support a greater range of activity. That said, any attempt to develop more meaningful experiences for people who access services (also benefitting their families / carers) is to be commended, and the Committee welcome the clear intent of all review contributors to progress this very important area of Borough life.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **SBC and its relevant partners continue working with people accessing services and their families / carers to understand demand for both traditional building-based day service provision and community-based activities. This should include:**
 - a) **The creation of co-production groups that can support the future development of day opportunities.**

(continued overleaf...)

Recommendations (continued)

- b) Specific work with those who remain reluctant to return to building-based provision as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (engagement to learn of obstacles / changes in support requirements).**
 - c) Considerations around preferences of those with particular needs (including potential for mixing between those with differing needs) and differing demographics (e.g. younger adults).**
 - d) Continuing investigations into access to meaningful opportunities as part of a residential placement.**
 - e) Considerations around the potential for assisting with identified transportation needs (e.g. ensuring public / private transport options are accessible and respond to the needs of people who use day opportunities).**
 - f) Changes to the existing budget for SBC in-house and commissioned services.**
- 2) There is an assessment of the information provided around personal budgets and the options available to people, ensuring this is disseminated in a variety of formats (not just online).**
 - 3) SBC Adults and Health and Children's Services directorates reinforce joint-working to identify and support opportunities that are most meaningful to younger people (including a reflection on any updated results from the Disabled Children's Team online survey), and strengthen the dissemination of information about existing services.**
 - 4) SBC to follow-up with Catalyst regarding the views of the wider VCSE sector around future day opportunities involvement (e.g. promotion of / access to existing VCSE activity, potential funding streams, volunteering).**
 - 5) SBC and its relevant health, social care and VCSE partners share and work towards an agreed vision for day opportunities across the Borough through the most appropriate mechanism (existing or new).**
 - 6) All existing SBC in-house and commissioned day service providers ensure they have a mechanism for enabling the families / carers of people accessing services to regularly share their views with the provider, and each other, on existing and future service delivery.**
 - 7) SBC ensures, as far as possible, that work experience undertaken by those individuals accessing day services is appropriately recognised.**
 - 8) SBC strengthens links between existing day service providers through the creation of a new peer group to share good practice / resources (inc. volunteering opportunities as a gateway to employment).**

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's scrutiny review of Day Opportunities for Adults.

2.2 The Committee's main aims for this review were threefold. Firstly, it sought to understand the current model used by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) to deliver day opportunities, including their purpose, accessibility and promotion. Secondly, it wanted to ascertain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which, in light of the development of new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals, had prompted an understandable reflection on what and how day opportunities are offered in the Borough. Finally, the Committee was keen on learning about alternative methods of delivery from a community-based perspective which could potentially herald a move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision.

2.3 The Committee focused on the following key lines of enquiry:

- What are the principal needs of the different people who access day opportunities services (including young people who are transitioning to adult services)?
- What services currently exist across the Borough, and how are existing assets utilised across Stockton-on-Tees (including services offered by other departments of the Council, partners, VCSE and volunteers)?
- How are people made aware of these services? How do they access them?
- How has COVID-19 impacted upon local day opportunities provision (including how this has affected service-users and their families / carers)?
- What are the alternatives to a traditional building-based day opportunities offer with greater choice? How do / can providers maximise independence of the people who access services?
- How is the voice of service-users sought and responded to in order to continually improve the offer? What are the expectations and involvement of families and informal carers in delivering meaningful day opportunities?
- Where can technology be a key solution to enhance the experience of people who access day opportunities provision?
- What focus is given to inclusion, community assets and social enterprise?
- What national good practice exists around day opportunities and can this influence local provision?

2.4 The Committee received contributions from a range of key stakeholders including relevant Council officers from both the Adults and Health, and Children's Services, directorates, NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), and Catalyst (incorporating a collective view from the voluntary, community and

social enterprise (VCSE) sector). Virtual visits were also conducted with local day service providers which allowed the Committee to engage with management, staff and individuals accessing services at the time.

- 2.5 To further understand the voice of those using day services and their families / carers around this scrutiny topic, Council consultation responses were considered. Following-up on the virtual visits to local providers, the Committee also issued its own survey to families / carers of those who access the observed settings.
- 2.6 Recognising the increasing pressure on the Council's finances, it is imperative that in-depth scrutiny reviews promote the Council's policy priorities and, where possible, seek to identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Day opportunities for adults has its origins in legislation introduced under the National Assistance Act 1948 and was further developed under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the National Health Service Act 1977 (now superseded in the 2014 Care Act, particularly in relation to the Council's duties around the promotion of wellbeing, developing the market, providing information, personal budgets and direct payments and carers support).
- 3.2 In recent years, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and Local Government Association (LGA) National Learning Disability and Autism Steering Group developed a *Supporting adults with learning disabilities to have better lives* framework (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/sector-support-offer/care-and-health-improvement/autistic-and-learning-disabilities/learning-disabilities/intro/better-lives>). It was formed at the end of 2019 to lead developments to improve how adults with learning disabilities and autism (learning disability and / or autism) are supported by Councils and their partners, and has a vision with six interrelated and overlapping elements:

- **Inclusion** – Support people to have good lives in their communities and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Equal access** - To opportunities and services e.g. contributing to community life, social and leisure opportunities, housing, banking, jobs, health, and transport.
- **Person centred planning and support** – Involve people, families, and carers in solutions that respond to the individual strengths and needs.
- **Safeguarding** – Be safe in communities and free from the risk of discrimination, hate crime and abuse.
- **Sustainable models of support** – A commitment to focus on developing these.
- **Progression** – Recognising that people with disabilities (including the most complex) have the potential to progress and develop.

- 3.3 Other Local Authorities have previously reviewed this important area of social care provision including [Leeds City Council](#), which recognised the need to offer more opportunities for people to take part in activities they enjoyed, and in particular, to make sport and leisure activities more accessible for people with a learning disability, [Warwickshire County Council](#) and [Worcestershire County Council](#).
- 3.4 The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities looked at the best ways to support people with learning disabilities to have good community day activities (<https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/changing-service-delivery/day-opportunities-and-day-services>), and in

association with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), produced materials to let people know how to help people with learning disabilities have better days. A guide about what services can do to ensure that people with learning disabilities 'have a good day' focuses on:

- building community opportunities and support so that people can have ordinary daily lives
- day centres – how to make improvements
- community-based services
- employment, lifelong learning, leisure, relationships

- 3.5 Through Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) duty to provide services to people with eligible and assessed needs, day opportunities services have constantly evolved to meet local requirements and meet national guidelines. This includes services provided by SBC, commissioned through the independent or voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and those people who choose to purchase their own support through a direct payment (personal budget paid by the Council allowing greater flexibility on how this is spent).
- 3.6 Whilst the number of people directly impacted by this scrutiny topic is relatively low (less than 1,000) and is shared across a wide range of services offering different levels of support and engagement, the individuals affected are generally some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and very often have families and carers whose own wellbeing is directly impacted. Day services are largely utilised by individuals affected by old age, mental ill health, learning disabilities, dementia and autism, conditions which drive some of the greatest inequalities.
- 3.7 However, the profound and continuing impact of COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way the Council has been able to deliver this service during 2020-2021. In line with Government guidance, building-based day opportunities have been closed for extended periods throughout the pandemic, with building-based offers limited to individuals who have been prioritised by risk. As a result, the Council's day services have developed new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals – this has included offering online groups, wellbeing calls and other initiatives designed to help people stay connected. These changes have caused the Council, people who access its services, and key stakeholders to reflect and review what, who and how day opportunities are offered in Stockton-on-Tees.
- 3.8 Recognising the enormous operational pressures faced by the adult social care sector since COVID-19 emerged, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Care Provider Alliance (CPA) produced a series of briefings to signpost existing good practice and guidance for providers and commissioners to support services which may have not received as much attention during the pandemic. The first briefing covered day services (<https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-and-cpa-care-market-best-practice-1-day-services>) and included examples from Islington Council and Norfolk County Council.
- 3.9 This review provided an opportunity to consider and identify options for the remodelling of day opportunities services, potentially to move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision to a 'needs-led' community-focused service which clearly articulates the role of the Council,

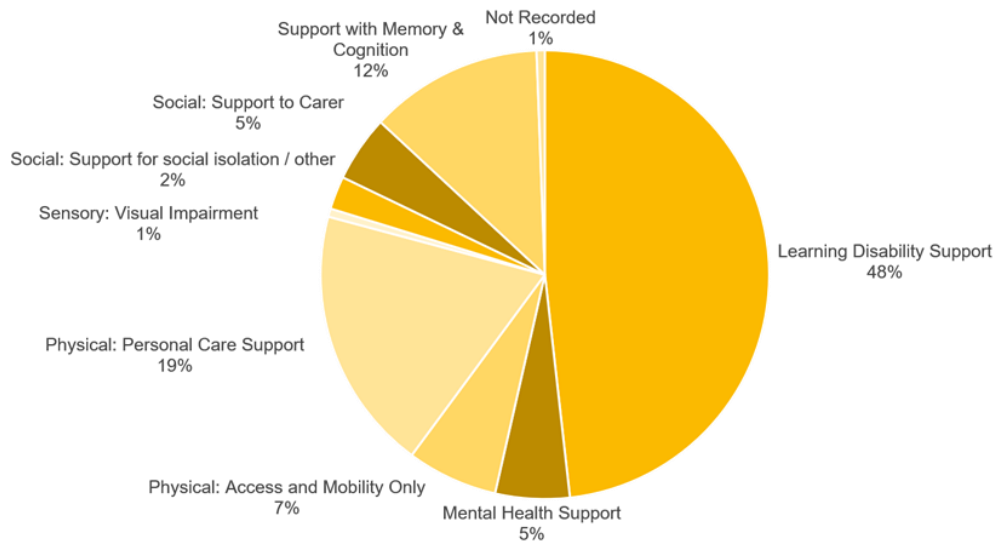
independent / VCSE assets, stakeholders and volunteering in delivering this model. It can assist in identifying a day opportunities for adults offer that:

- Supports people to do the things that are meaningful to them and helps individuals to live the life they want to live.
- Enables people to establish and grow relationships in their communities, and supports people to be active and valued members of their communities.
- Is developed based upon the needs and views of the people it supports (and their families and carers), and provides people who access services with choice over how they want to meet their assessed needs.
- Supports people to develop the confidence, skills, relationships and abilities that can maximise their control over their lives and access to opportunities.
- Makes full use of existing community facilities and resources as well as opportunities that technology can offer.
- Promotes collaborative working across communities and sectors to deliver outcomes that individuals have identified as important and can act as a signposting mechanism to other services.
- Enables early intervention and preventative services and reduce levels of isolation.
- Is mindful and responsive to national best practice.

4.0 Findings

Purpose of, and people using, day opportunities

- 4.1 Day opportunities can be either building or community-based and offer opportunities for social connections, activities which promote wellbeing, skills development and greater independence, and respite / breaks for informal carers. Day opportunities are accessed by individuals with a range of needs including older people, people with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities and mental health needs.
- 4.2 According to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) data, the primary support reason for individuals accessing in-house and commissioned day opportunities is outlined below:



Data taken from Care Director, June 2021

- 4.3 It was estimated that, pre-March 2020, around 900 people were supported by the Council to access day opportunities – this includes people accessing in-house and commissioned services, as well as those accessing opportunities using a direct payment. This is based on:
- Data from before the pandemic shows that between the 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020, 442 individuals had day care provisions authorised on Care Director¹.
 - In July 2021, the Council's STEPs team was supporting around 361 people (these numbers are in-line with the numbers pre-pandemic).

¹ Care Director is an electronic social care client case management system that allows officers to effectively manage the referrals, assessments and support for people accessing health and care. This system was replaced in 2021 by Liquid Logic Adult Social Care System (LAS) that enable the management of contacts, referrals, assessment, support planning and personal budgets.

- Approximately 100 people were accessing day opportunities using a direct payment in July 2021 (a slight decrease compared to pre-pandemic numbers and mainly due to continuing concerns around COVID-19).
- 4.4 Officers recognised that further work was required to understand the needs of younger people who were expected to transition into Adult Social Care. This includes understanding expected needs, how day opportunities can deliver the outcomes valued by younger people, and the support required to help younger people successfully transition into Adult Social Care.
- 4.5 During 2020-2021, work was undertaken to ensure that individuals living in residential settings would be supported to access opportunities as part of their residential provision. This work was ongoing, and each person would be individually assessed to ensure their support meets their needs. As a result of these measures, the number of people accessing day services after the pandemic was likely to be reduced.
- 4.6 As part of the initial discussions around this scrutiny topic, the Committee noted the different age-ranges that were potentially affected by this review, and it was suggested that elderly and vulnerable people may, understandably, be more reluctant to re-engage with services due to ongoing worries around COVID-19 infections. At the younger end of the spectrum, concerns were expressed around potential gaps in service provision for those people leaving education and transitioning into adult services.

Transitioning into Adult Services

- 4.7 The SBC Disabled Children Team Manager subsequently addressed the Committee following a request for information on the needs of young people transitioning into Adult Services, the information available about day services and how this is shared, and what young people and their families / carers value about day opportunities (how this is ascertained and whether this was reflected in the current adults offer). Supported by the SBC Learning Disability and Mental Health (Adults) Service Manager, key aspects were as follows:
- People aged 18-24 accessing Adult Social Care: 163 individuals accessing SBC Adult Social Care in 2020-2021 (compared to 195 in 2019-2020 and 156 in 2018-2019), with 15 individuals accessing the Council's in-house day opportunities for adults or services commissioned by the Council (compared to 27 in 2019-2020 and 33 in 2018-2019). In addition, 35 people aged between 18-24 were using a direct payment to access day opportunities as of November 2021.
 - Educational pathways as an alternative to day opportunities for people with an EHC plan: As of November 2021, there were 133 young people within the Borough with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan accessing educational provisions post-19 (year 14 onwards) – of these, 68 were under the Special Educational Needs (SEN) category of 'Cognition and Learning' (including moderate and severe learning difficulties), 40 were under the category 'Communication and Interaction' (including autism spectrum disorders and speech, language and communication needs), 16 were under the category 'Social Emotional and Mental Health',

and 9 were under the category 'Sensory / Physical Disability' (including visual and hearing impairment).

These young people, who would have previously transitioned into day services after education, now have a wider range of options to continue in education post-19, including specialist education provision, supported internships, and supported apprenticeships. Having other options available has meant a likely reduction in the number of young people with SEN accessing day opportunities provided by Adult Social Care, and an increase in individuals remaining in education and / or training to work towards their individual aspirations.

- Needs of young people transitioning into Adult Social Care: As of November 2021, 34 younger people (twenty 17-year-olds and fourteen 16-year-olds) were being supported through the transition process. Services currently accessed by these individuals was listed, the most prevalent being overnight provision (13), direct payments (employment of a Personal Assistant to arrange activities) (12), and ROC (Reach Out Care – a supported housing project, staffed 24/7, which offers accommodation for vulnerable under-18s, vulnerable over-18s and young parents) (11). Work was ongoing to gather the views of young people about what they want to be available and how they want to be kept up-to-date, and surveys were being conducted at Hartburn Lodge Short Breaks Centre.

- 4.8 Younger people expected to transition into Adult Social Care and who may access adult day opportunities were supported by the Council's Disabled Children Team. The role of the Team was outlined, as was the support it provides via two Transition Workers who start working with a young person around the time they turn 16 years-old. The Team can also facilitate visits and trial days at a day service to help inform a person's decision-making, and throughout the transition process, multi-agency transition meetings are held on a regular basis to help identify and plan the support required once the young person becomes 18 years-old.
- 4.9 Data showing the number of people aged between 18-24 accessing specific Council-run or Council-commissioned services indicated a drop in usage over the last three municipal years. The reduced 2020-2021 data coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic where some families were no longer working (as a result of the national lockdown) and were therefore able to become the Personal Assistant for their loved one.
- 4.10 A further table detailing the specific day services being accessed by the 35 people aged between 18-24 via a direct payment was included. Vision 25 (providing a programme of social and learning-based activities for young people with a disability aged 17+) was the most-used provider (16) – this may be due to the proactive work it undertakes with Abbey Hill school to promote its offer, as well as its strong social media reach.
- 4.11 The Committee raised a query around supported internships and whether these involved only English and maths. It was subsequently explained that supported internships are a structured study programme based primarily at an employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. Supported internships are unpaid and generally last for one year. Wherever

possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Alongside their time at the employer, young people complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths. It is an employment-based programme with English and maths included, and often has elements of Employability and Personal and Social Development included. However, if the young person wishes to study wider than English and maths, they would need to look at attending a Further Education College or training provider to undertake a vocational education programme in a subject area of their choice.

- 4.12 A key feature to the data provided was that a higher percentage of those aged between 18-24 appeared to be accessing day opportunities via a direct payment than using the Council's in-house services. Members wondered if this may be because the direct payment options could be considered more appealing to this age-range, and were therefore keen to understand how young people and their families / carers were finding-out about existing Council-run / Council-commissioned services on offer across the Borough.

Existing services (including access to and promotion of)

- 4.13 The Committee was informed that day opportunities for adults in Stockton-on-Tees was currently provided in three ways:

- SBC-run day services;
- SBC-commissioned day services from the independent / voluntary sector;
- support purchased directly by individuals from the independent and voluntary sector using a direct payment.

SBC-run services

Name	Primary client group	Places available	Comments
Allensway	People with learning disabilities	Up to 50 places per day (pre-Covid)	Supports people with more complex health and care needs. Service is primarily building based.
Community Day Options	People with learning disabilities	75 places per day (pre-Covid)	Predominantly supports people with moderate health and care needs from 5 community bases across the Borough.
Halcyon Centre	Includes people with mental health needs, sensory impairment, physical disabilities and dementia	80 places per day (pre-Covid)	Individuals using the Halcyon Centre are predominantly over the age of 55. Service is primarily building based.
STEPs	People with a disability	Currently supporting 212 active clients and 149 clients in 'aftercare' receiving a lower level of support	Community based service supporting people to develop skills and maximise independence.

SBC-commissioned services

Name	Primary client group	Places available	Comments
Teesside Ability Support Centre (TASC)	People with disabilities	40 sessions per week available for SBC residents	Located in Middlesbrough. Activities are carried out both in house and externally at local colleges
Shaw Trust	People with learning disabilities	25 places per day (at 1:1 support levels)	Work focused activities hosted within in a garden centre, plant nursery and café
Tees alive	People with learning disabilities	40 places per day (pre-covid)	Delivered by Community Integrated Care. Based in the Forum (pre-Covid) with some community activities.
Ware Street	People with autism	13 places per day	Delivered by Education and Services for People with Autism (ESPA). Building based with some community activities.

Access to such services was initiated via an individual's Social Worker following an assessment of their needs, and it was confirmed that the Borough's residents were able to access those providers listed who were based outside Stockton-on-Tees.

- 4.14 An outline of the Council's spending on day opportunities through its in-house and commissioned services in 2019-2020 was provided as follows:

Item	Cost
Gross spend	£4,855,000
CCG Funding	£841,000 cr
Meal income (Halcyon Centre)	£39,000 cr
Public Health funding (for STEPs)	£25,000 cr
Net spend	£3,950,000

- 4.15 Services run by, or commissioned by, the Council could be accessed following an assessment and referral by a Social Worker. All social care clients would be financially assessed and, depending on their financial circumstances, individuals may be asked to pay for, or contribute towards, the cost of their care, including day services. As these contributions were not service-specific, it was not possible to accurately identify the proportion of clients' contributions that relate to day opportunities.
- 4.16 Individuals with an assessed need would be offered the opportunity to access their personal budget as a direct payment – this allowed people to use their budget to directly purchase opportunities from independent providers. As of November 2021, 119 adults in Stockton-on-Tees were using direct payments to purchase day opportunities (note: some individuals use their direct

payment to purchase day opportunities from more than one provider). These opportunities were purchased from 20 providers, several of them being based outside the Borough (see **Appendix 1**).

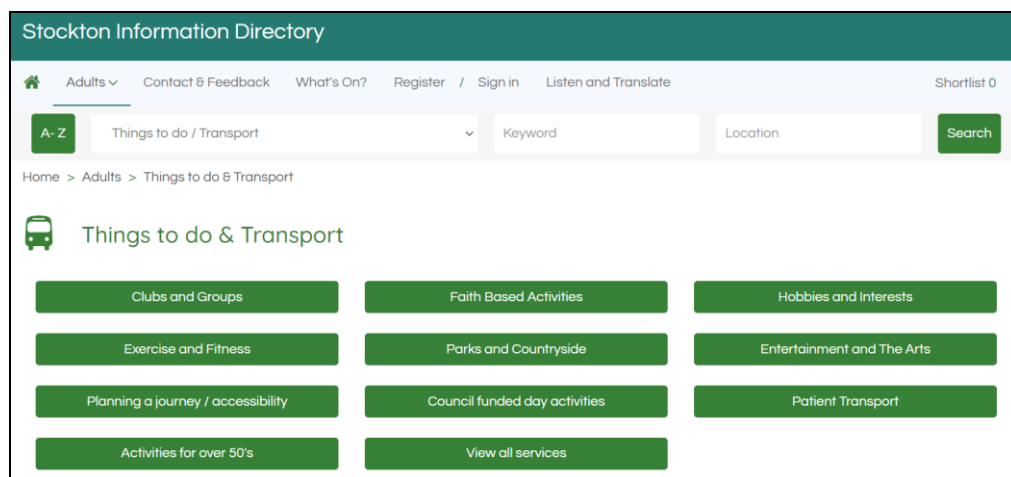
It was acknowledged that further work was needed to identify the amount spent on accessing day opportunities through direct payments.

Transport

- 4.17 A referral to the Community Transport team for support with accessing services can be made if a person is assessed as needing help with travel. Day services commissioned by the Council have access to vehicles to facilitate attendance, and people using a direct payment can use their budget to independently purchase transport.
- 4.18 Where appropriate, the STEPs team offer travel training to individuals, helping them to develop skills and confidence with using publicly available transport options.

Information and Promotion

- 4.19 Social Workers support people with an assessed need to consider what they want to gain by using day opportunities and review available options. The Stockton Information Directory provides information on all local Council-run, Council-commissioned and independently provided services (<https://www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org/kb5/stockton/directory/adult.page?adultchannel=945>), and the SBC website provides further details of Council-run opportunities. Most independent providers also manage their own websites and social media accounts (links to these can be found on the Stockton Information Directory).



- 4.20 Reflecting on the services listed and their geographic locations (see **Appendix 2**), Members highlighted that the buildings where day opportunities were provided from appeared to be concentrated within particular areas of the Borough – ensuring a quality offer across all of Stockton-on-Tees should be a future priority.

VCSE Sector Provision

- 4.21 Local voluntary sector organisations also deliver social activities and initiatives that support individuals to develop the skills and confidence that can enable them to access mainstream community opportunities. Catalyst, the leading voice of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Stockton-on-Tees, works with organisations across the Borough to find innovative solutions to help them continually improve and thrive, and offers a range of specialist support, strategic operations, and a commitment to push forward the conditions in which the several hundred organisations in the sector in Stockton-on-Tees operate. Part of its role is to raise questions about the state of the sector and the issues affecting different communities, along with identifying needs and opportunities to obtain funding, and developing collaborative projects to make a difference.
- 4.22 Catalyst aims to represent the VCSE sector and act as a conduit between it and other organisations, including the Local Authority, to identify ways of working together to meet community need. Having direct access to, and contact with, so many organisations across the sector gives Catalyst an ideal position from which to co-ordinate delivery of services to the community in the best way possible. The weekly Catalyst e-bulletin reaches around 2,000 people in the Borough and includes details of its forums and training events – it also contains advice about funding, governance, and other aspects of running a successful organisation.
- 4.23 Catalyst currently has 148 members, with over 1,000 people registered to receive the weekly e-bulletin which acts as a virtual meeting place for the VCSE sector and provides information including funding opportunities, good news and paid / voluntary roles. The Catalyst website also holds a directory of over 300 VCSE organisations in Stockton-on-Tees – this illustrates how diverse the sector is and how much it has to offer. Included in this are over 50 organisations which support members of the community who may come under the remit of ‘Adult Day Services’.
- 4.24 Members commended the VCSE sector for its vital role in providing wider support within the Adult Social Care domain. Successful holiday activity and food-provision initiatives were highlighted, and replicating this in some way with day opportunities for adults would be hugely beneficial.
- 4.25 Reflecting on the large number of organisations within the VCSE sector, the Committee urged Catalyst to continue to promote its role and the support it can, and does, offer through as many platforms as possible to ensure all groups are aware of the potential to develop and grow. A lot of activity was taking place across the Borough (including volunteering opportunities for the wider public) that people may be oblivious to, and being aware of, and signposted to, Catalyst could help those with an array of skill-sets to become involved (particularly young people, who Members had received enquiries from regarding volunteering).
- 4.26 Members queried if the geographical spread of VCSE activity was consistent throughout the whole Borough. Catalyst felt that provision was widespread, though there was naturally some emphasis on certain areas with a specific need (i.e. linked to places with higher levels of deprivation), and gave assurance that it regularly engaged with organisations across Stockton-on-

Tees to reinforce awareness of where service delivery was taking place. There was no concept of a north / south divide within the Borough.

- 4.27 The Committee considered the benefits of place-based activity for those in more rural areas of Stockton-on-Tees, though it was acknowledged that local people may be more willing to travel within the Borough due to its smaller size compared to other Local Authority areas. It was also recognised that some initiatives could be hampered by time-limited funding windows (e.g. 3-years only) and / or challenges in retaining VCSE staff (with short-term contracts) which may impact on the long-term success of a project – both the Local Authority and the VCSE sector therefore needed to be careful not to build-up hopes around a particular provision if this could not be sustained.

Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (TVCCG)

- 4.28 The TVCCG Mental Health Commissioner informed the Committee that, whilst TVCCG did not directly commission day services for adults, it does have places and opportunities that people are able to access. As well as commissioning Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) itself, TVCCG commission *with* TEWV, and the ongoing programme of community transformation (with funding available) was noted – this has encouraged the voluntary sector to inform TVCCG where they want support, and TVCCG welcome further views from the Committee on closing any potential gaps in relation to this scrutiny topic.

Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)

- 4.29 No TEWV-led day services within Stockton-on-Tees currently exist, but TEWV were involved in multi-disciplinary work (offering direct therapy whilst service-users were present) at Allensway, Vision 25, and Ware Street. TEWV's Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy, and Dietetics offer also allows people to be seen for therapy, as well as delivers staff training.
- 4.30 Two TEWV-led day opportunities services outside the Borough which offer a mixture of health and social interventions were highlighted – Kilton View, Brotton (a 20-place traditional day service), and The Orchard, Middlesbrough (traditional day provision in partnership with Middlesbrough Council).
- 4.31 The Committee queried why TEWV had a day opportunities partnership with Middlesbrough Council and not SBC, and was informed that this had evolved not by choice and was something TEWV were looking to expand to other areas. It was also asked how TEWV had become aware of those who had not been vaccinated against COVID-19 – the Trust stated that this was ascertained through the positive relationships the staff teams had developed with families which meant individuals were comfortable in relaying their vaccination status.
- 4.32 Members noted that some Stockton-on-Tees residents who could potentially use day opportunities were placed outside the Borough, and assurance was given by the Trust that these individuals (and their families / carers) were acknowledged and included in any thinking around future service provision.

Impact of COVID-19

- 4.33 A key driver around this scrutiny topic was the impact of COVID-19 on access to, and delivery of, existing services. In line with Government guidance, access to day centres had been limited during the pandemic, with some buildings closed for periods of time, and attendance only offered to those individuals who had no alternative arrangements and who would be at risk if the provision was withdrawn. However, weekly contact had been maintained with individuals unable to attend day services due to COVID-related restrictions.
- 4.34 Throughout the pandemic, the **Council's** adult day services developed new approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals who would, under other circumstances, be accessing their venues. This included offering online groups, wellbeing calls and other initiatives designed to help people stay connected and supported (including some instances of face-to-face contact in the community). **Appendix 3** provides more detailed information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on services that are run or commissioned by SBC.
- 4.35 Specific support provided by the SBC Community Day Options service was outlined. Following the initial suspension of face-to-face activity, the team realised the need to adapt how they worked so they could offer people a sense of normality, opportunities to speak with people they knew, and to provide support and breaks for families and carers. ICT infrastructure was quickly provided by the Council and staff were given laptops and tablets to allow them to work remotely. As well as facilitating team meetings, the technology also enabled the team to develop a timetable of virtual activities (example below) which allowed individuals to engage, from their own homes, with many of the activities that had previously been provided face-to-face.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:30am – 10:30am on Teams Out and about with Chris and Bev's Virtual tours – visiting Britain's biggest attractions!	9:30am – 10:30am on Teams Everyday Makaton with Anne	9:30am – 10:30am on Teams Musical Makaton with Jan	9:30am – 10:30am on Teams Art and discussion with Lynzi	9:30am – 10:30am on Teams Chair Exercises with Chris
10:45am -11:45am on Teams Games with Elaine	10:45am – 11:45am on Teams Cooking with Mary	10:45am -11:45am on Teams Nature with Caroline	10:45am – 11:45am on Teams Drama with Marty	10:45am – 11:45am on Teams CDO quiz with Stephen
1pm – 2pm on Teams Story building with Anne	1pm – 2pm on Teams Crafts	1pm – 2pm on Teams Book club with Marty	1pm – 2pm on Teams Games with Elaine	1pm – 2pm on Teams Musical Makaton with Jan

The team sent out newsletters written by all the staff familiar to individuals (please see below). They also provided monthly activity packs which were delivered to people in their homes in a covid safe way. The packs offered worksheets and craft projects based around monthly themes which were familiar to people who used the service.

- 4.36 People using a direct payment to purchase day opportunities were contacted by the Council during the pandemic to determine their needs. Where their

usual day services were closed, some people chose to use their budget to engage in activities with friends, family or other providers.

- 4.37 The **VCSE sector** had demonstrated a flexible response and managed to stay in touch with service-users well, including some face-to-face support (while observing social distancing requirements). Some within the sector felt the Local Authority closed down many services without offering alternatives, though it was acknowledged that this was done in response to Government guidelines rather than choice (SBC officers also noted that some clients and their families did not want to continue using a service because of concerns around the pandemic, and that the Council had maintained regular contact with everyone who attended its day options via virtual catch-ups and other innovative ways of keeping in touch with individuals and their families / carers). The strength of local partnership-working was evident, something both Catalyst and SBC played a key role in facilitating.
- 4.38 As with many other organisations, the initial stages of the pandemic led to the temporary closure of existing **TEWV** services due to increased risks, and this had a significant impact on families / carers. Since the social elements could not be offered, a decision was subsequently made to focus on providing health interventions only (where families were happy to receive these), and a temporary outreach function was developed. Services had gradually reopened in-line with infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance, though challenges remain around those families who had declined the COVID-19 vaccination and the need to establish appropriate IPC arrangements for this particular cohort.

Alternative service models

- 4.39 Whilst day centres had traditionally been central to the delivery of day opportunities, a growing body of national guidance has emphasised the limitations of such an offer (e.g. restricting social inclusion and the development of relationships within the community, reliance on a 'menu' of activities that are not personalised, and a requirement for transport to access settings), as well as the benefits of alternative approaches.
- 4.40 Adopting a community-based model has long been promoted, an approach that can enable individuals to access activities that are meaningful to them, support them to be active and valued members of the community, develop confidence, skills and relationships, and empower them to be equal partners in the design and delivery of local opportunities. This model can also open-up a wider range of choice (both within and outside the usual working week), create connections with others and enhance sources of natural support, and prioritises the Council's role as a facilitator to unlock assets across communities and build barrier-free access.
- 4.41 Examples of community-based day opportunities, both within and beyond the Borough, were highlighted:
- **STEPS**: support provided by SBC (based in the Stockton Business Centre) which works with people with a range of disabilities to help them access mainstream and universal opportunities across the Borough.

<https://www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org/kb5/stockton/directory/service.page?id=g9PJvkEXq1w>

- **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. www.gigbuddies.org.uk
- **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. www.grapevinecovandwarks.org
- **Community Circles:** 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. www.community-circles.co.uk
- **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. www.goodgym.org

4.42 Attention was drawn to the often-interchangeable use of the terms 'day opportunities' and 'day centres' when they were actually very different (the latter being a part of the former), as well as the Council's progress around this scrutiny topic over the years. Nevertheless, and certainly in light of events around COVID-19, this review offered a good opportunity to further develop the existing offer and bring new ideas to the table. It also chimed with the notion of 'building back better' pandemic sentiment, and had the ability to influence what was a significant budgetary pressure for the Council that needed to be fully understood.

View from the VCSE Sector

4.43 To effectively represent the interests of the VCSE sector across Stockton-on-Tees and provide a representative voice, Catalyst undertook a consultation to capture the views of several VCSE organisations on day opportunities for adults and the role they can play. Views of two VCSE sector infrastructure organisations were sought, and a local Higher Education Institution (HEI) was also consulted for information on any relevant research in this area (though no relevant research had yet been completed, the HEI was happy to keep Catalyst informed as and when any research was carried out). Key points and themes emerged as follows:

- VCSE sector role in supporting people to access opportunities in their communities: The sector is particularly forward-thinking and less risk-averse than other sectors (enabling new and more radical approaches to be tried), and many VCSE groups have an autonomy which allows them to respond quickly to change and provide a flexible service as they are not restricted by the sometimes-lengthy decision-making processes which often exist within larger organisations. Some limitations exist, mainly due to capacity and funding – for this reason, most organisations felt a combination of Local Authority and VCSE services was needed to provide or facilitate opportunities and support.
- Existing / future services (what should be retained / adapted / changed?): More diversity required in service provision (i.e. various options for people needing support for the same reason) and in the organisations commissioned by the Local Authority, each bringing their different skills and strengths to the provision of services. A more transparent commissioning process was needed so that as many VCSE organisations as possible were aware of tenders which are available and how they can apply (though it was acknowledged that some may not be reading the opportunities which are advertised), as was a move to commissioning more smaller VCSE organisations rather than repeatedly relying on larger, national charities / organisations for delivery.

Strong feeling of the need to carry out direct consultation with service-users and their families or support network in order to identify what services should be retained or changed (one organisation offered to facilitate this through focus groups). The importance of organisations being able to link back to the Local Authority if there were any issues regarding service delivery was also stressed.

- Awareness of good practice elsewhere: Approaches to VCSE-related provision in Yorkshire (replacing services previously delivered by the Local Authority and a focus on hyper-locality – smaller organisations rooted within specific communities being better-placed to respond to local needs than the Local Authority) and North Tyneside (buddying project in collaboration with social prescribing service, facilitating partnership approaches, offering hybrid (remote as well as physical) sessions / community activities) were highlighted. HEI views on the benefits of virtual interaction (alongside in-person support) and the sector's role in addressing any 'digital poverty' to enable vulnerable adults to access remote support was also noted.
- Potential role of Catalyst: Attention was drawn to three specific initiatives – *Social Lights* (matching volunteers with adults with autism or other learning disabilities to provide support to access activities and groups within the community), *Gig Buddies* (national project which matches adults with autism and / or learning disabilities with a volunteer to attend live entertainment with), and *GoodGym* (a running club which does 'good deeds' for members of the community). Catalyst was researching the feasibility of delivering national projects in Stockton-on-Tees including *Gig Buddies* and *GoodGym*, though both would require significant funding in order to be set-up, and research into potential funders is ongoing. If funding were available, the aim would be to identify a VCSE organisation to access the funding to run the programmes with Catalyst's support –

Catalyst would only consider running programmes such as these centrally in the absence of an organisation with the expertise and capacity to do so.

- 4.44 When appropriate organisations were not identified, or were unable to provide delivery, Catalyst was well-placed to deliver projects, drawing-on volunteers and the experience and skills of Catalyst staff. There was a potential role for Catalyst in helping to upskill VCSE organisations to bid for and deliver services which historically were awarded to national bodies. Feedback from the sector suggests that an element of co-production in planning services before they are commissioned would be welcomed – this would give the VCSE sector a sense of ownership / involvement and would be something Catalyst could help facilitate.
- 4.45 Concern was expressed around an observation within the consultation findings that there was *'a tendency to 'force' individuals into a VCSE sector organisation's support even when it may not meet the person's needs'*. Previous work had been undertaken to address any notion of this occurring, and it was suggested that this sort of feedback would be of interest to both the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)

- 4.46 A TEWV project group (including family / carers) was in place to review current day provision, with the aim of considering:
- how to modernise the service model and move away from traditional models of care
 - how to support the varying needs of individuals (age / capacity / ability to either experience, participate, or contribute) and their families
 - how to engage and work with the community sector more meaningfully
 - the use of personal health budgets, and
 - transportation (looking to promote the use of volunteers with this, not just health staff)

The Trust was also developing an enhanced physical health team, a focused piece of work around managing individuals more effectively.

- 4.47 TEWV representatives visited an Amsterdam learning disability service (Cordaan) in October 2019 and observed areas of good practice in the delivery of meaningful day opportunities. The set-up was based on the experience-participate-contribute ethos and incorporated innovative roles and responsibilities including the maintenance of a local forest (Government-commissioned), restoration of cars (which developed into work with other machinery), and liaising with local businesses to create safe spaces. This approach developed a real sense of community, something that TEWV would like to take forward itself.



4.48 Observations and resultant proposed Trust actions regarding a range of learning objectives were shared with the Committee, including:

- Approaches used to manage behaviours that challenge, living with others and also community participation / inclusion.
- Provision for those with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), specifically day service configuration and respite opportunities.
- How transitions from children to adult services were identified, coordinated and managed.
- How technology was used to promote communication between service users, carers and families.
- How meaningful feedback was gained from service users and carers, including those with PMLD.
- How the extensive volunteer programme within Cordaan had evolved, was utilised and was governed.

User involvement and consultation (including family / carer views)

4.49 Various approaches were used by individual providers to collect feedback on services, including annual questionnaires, feedback boxes, and discussions as part of an individual's annual review. Following the emergence of COVID-19, an autumn 2020 SBC consultation was undertaken (primarily conducted through online questionnaires, though phone conversations with some individuals also took place) which involved questionnaires aimed at specific groups:

- People who accessed Council services with a disability (including learning disabilities and autism) (79 responses): Majority of respondents (60) missed going to their day service, principally due to not being able to access their friends (53) and the activities (33). Some (14) expressed an interest in trying virtual sessions, and some (5) liked the activity packs. Just over half (40) expressed a preference for doing more things in their communities.
- People who accessed the Halcyon Centre (44 responses): Respondents had experienced low mood (17) and feeling lonely / isolated (14) as a result of not being able to attend the service, and had mostly missed seeing and talking to people (32) and the activities (12). Majority (33) did not want to be supported by a volunteer rather than a Halcyon team member, had limited access to a smart / mobile phone (13) or internet connection (11), and did not want support in using such devices (34).
- Family and carers of people who accessed Council services with a disability (including learning disabilities and autism) (79 responses): Many respondents (34) would not support their loved one being assisted by a volunteer, whilst most (57) did not feel that virtual sessions could support them in their caring role. Most (52) were aware of the Council's carers service (though 20 were not aware).
- Family and carers of people who accessed the Halcyon Centre (41 responses): Lack of respite / increased pressure of carers role (14) was the biggest impact of the centre closing, though half (21) were managing with the existing situation.

4.50 SBC were 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.

Transitioning into Adult Services

4.51 In support of this review, to understand how parents and carers wanted to receive information specifically about day opportunities, the SBC Disabled Children Team conducted a random sample survey in November 2021 consisting of parents and carers of young people aged 16 or 17 years of age. 39% (15) of the 38 parents and carers contacted took part, and responses highlighted the importance of written information, with suggestions including welcome packs, letters, emails, newsletters or online information. Some respondents also highlighted the benefit of being able to talk through information. Running alongside this was an online survey on the Council webpage which had received seven responses from parents and carers (this remained live and updated response rates could be made available to the Committee in future).

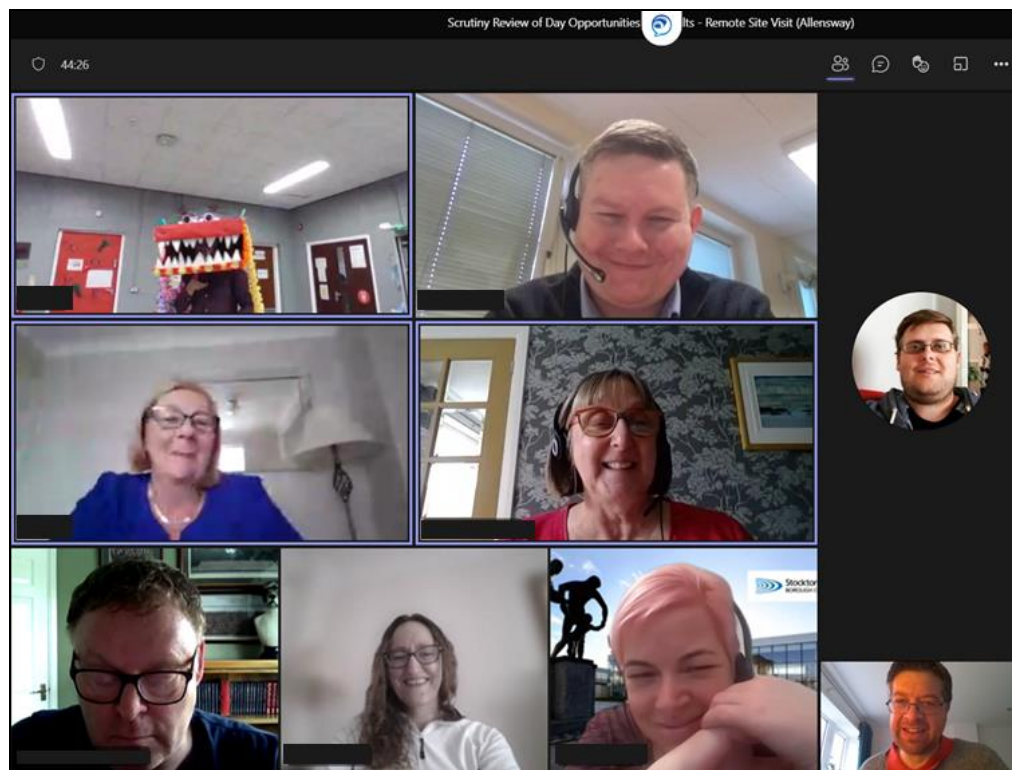
4.52 Parents and carers were also asked '*what opportunities would your child, or the young person you care for, value if they were to access day opportunities when they have transitioned into adult service*', with responses indicating that:

- 53% (8) would like opportunities for their child to continue learning and developing
- 53% (8) desired access to the community
- 47% (7) mentioned opportunities to develop social skills and socialise with others
- 47% highlighted the importance of providing structure and routine via activities such as arts, crafts, gardening, dance and technology
- 40% (6) wanted their child to have access to suitable volunteering opportunities
- 40% (6) raised the importance of developing independent living skills (e.g. cooking, shopping, bus travel, self-care)

4.53 Reflecting on the early results of the Disabled Children Team survey, it was noted that those parents / carers who had responded seemed to focus more on their aspirations for their young person rather than just service opportunities. In addition to parent / carer views, the need to establish the voice of the young person themselves was also acknowledged.

Committee Virtual Visits

4.54 To gain an insight into some of the existing day service provision within the Borough, and to engage with service-users, the Committee undertook four virtual visits (in-person visits were not viable due to COVID-19 restrictions) to Community Day Options, STEPs, Vision 25 and Allensway – see **Appendix 4-7** for notes from these visits.



Demonstration of the Chinese dragon model at Allensway

4.55 Engaging with management, staff and those individuals who were accessing the services at the time, the Committee was able to reflect on a wide variety of views on current provision as well as ideas for the future, including:

Community Day Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Potential to explore an 'enterprise' model around marketing / sales of service-user produce – enhance existing and develop new skills. ➤ Suggested that the provider makes contact with the SBC Engagement Team so it can highlight the volunteering opportunities associated with the service. Has Catalyst had any involvement previously? ➤ Development of pathway from Allensway to more community-based activity. ➤ Further exploration of potential 'double-payments' for day opportunities on top of 24-hour care packages.
STEPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further work needed to improve mental health and resilience following pandemic; particularly highlighted the role of a gradual approach, from 1:1 sessions to small group sessions where people can grow their confidence again – people have got used to not physically attending groups. ➤ Many community activities not orientated to younger people who are keen to know if people of a similar age will be present (is this better achieved via a traditional day service – might need two models depending on an ability to mix with older / younger people?). ➤ Should be opportunities for people using day opportunities to mix and shouldn't be defined by disabilities. ➤ Day opportunities shouldn't just be about habit and routine but should be about growth and development. ➤ Virtual groups to be maintained as a stepping-stone for people building their confidence, but also because they allow more opportunities for people who might otherwise struggle to get out to as many things as they would want to (e.g. due to mobility issues or other disabilities). ➤ Limited wheelchair-accessible taxis on evenings and weekends needs to be considered. ➤ Involvement group has set priorities around raising awareness and reducing discrimination. ➤ Pressure from increasing household bills may have reduced the levels of disposable income people have which, in turn, may impact on what people with disabilities can do. ➤ Better information needed around personal budgets and their options available to people, and this needs to be in a variety of formats (not just online). ➤ Volunteering as a gateway to employment – potential for links to volunteering at other day service providers (e.g. Community Day Options)?
Vision 25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Drop-points for the new premises may initially see some teething issues, though bus-stops will be nearby and staff will collect young adults where required. ➤ Sharing of good practice. ➤ Any opportunity to get family / carer views? ➤ Opportunities to develop 'home sessions' via technology. ➤ Current room was very noisy because of activities going on in different areas, though noted that the new building will provide separate rooms. ➤ Consider whether a nominal amount of money could be given for currently-unpaid work as it would give extra value to what young adults are doing and would be a great achievement for them.
Allensway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More shared-learning from other services – potential for some form of a networking group? ➤ Acknowledged that the service could be better at sharing some of its resources for the benefit of others – investigate ways in which equipment / technology could be moved around. ➤ Good outside space – possible opportunity to use this area for families to enjoy too (e.g. BBQs). ➤ More planning around transition needs. ➤ Would be useful to explore family / carers views too. ➤ Consideration of a peer-led group for day service providers (akin to the care home group) – would expand services' knowledge and enable them to support each other in difficult times.

4.56 Ahead of the virtual visit to STEPs in January 2022, the Committee was provided with details of its new Involvement Group which consisted of clients with sensory loss, mental health, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The first meeting was held remotely in November 2021 and primarily explored establishing the aims of the group and ground rules, but also considered this scrutiny review. Key issues to arise from the group's discussion were:

- Day centres provide opportunities to make friends, develop skills and interests, promote independence and provide a sense of community.
- Two types of day service provision should be offered – the first being a day centre, not disability specific, to promote inclusion; the second being day centre provision that is specific to a disability.
- Traditional day services were considered costly, and some clients have encountered difficulties with travelling independently.
- Day services should be a stepping-stone, an avenue for progression rather than a habit or routine. There should be real benefits and outcomes from attending.
- Advantages to engaging in community activities were the ability to make friends, increased support base in the community, greater control over the activities attended, and often much more cost-effective.
- Volunteering and work placements enable experience to gain paid employment, and also make a difference in developing skill-sets, confidence and self-esteem, as well as building relationships.
- People with a physical disability who use a wheelchair can have difficulties booking taxis, especially on an evening and weekend, which limits the activities they can undertake in the community.
- Information needs to be shared in a timelier fashion so clients can make informed decisions regarding their personal budgets.

The Committee also received feedback from clients on their personal stories and experiences of STEPs, and the very successful development of these individuals who had moved into roles such as volunteering, mentoring, organising activities of their own with and for others, and employment. Gaining self-confidence and increasing independence was a crucial benefit.

Committee Families / Carers Survey

4.57 As it was not possible to hear from families / carers during the above virtual visits, questions were also issued by these visited providers to the families / carers of those individuals who use their service. A summary of the 32 responses received indicated that:

- 'Increased social interaction and opportunities to make, build and maintain friendships' (14) was the most common benefit that families / carers wanted their loved one to achieve from accessing day opportunities. This

was followed by 'increased independence', 'a chance to learn new skills', and 'a chance to try new and stimulating activities / hobbies' (all 8).

- The most important issue in relation to the delivery of day opportunities was overwhelmingly the provision of 'a comfortable, safe, environment where the person feels secure, is treated with respect and all their needs are met' (19). The next highest responses were 'access to exciting, stimulating and varied activities with trips, visiting speakers and chance to try new activities' and 'A team of stable support workers with the right skills (including the ability to empower, enthuse and help build confidence)' (both 5).
- The majority of respondents (20) preferred to be informed of available day opportunities through a phone call / face-to-face conversation with a known professional (e.g. Social Worker / member of the day opportunities team). Post (9), email (6) and online / social media (4) were also indicated.
- Several suggestions were made around how day opportunities providers could help improve outcomes for both families / carers and the person they cared for. The most common involved the availability of transport to and from day provisions (4), followed by greater variety in activities, flexibility to add extra days if needed, access to hydrotherapy facilities (Allensway), and open days for family members (all 2).

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

- 5.1 Supporting Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) duty to provide services for those individuals with eligible and assessed needs, this review tasked the Committee with considering and identifying options for the remodelling of day opportunities for adults. Whilst existing provision has evolved as a result of local requirements and national guidelines, the emergence and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a re-think in relation to how such services are delivered to individuals, many of whom are among the Borough's most vulnerable residents (and very often have families and carers whose own wellbeing is directly impacted). As restrictions around the pandemic continue to be relaxed, it is therefore timely that the Council and its relevant partners reflect on current arrangements, particularly on the balance between traditional building-based provision and a 'needs-led' community-focused service.
- 5.2 Day opportunities have multiple purposes for individuals and their families / carers – they facilitate social connections, activities which promote wellbeing, skills development and greater independence, as well as respite / breaks for the loved ones of those accessing services. As of March 2020, the Council supported around 900 individuals with a range of needs (principally people with learning disabilities and those requiring personal care assistance and support with memory and cognition) to access both in-house and SBC-commissioned services, in addition to those accessing opportunities using a direct payment.
- 5.3 The Committee heard of several factors impacting upon demand for existing, and potentially future, SBC in-house and commissioned services. These included a larger proportion of younger adults (18-24) accessing alternative opportunities through a direct payment (perhaps reflecting what this demographic wants to experience in the community rather than a traditional building-based environment), and ongoing investigations into access to opportunities as part of a residential placement. The existence of a larger number of educational pathways (as an alternative to day opportunities) for people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided young people with further choice. It is therefore important for the Council to think carefully about how many individuals still want to be supported within the present model (which constitutes a significant budgetary pressure for SBC) so the appropriate level of resource is in place.
- 5.4 A key aspect of this review was around transitions (younger people moving into Adult Services), something SBC officers acknowledged required further work when considering day opportunities. To this end, the Committee urge a more joined-up approach between the Council's Adults and Health and Children's Services directorates to identify and support opportunities that are most meaningful to younger people, and to strengthen the dissemination of information about existing services. The level of interest in Vision 25 from younger adults, a service which has fostered links with Abbey Hill and uses its social media presence to market itself, provides food-for-thought in terms of how other providers reach out to those individuals with eligible and assessed needs.
- 5.5 The importance of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in light of the increasing number of people using a direct payment to access a wider range of activities should not be underestimated, and the

Committee was encouraged to learn of the 50+ VCSE organisations which already exist to support members of the community who may come under the remit of 'Adult Day Services'. The Committee heard several ideas from the VCSE sector on future service delivery, and SBC should consider how it links those with an eligible / assessed need to these opportunities, and how it can work in partnership with Catalyst and the wider sector to potentially unearth funding streams (e.g. community transformation programme) to build on existing provision within the community, including the promotion of volunteering possibilities.

- 5.6 In terms of bolstering the day opportunities offer across the Borough, the Committee welcomed Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust's (TEWV) desire to expand on its current Middlesbrough provision. Both TEWV and SBC should initiate work to identify how this could look given the views of people who access services (existing and potentially future) and their families / carers, including those currently placed outside the Borough – possibly as part of a wider Forum involving VCSE / Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group input which could further reflect on the Trust's experiences of the Amsterdam model which the Committee was informed about.
- 5.7 Like many aspects of life, the COVID-19 pandemic had significant repercussions for day service providers. Social restrictions led to the need to adapt the way services were offered, and the Committee commends providers for the demonstrable efforts to maintain contact / support using innovative practices over the last two years. As evident in other aspects of health and social care provision, the pandemic has necessitated the implementation of alternative means of delivery, and the Committee welcome the intention to continue with those elements which have been embraced by people who access services and their families / carers, as well as the staff themselves.
- 5.8 The terms 'day centres' and 'day opportunities' are often used interchangeably and indistinguishably, and although the former had traditionally been central to the delivery of the latter, this review heard of several alternative community-based day opportunities delivery methods which enabled individuals to access activities that are meaningful to them, support them to be active and valued members of the community, develop confidence, skills and relationships, and empowers them to be equal partners in the design and delivery of local opportunities. However, whilst enabling a wider range of choice is to be embraced, there was also much evidence of the satisfaction of, and indeed reliance on, existing building-based provision from people who access services and their families / carers (as demonstrated in views expressed via pre-review and review consultation).
- 5.9 Critical for any service design / development, ensuring the views of users / families / carers are sought, collated and reflected upon was key, something the Committee remains a very strong advocate for. In addition to the submission of previous consultation summaries, this review actively engaged with several providers as part of its wish to hear directly from those involved in existing services. One of the most striking messages was the feeling that day opportunities should not just be about habit and routine, but should involve a focus on individual growth and development (building confidence and skills) – as one individual who was accessing a service stated, rather than a provider merely being a destination, 'it's about seeing it as a journey'. From a family / carer perspective, the development of their loved one's social (friendships /

networks) and personal growth (independence and skills development) within a comfortable, safe environment which treats them with respect and meets all their needs was the principal requirement.

5.10 The last two pandemic-impacted years have undoubtedly focused minds when it comes to how services are delivered by SBC and its partners. In reflecting on previous models of provision, required changes due to COVID-19, and considerations around future demand and preferences, the Committee support the Council's ambition to establish co-production groups (with those who use Adult Social Care) that can aid in the future development of day opportunities, and would also urge the creation of a day opportunities peer group to enable the sharing of ideas / resources. The potential for building-based providers to develop a new / existing community-based programme as part of its offer to foster a wider range of activity and increased integration within the Borough should also be considered, as should further possibilities for the Council and VCSE partners to assist with identified transportation needs.

5.11 As part of initial discussions around this scrutiny topic, several key elements of a good day opportunities for adults offer were identified, including:

- Supports people to do the things that are meaningful to them and helps individuals to live the life they want to live.
- Enables people to establish and grow relationships in their communities, and supports people to be active and valued members of their communities.
- Is developed based upon the needs and views of the people it supports (and their families and carers), and provides people who access services with choice over how they want to meet their assessed needs.
- Supports people to develop the confidence, skills, relationships and abilities that can maximise their control over their lives and access to opportunities.
- Makes full use of existing community facilities and resources as well as opportunities that technology can offer.
- Promotes collaborative working across communities and sectors to deliver outcomes that individuals have identified as important and can act as a signposting mechanism to other services.
- Enables early intervention and preventative services and reduce levels of isolation.
- Is mindful and responsive to national best practice.

The Committee widely supports all the above, though is also conscious that identifying and facilitating individual preferences is not an insignificant task and may have possible resource implications. There is likely to be a wide range of views regarding what people want to do / experience, and whilst some of these may be possible using existing services (whether building or community-based), others may require the identification of new contacts (individuals / organisations) within public / private / voluntary sectors to potentially support a greater range of activity. That said, any attempt to develop more meaningful experiences for people who access services (also benefitting their families / carers) is to be commended, and the Committee welcome the clear intent of all review contributors to progress this very important area of Borough life.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **SBC and its relevant partners continue working with people accessing services and their families / carers to understand demand for both traditional building-based day service provision and community-based activities. This should include:**
 - a) **The creation of co-production groups that can support the future development of day opportunities.**
 - b) **Specific work with those who remain reluctant to return to building-based provision as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (engagement to learn of obstacles / changes in support requirements).**
 - c) **Considerations around preferences of those with particular needs (including potential for mixing between those with differing needs) and differing demographics (e.g. younger adults).**
 - d) **Continuing investigations into access to meaningful opportunities as part of a residential placement.**
 - e) **Considerations around the potential for assisting with identified transportation needs (e.g. ensuring public / private transport options are accessible and respond to the needs of people who use day opportunities).**
 - f) **Changes to the existing budget for SBC in-house and commissioned services.**
- 2) **There is an assessment of the information provided around personal budgets and the options available to people, ensuring this is disseminated in a variety of formats (not just online).**
- 3) **SBC Adults and Health and Children's Services directorates reinforce joint-working to identify and support opportunities that are most meaningful to younger people (including a reflection on any updated results from the Disabled Children's Team online survey), and strengthen the dissemination of information about existing services.**
- 4) **SBC to follow-up with Catalyst regarding the views of the wider VCSE sector around future day opportunities involvement (e.g. promotion of / access to existing VCSE activity, potential funding streams, volunteering).**
- 5) **SBC and its relevant health, social care and VCSE partners share and work towards an agreed vision for day opportunities across the Borough through the most appropriate mechanism (existing or new).**

(continued overleaf...)

Recommendations (continued)

The Committee recommend that:

- 6) All existing SBC in-house and commissioned day service providers ensure they have a mechanism for enabling the families / carers of people accessing services to regularly share their views with the provider, and each other, on existing and future service delivery.**
- 7) SBC ensures, as far as possible, that work experience undertaken by those individuals accessing day services is appropriately recognised.**
- 8) SBC strengthens links between existing day service providers through the creation of a new peer group to share good practice / resources (inc. volunteering opportunities as a gateway to employment).**

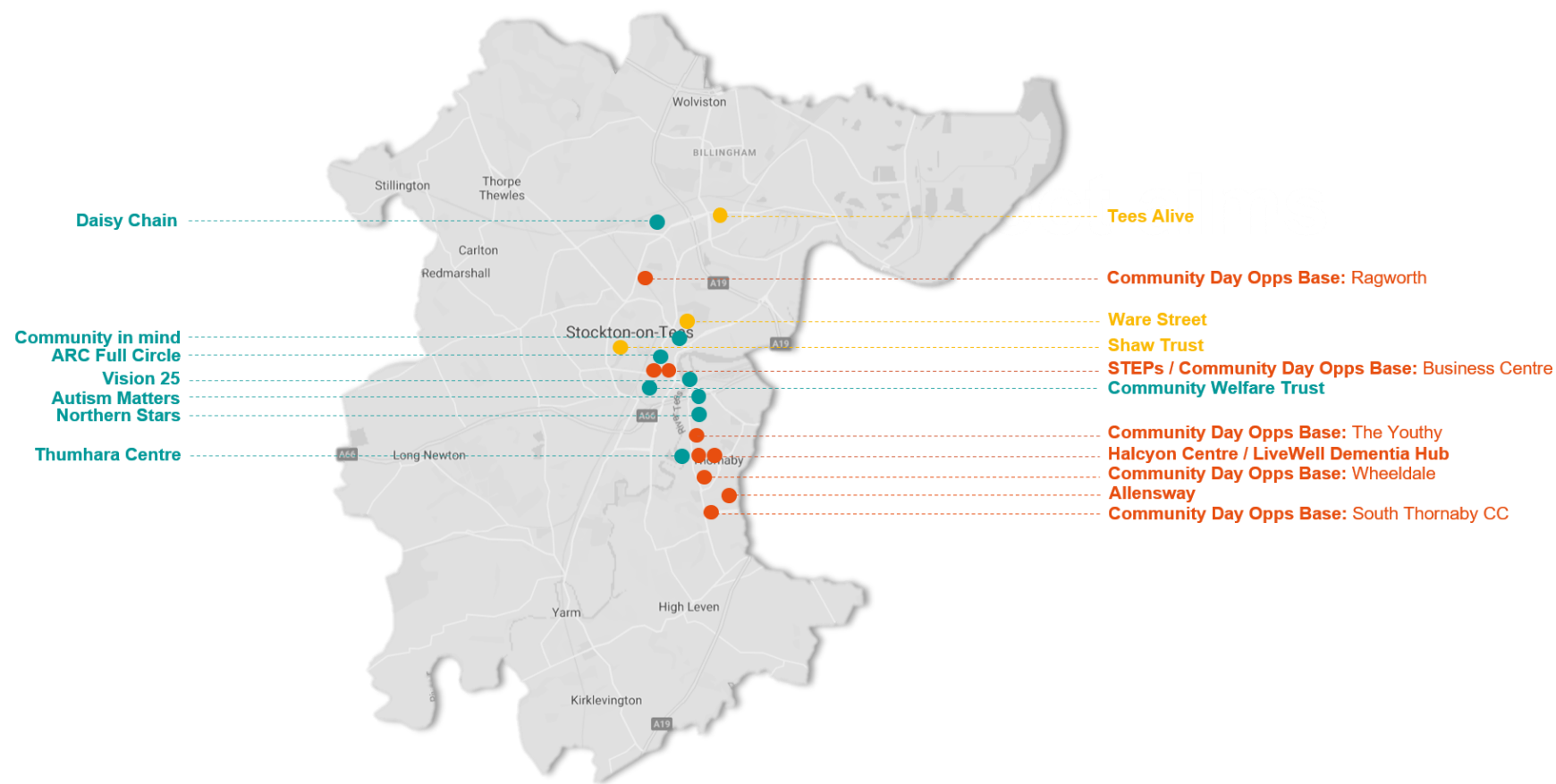
APPENDIX 1: Day opportunity providers accessed by adults in Stockton-on-Tees using a direct payment (as of November 2021)

Providers	Type	No. accessing using direct payment	Ward / Location
Aapna	Provides day services for women and men aged 50+ and people with learning disabilities and autism aged 18+	18	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Atrium	Art studio and gallery supporting individuals with their mental health through creative interests	1	Out-of-Borough (Hartlepool)
Autism Matters	Supporting people with autism through social groups, individual PA support and their Autism Angels service offering work skills training	12	Mandale and Victoria
Camphill Village Trust	Offers training and work experience for adults with learning disabilities through their farm, bakery, felting workshop, farm shop and coffee bar	1	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Catcote Futures	Centre for Post 19 learning and development offering study programmes and vocational options	5	Out-of-Borough (Hartlepool)
Daisy Chain	Provides social groups for young adults with autism aged 18-30, a gardening group and a group for adults with autism aged 30+	5	Norton West
Earthbeat Theatre Company	Theatre group for adults with learning disabilities	1	Out-of-Borough (Redcar and Cleveland)
Full Circle	Theatre group for adults with learning disabilities	3	Stockton Town Centre
Hartlepool Special Needs Group	Provides work experience opportunities within their Resource Centre as part of their Get Together Group	1	Out-of-Borough (Hartlepool)
JPC Farm	Provides day services and training for independence centre for people with disabilities and / or learning disabilities	2	Out-of-Borough (North Yorkshire)

APPENDIX 1: Day opportunity providers accessed by adults in Stockton-on-Tees using a direct payment (as of November 2021)

Providers (continued)	Type	No. accessing using direct payment	Ward / Location
MAIN	Provides social groups for people with autism in specialist settings and the community	6	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Northern Stars	Performing arts company working with adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	13	Mandale and Victoria
Shaw Trust	Work and skills based activities in a garden centre, plant nursery and café for adults with learning disabilities, autism or complex needs	2	Newtown Ward
Shoot Your Mouth Off Films	Arts based projects for people with learning disabilities	1	Out-of-Borough (Hartlepool)
Teesside Ability Support Centre (TASC)	Day centre for adults with disabilities	1	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Tees Valley Asian Welfare Trust	Provides day services for older people including health orientated activities	2	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Tees Valley Community Care Trust	Day centre offering massage sessions, health and well-being talks, craft tables and exercise sessions	9	Parkfield and Oxbridge
Thumhara Centre	Centre providing support for predominantly older people from an Asian background	14	Mandale and Victoria
TIN Arts	Dance school and arts organization for adults with a learning disability or autism	1	Out-of-Borough (Durham)
Unicorn Centre	Provides riding therapy and training opportunities for people with disabilities	4	Out-of-Borough (Middlesbrough)
Vision 25	Provides a programme of social and learning based activities for young people with a disability aged 17+	28	Mandale and Victoria
Total number of provisions		130	

APPENDIX 2: In-Borough providers of day opportunities



● = Council run services

● = Council commissioned services

● = Providers purchased through a direct payment

APPENDIX 3: Impact of COVID-19 on community day options

Community Day Options

Community Bases: July 2021

1. Wheeldale, Wheeldale Crescent, Thornaby TS17 9BX

- 1.1. Prior to the pandemic the site supported individuals to develop independent living skills including shopping, cooking and other domestic tasks. In addition, weekly visits from Prior Pursglove College supported individuals to achieve a personal development qualification. Other activities included Makaton, numeracy and literacy skills and educational activities using interactive technology.
- 1.2. Since re-opening the site has reintroduced a range of activities including baking, numeracy and literacy, gardening and chair-based exercises.

2. The Youthy, 211-213 Thornaby Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6LS

- 2.1. Prior to the pandemic the site supported individuals to attend sport-based activities at a range of settings across the community. The site also offered community walks and travel training, Makaton sessions, pamper sessions and activities based around music, drama, crafts and IT.
- 2.2. Since re-opening the site has reinstated a range of on-site activities as well as regular walks in the community.

3. Stockton Business Centre, 70 to 74 Brunswick Street, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1DW

- 3.1. The Community Day Options team occupy four units as well as office space within the Business Centre.
- 3.2. Prior to the pandemic the site provided an interactive suite with a Tovatafel table, as well as textile and specialist craft sessions (stained and fused glass making, sewing and textiles). The site also offered a range of enterprise activities including producing and selling items in the foyer and other venues. Enterprise activities included supported learning around pricing, packaging and money skills.
- 3.3. Since re-opening the site has restarted a range of art and craft-based activities and is gradually reintroducing its specialist crafts as individual projects rather than group work.

4. South Thornaby Community Centre, 112 Havilland Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9JG

- 4.1. Prior to the pandemic the site offered a range of sport, exercise and game related activities as well as textiles and crafts. Individuals were also supported to access activities at other venues including football at Middlesbrough Football Club's training ground, community Zumba groups and sporting activities at the Pavilion.
- 4.2. This site has not yet re-opened as the team are reviewing how it can be best used.

5. Ragworth Community Centre, 5 St John's Way, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0FB

- 5.1. Prior to the pandemic the site supported individuals to attend sport-based activities at a range of settings across the community. The site also offered support to develop skills around shopping and budgeting, community walks, Makaton sessions, and activities based around literacy, drama, crafts and IT.
- 5.2. Since re-opening the site has reinstated a range of on-site activities.

APPENDIX 3: Impact of COVID-19 on community day options

6. Additional information

- 6.1. The Community Day Options team provided ongoing contact with and support for individuals throughout the pandemic. This included setting up online groups, some of which are still running.
- 6.2. The team previously provided activities from a base in Elmwood Community Centre. The lease with the Centre ended on the 31st October 2020 and was not renewed as the team had not used the venue since the start of the pandemic. Additional space was secured in Ragworth Community Centre as an alternative. This change provided the team with sole use of a large area of Ragworth Community Centre enabling them to implement a range of Covid secure practices.
- 6.3. As of the 23rd June 2021 the team were supporting 32 individuals across its bases (17 at The Youthy, 2 at Wheeldale, 4 at Ragworth and 9 in the Business Centre Units).

APPENDIX 4: Virtual Visit Notes – Community Based Options (19th Jan 22)

<p>Details of main contact during visit</p> <p>Name: Elaine Knowles</p> <p>Job Title: Manager – Community Based Options Tel no:</p>
<p>What did you see?</p> <p>Based within Stockton Business Centre (other bases are at The Youthy, Ragworth and Wheeldale), this service was for adults with a learning disability and was used by individuals of school leavers' age up to a person aged 70 (staff felt mixed age-groups were not a problem). There were four units within the setting: technology room (inc. Tovertafel (magic table)), textile unit, stained-glass infused unit, and art / craft unit (for upcycling / recycling). After an initial introduction from staff, a virtual tour of the setting was conducted (inc. a live Makaton session which was being conducted at another base) – questions were raised throughout and at the end of the tour.</p>
<p>Who did you talk to – staff / service users / family / carers?</p> <p>The manager gave a brief overview of the service and then took Members on a virtual tour of the setting – this involved interaction with both staff and service-users who were engaged with sewing (table mats, bags), embroidery (cushions), tracing patterns (stained-glass), and making plants / decorating boxes (arts / crafts). Staff demonstrated numerous other examples of service-user work (items and packaging) across all four units, and spoke of the 'theme days' they try to weave into the activities on offer and the safety messages that are reinforced when using some of the equipment. Service-users expressed great enthusiasm / pride over what they were working on ('enjoy doing this', 'like all activities', 'enjoy coming here, like working with the staff', 'happy to be back') and, due to the mix of activities, could choose what they preferred to do whilst there.</p>
<p>What were the key issues arising from the visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When COVID hit, staff had to think how best to deliver the service given the new restrictions. Virtual sessions were quickly developed (e.g. musical Makaton, bingo, Friday quiz, Mary's Kitchen), including a virtual timetable / activity packs – this allowed the team to reach-out and connect people, and the most popular sessions have been retained post-lockdown as part of their standard offer. A '<u>support provided during the pandemic</u>' paper was forwarded following the visit – see attached. • By-product of increased use of technology has been improved connectivity between bases. • Individuals who remained at home or were within a residential / supported living setting could still access virtual sessions. Distributed (delivered to their door) monthly activity packs which continue to be issued for those who have yet to return to one of the community day options bases. • Hold fairs where service-user produce (which can be customised) is sold and looking to produce a brochure of items for purchase – thinking of making bunting for the Queen's Jubilee in 2022 and could send a box of items to Municipal Buildings with price list (inc. to a future Committee meeting). • 43 staff in total, including two senior service-delivery co-ordinators, five key-workers (who create person-centred timetables for service-users) and support workers who are a crucial part of the overall provision. No volunteers involved as yet, but it was felt that such additions would bring value. • Links to Allensway (re. transitions) probed – more challenging behaviours presented at Allensway with a need for 1:1 / 2:1 support (in community-based settings, ratio is around 4:1). Manager does have links to Allensway, and a pathway between there and community day options could be strengthened. • Had 94 service-users pre-COVID – 38 have returned, though social distancing requirements still need consideration when planning capacity within settings. • Delays in assessments of those in residential settings potentially impacting upon access to services. SBC currently reviewing contracts around what is included when paying for a 24-hour

<p>package of care (i.e. should some form of day opportunities be provided as part of such a contract?).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The tour gave a positive impression – the setting seemed welcoming and stimulating for those present.	
<p>Any recommendations / feedback for consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential to explore an ‘enterprise’ model around marketing / sales of service-user produce – enhance existing and develop new skills.• Suggested that the provider makes contact with the SBC Engagement Team so it can highlight the volunteering opportunities associated with the service. Has Catalyst had any involvement previously?• Development of pathway from Allensway to more community-based activity.• Further exploration of potential ‘double-payments’ for day opportunities on top of 24-hour care packages.	
<p>Signed: Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Steve Matthews, Emma Champley, Peter Otter, Gary Woods</p>	<p>Date: 19th January 2022</p>

APPENDIX 5: Virtual Visit Notes – STEPs (19th Jan 22)

<p>Details of main contact during visit</p> <p>Name: Kelly Hall</p> <p>Job Title: Personal Development Advisor Tel no:</p>
<p>What did you see?</p> <p>Teams meeting with staff from STEPs as well as two individuals who use the service. Additional information from their involvement group was submitted prior to the session as was two 'client feedback' documents – these were referenced during the conversation. One service-user who had planned to attend the session was unable to do so due to their health (their comments were circulated after the visit).</p>
<p>Who did you talk to – staff / service users / family / carers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEPs team: Manager, Deputy Manager, Personal Development Advisor • Service-users: L and D
<p>What were the key issues arising from the visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L and D highlighted the value of support to overcome barriers to accessing the workplace and volunteering opportunities. • Highlighted value of user-led groups and initiatives, and doing 'normal things'. • Emphasis on setting goals and personal development, with L stating 'it's about seeing it as a journey'; this contrasts with the idea of a day centre as a destination. • Benefits of traditional day centres were noted to be the fact that they provide opportunities to get people out and stopping people feeling lonely. • Pandemic was explained to be very challenging for people with disabilities as it lowered levels of confidence. • Offer adapted during COVID and based on what speaking to people at the start of the lockdown to identify what they wanted from the service (this required STEPs to move from their usual role as a facilitator to instead directly providing groups). • As part of their ongoing work around user involvement, STEPs have recently set up an Involvement Group which currently has around 6-7 members. One meeting thus far (via Teams), and the intention is to be a sounding board for change (with members representing views of those they interact with). • Highlighted the importance of people being able to access long-term sustainable employment, stating 'people need to be able to contribute; you can't take that away from them'.
<p>Any recommendations / feedback for consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work needed to improve mental health and resilience following pandemic; particularly highlighted the role of a gradual approach, from 1:1 sessions to small group sessions where people can grow their confidence again – people have got used to not physically attending groups. • Many community activities not orientated to younger people who are keen to know if people of a similar age will be present (is this better achieved via a traditional day service – might need two models depending on an ability to mix with older / younger people?). • Should be opportunities for people using day opportunities to mix and shouldn't be defined by disabilities. • Day opportunities shouldn't just be about habit and routine but should be about growth and development. • Virtual groups to be maintained as a stepping-stone for people building their confidence, but also because they allow more opportunities for people who might otherwise struggle to get out to as many things as they would want to (e.g. due to mobility issues or other disabilities). • Limited wheelchair-accessible taxis on evenings and weekends needs to be considered. • Involvement group has set priorities around raising awareness and reducing discrimination.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressure from increasing household bills may have reduced the levels of disposable income people have which, in turn, may impact on what people with disabilities can do.• Better information needed around personal budgets and their options available to people, and this needs to be in a variety of formats (not just online).• Volunteering as a gateway to employment – potential for links to volunteering at other day service providers (e.g. Community Day Options)?	
Signed: Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Lynn Hall (part), Emma Champley, Peter Otter, Gary Woods	Date: 19 th January 2022

APPENDIX 6: Virtual Visit Notes – Vision 25 (2nd Feb 22)

<p>Details of main contact during visit Name: Paul Walmsley Job Title: Service Manager – Vision 25 Tel no:</p>
<p>What did you see? Vision 25 is a day service for young adults (18+) with disabilities and has four aims – employment, more independence, increased social inclusion (provision often out of town), and health and wellbeing. Days comprise six parts: two sessions in the morning (craft, trip), followed by lunch, then free-time (e.g. jigsaws, computers), then two session in the afternoon – a period of down-time is used after 3.00pm each day to reflect on the day and learn for the future. Mainly funded by SBC, there were 33 young adults on the register (10 on the waiting list), with a maximum of 23 in the building at any one time due to social distancing requirements.</p>
<p>Who did you talk to – staff / service users / family / carers? After an initial introduction from the Service Manager, a virtual tour of the setting was conducted (inc. a live storybook activity session (led by the Deputy Manager) with a complex higher-needs group, and an ongoing enterprise / craft session involving supported sewing / cutting / stitching). During the tour, Members engaged with service-users who expressed enthusiasm about the setting and the activities they were doing (L: ‘love all of it and my friends’; A: ‘like using the machine’; L: ‘like going, would like to work in the new shop!’) – they also made it clear when they were fed up with us!</p>
<p>What were the key issues arising from the visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current base has car park issues, with staff / parents receiving lots of fines. • Used to cook at lunchtime but moved to packed-lunch due to COVID – will go back to cooking in the future as this ties-in with health and wellbeing aims (preparing food). • To further employment opportunities, an Employment Support Worker (part-time) would normally be recruited to establish aims / abilities of young adults (plans are individual to each person) – cannot do this at present as COVID had restricted opportunities, but have previously had people working in cafes, libraries and at SBC. Progress / goals document sent out families and monitored – Vision 25 find an appropriate workplace (with support) and then it is up to that setting to support the individual’s learning. No remote capability at present to allow for a demonstration of workplace opportunities. Some clients were working in different location and getting experience – the work they were doing was unpaid. • Due to move to new premises in Stockton High Street in 10 weeks (work ongoing now to renovate the new setting). Phase 1 will involve a large bistro / café, the building of a craft room (with produce sold through eBay), state-of-the-art sensory room, IT room and chill-out zone (by April 2022). Phase 2 will see the café open to the public (with young adults working as waiters / waitresses) and a shop at the front with self-made products for purchase. No hoists in the toilet area at present – the new building will have these, and there will be separate rooms for each of the activities. • Older disabled people talking with young adults (as role models) – mainly the Service Manager at present, though the move to the new site will bring more exposure therefore more opportunities for interaction. • Ratio of staff:users was 1:3 (1:1 for those with more complex needs). Main age bracket was 18-24 (oldest 30) and those using the service had a range of abilities. • Identified gap between school / college leavers and adulthood – have worked with Abbey Hill Academy. Help young adults to have independence / sense of responsibility – this benefits their wider family too. • Tea / coffee morning once a week – parents come to Vision 25 and talk to each other. Hold a craft club on Tuesday nights where parents attend and can share experiences whilst doing an activity. Monthly parents meeting held (not attended by staff) where they can also share ad-

<p>vice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regarding transport, Vision 25 are not governed by SBC so don't receive transport provision – 90% brought to current setting by parents / carers.• Build relationships with family to create trust – crucial to have this bond.• Try to ensure the quality of the items made is good – this increases pride in the produce and sell-ability. However, some activity takes place where the outcome doesn't matter (can take things home if need be).• Young adults have choice to decide what they want to do whilst at the setting – some say 'no' to certain activities and staff try to understand why and challenge them (this was considered important). Those observed seemed relaxed and there was a nice vibe about the setting.• Work on social situations and learn about social interactions / skills. Will also teach Stockton 'safe places'.	
<p>Any recommendations / feedback for consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop-points for the new premises may initially see some teething issues, though bus-stops will be nearby and staff will collect young adults where required.• Sharing of good practice.• Any opportunity to get family / carer views?• Opportunities to develop 'home sessions' via technology.• Current room was very noisy because of activities going on in different areas, though noted that the new building will provide separate rooms.• Consider whether a nominal amount of money could be given for currently-unpaid work as it would give extra value to what young adults are doing and would be a great achievement for them.	
<p>Signed: Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Lynn Hall, Emma Champley, Peter Otter, Gary Woods</p>	<p>Date: 2nd February 2022</p>

APPENDIX 7: Virtual Visit Notes – Allensway (2nd Feb 22)

<p>Details of main contact during visit</p> <p>Name: Lisa Peat Job Title: Manager – Allensway Tel no:</p>
<p>What did you see?</p> <p>Based in Thornaby (back of Asda), the service for adults with learning disabilities / complex needs has been open for 32 years and has 11 activity rooms (and other rooms) all on one level (centred around a courtyard). Lots of 1:1 support provided by a team of 30, and referrals are received from other professionals. After an initial introduction from staff, a virtual tour of the setting was conducted – questions were raised throughout and at the end of the tour.</p>
<p>Who did you talk to – staff / service users / family / carers?</p> <p>Initial conversation with Manager, then dialogue with various key workers and an activity planner during the tour which demonstrated the sensory area (an enclosed outside space which was very useful since COVID emerged), canteen (birdfeed being made by clients), educational room (including a Tovertafel (magic table) used on a 1:1 and group basis), art room (clients painting / singing), exercise / physical activity room (adapted, spacious, can be used for active or relaxation means), and OMi room (containing six projectors). Very enthusiastic staff, and open invite for Members to visit in-person.</p>
<p>What were the key issues arising from the visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent adaptations due to COVID included splitting the building in two to create two socially-distanced ‘bubbles’ (this continues to be reviewed). Been able to meet everyone’s needs and have remained open – smaller groups have worked well (hope to continue this). Pre-COVID, capacity was a maximum of 50 – this is currently down to 24 (following risk assessments) in order to keep clients safe. 5 new referrals (transition) over last year – 8 new referrals on waiting list. • Some clients previously used other day service provision elsewhere in addition to Allensway, but COVID has restricted individuals to one setting. • Significant reduction in respite provision in the area due to COVID – multi-agency meetings held in initial stages of the pandemic to establish user / family needs (on an individual basis); good communications between service and Aysgarth (respite provider). Work closely with respite care – need to provide consistent care. • Looking at strengthening awareness-raising /promotion of the service. • Work with different professionals regarding care packages before bringing individuals into the service. • Referrals from Social Workers for young people – work with families / Occupational Therapists / schools to put plans together prior to arrival (used to do this after they came in), and a person-centred activity plan is put in place with allocated staff. • Day options plan includes elements around communication, emotions, personal care needs, health and likes / dislikes. Use a scoring system to determine support level – this is regularly reviewed by a number of staff to get all-round perspective (not just one view). Staff team important for gathering information – working together was key to create meaningful experiences for clients. • Look at themes for activities on a monthly basis (e.g. Chinese New Year, Valentines, Christmas), though needs to be pitched at the right level. • Family / carer involvement – have communications book as a link between the service and family, and weekly feedback is sought from relatives. Have discussed created a family group to allow the sharing of experiences, including a transitions element (feeding into schools). • Try to keep equipment up-to-date – have visited Tree Tops in Stockton re. sensory need support. • Liaise with libraries (people coming-in to give stories) and looking to start aromatherapy ses-

<p>sions and re-start trampolining this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manager has joined Inclusion North – useful platform for sharing good practice.	
<p>Any recommendations / feedback for consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More shared-learning from other services – potential for some form of a networking group?• Acknowledged that the service could be better at sharing some of its resources for the benefit of others – investigate ways in which equipment / technology could be moved around.• Good outside space – possible opportunity to use this area for families to enjoy too (e.g. BBQs).• More planning around transition needs.• Would be useful to explore family / carers views too.• Consideration of a peer-led group for day service providers (akin to the care home group) – would expand services’ knowledge and enable them to support each other in difficult times.	
<p>Signed: Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Steve Matthews, Emma Champley, Peter Otter, Gary Woods</p>	<p>Date: 2nd February 2022</p>