

20 September 2021

Agenda Item: 4

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, LIVING WELL COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE DAY OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY 2021-2026**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report sets out a case for change for Day Opportunities including a vision for the way in which Adult Social Care will support and enable people to live the lives they want and sets out how a Day Opportunities Strategy will help to achieve this. Committee is asked to approve a public consultation on the draft Day Opportunities Strategy, attached as **Appendix 1**, to obtain service user and carer views on the proposals.

#### **Information**

2. Day Opportunities are services and community activities that help people to have a fulfilling life, enable development of new skills, pursue interests, make friends, gain relationships and peer support, and make a positive contribution to the community. Employment support and building work readiness skills are part of the broad spectrum of opportunities that the Council would expect to have in place for people to access.
3. Adults with care and support needs face particular barriers and challenges to participating in community life and activities. They face greater inequalities and harassment and have less access to services and employment. Nottinghamshire County Council aims to help reduce these inequalities by supporting adults to live as independently as they can, build resilience and skills, enjoy good standards of health and wellbeing and have access to mainstream services and activities within their local communities. The strategy will look at how people can best be supported to access the support and activities they need to achieve the outcomes and lives they want.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that redesigning day opportunities was necessary to ensure compliance with restrictions, and some of these measures will be needed into the future to ensure people remain safe as part of ongoing measures to keep the risk to people low, including responding to any future outbreaks. COVID-19 has had a serious impact on the lives of people who use social care services and their carers. Disabled people, for example, more often indicated that coronavirus had affected their health than non-disabled

people (35% for disabled people, compared with 12% for non-disabled people)<sup>1</sup>. Already marginalised people have been more excluded from society due to their vulnerabilities and this has led to both incredible resilience from carers and the informal support of their communities around them, but also great hardship for those overwhelmed by the pandemic, with associated impacts on people's mental and physical health.

5. Loneliness has increased, with Office for National Statistics (ONS) data showing that up to a million more people became chronically lonely (defined as 'often' or 'always' feeling lonely) as lockdown continued – increasing the total to 3.7 million adults by the beginning of 2021<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore more important than ever that people are supported to make and maintain social connections and become part of their communities.
6. COVID-19 stimulated some different services and offers such as digital technology, small scale local community responses and more personalised individual solutions such as those delivered by Personal Assistants, which have been welcomed by some who continue to benefit from the new-found flexibility, friendships and support. Where there have been positive developments the strategy will look to build on that.

## Background

7. Day Services make up the majority of day opportunities at present and currently benefit 1,500 residents in Nottinghamshire with a range of support needs including older people, people with physical disability, learning disability, dementia, Autism and mental health difficulties. Services are delivered directly by the Council as well as independent organisations. The total budget for day services is £16.4m per annum.
8. The current day service offer is well valued by people and their carers, but is predominantly building based services with limited scope to offer a full range of choices and to raise alternative aspirations for people. Some services are provided through a range of other mechanisms including Personal Assistants, Shared Lives and Care Support and Enablement. The approach for day opportunities needs to expand on this and go beyond commissioned services, moving away from an historic emphasis on deficits or needs and instead 'consider the person's own strengths and capabilities, and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help' (Care Act 2014).
9. This is reflected in Nottinghamshire's Adult Social Care Strategy which sets out the Council's commitment to 'promote people's independence and wellbeing by building new relationships between formal social care, health, housing and the support that already exists in families and their local communities'. Comments from people locally during the engagement include: *"My son is desperate to socialise and try new things"* and *"As a carer for a disabled person, I would like the services to be available at different times throughout the week, not just 9-5. Access to additional services would positively affect my family, reducing social isolation"*.
10. During the past year a number of engagement and co-production activities took place including:

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<sup>1</sup> [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain](#), Office for National Statistics, February 2021

<sup>2</sup> [Loneliness Beyond Covid 19: Learning the lessons of the pandemic for a less lonely future](#), Campaign to End Loneliness, July 2021

<b>When</b>	<b>How the Council heard from people</b>
June 2020	Everyone who uses a day service was sent a questionnaire asking about their experiences of receiving day services during Covid.
November 2020	People using day services, people who use direct payments, short breaks, shared lives or mental health support services and their carers were asked to complete a questionnaire, join an online discussion or participate in a telephone call. Discussions were held in existing services to find out what a 'meaningful day' meant to the people who were going there.
February 2021	People who are Deaf were asked about their day opportunities needs to ensure this was fully understood. This was done virtually to enable interpreters to facilitate the session.
March 2021	People who use services, their carers, service providers and staff were asked about the practicalities of implementing the things that people told the Council they wanted. People provided feedback via questionnaires or through telephone conversations.
Ongoing	The Council is working with a small group of young people preparing for adulthood to design options for them where the current offer is not suitable. This will help trial the future model and is fully informed by the group.
Ongoing	The Council worked with a group of people with a learning disability to respond to concerns about loneliness and boredom during the pandemic to increase the use of virtual options and alternatives to meeting in day centres when this was not possible. The group has continued to be involved in work around the day opportunities strategy including the "I Statements".
Ongoing	The Council has worked with a group of carers who self-identified as being interested in the strategy through the survey in November 2020. In addition, carers of people receiving short breaks have met on a regular basis and as part of that have commented on the day opportunities work and the impact day opportunities have on their lives. Two sessions with carers from the Carers Hub have also informed the work.

11. In total the Council has heard from over 1,500 people who use services and their carers. This involvement of people who are directly impacted by services has directed the draft strategy and accompanying actions.

## **The Vision**

12. In order to move away from a predominantly service-based approach to meeting needs, a shift in focus is required to a personal approach. This should be done in conjunction with the community assets and services where they live, which bring people and places together, through a range of methods, to support people to live ordinary lives. Community assets are the wide network of community groups, services, businesses and faith-based provision within communities (SCIE Asset Based Places 2017).
13. The draft strategy sets out a vision for an inclusive society where mainstream leisure and employment support is accessible to people who access care and support and that through the use of Shared Lives and Personal Assistants they are able to access this how they want,

when they want. The strategy also reflects that internal services will develop in response. This will include:

- the provision of day services for those with complex needs
  - working with others to support people through enablement/reablement to gain independence including accessing employment and community support
  - continuing to provide support to those already utilising day services as appropriate.
14. The shift in focus will see patterns of investment change gradually over time; as more people choose community based options, a greater number of people receive short-term enablement and reablement offers and people find alternatives within their local communities. Funding will move accordingly to ensure those services are available to meet people's chosen options, with alternatives being commissioned or developed in response to demand.
15. In July 2020 the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) produced a paper, Adult Social Care - Presenting a Better Future, which identified the need for government and local authorities to think very differently and transformationally about the future of social care. 'For too long care has been built around organisations and buildings such as hospitals, day care centres and care homes. The future must be about what works for us as individuals and our families, with a whole series of local organisations working together to organise care and support that enables us to work, stay independent at home, and be as engaged in our communities as we want'. With this in mind, the strategy considers day opportunities in the widest sense in addition to the use of day services.
16. In line with the focus of the Prevention Strategy, which is currently in development, to ensure that services and opportunities are in place which prevent, reduce and delay the need for social care, the strategy takes a broad approach in looking at how adults with additional needs can be enabled to access a meaningful day.
17. The strategy has been developed in close collaboration with the Short Breaks Review in considering the needs of carers and reflecting the role day opportunities have in supporting carers. Whole family approaches and enabling carers to continue their role are key aspirations of the strategy. In setting out a vision of ordinary lives where people can access mainstream services in their own community, the strategy supports the strengths-based approach the department is taking to working with people.

### **What people have told us**

18. Key themes from the engagement with people who use services were:
- seeing friends
  - getting help with learning new things
  - doing exercise and sporting activities
  - attending evening and social events
  - attending activities in their local area (e.g. going to cafes, the cinema etc).

With carers citing the following as being of importance to them:

- getting a regular break

- having their own support network
- being able to carry out their caring role
- having the opportunity for hobbies and leisure activities
- being able to keep going to work.

19. People who use services and their carers worked to develop a set of 'I statements' that form part of the strategy and will inform future commissioning. People want to be able to say:

- I am treated as an individual
- I am asked about the things I can already do
- I am asked about the things I want to do
- I am asked about what I want to achieve and how I can be supported
- I am asked about what my family's needs are
- I am helped to use support I already have like my friends and family
- I am part of my local community
- I know the community I am part of are welcoming and understand my needs
- I am able to be as independent as possible
- I can get a Personal Budget or Direct Payment
- I get the support that is right for me and this might change over time
- I am able to keep in touch with the people I want to see
- I can do the activities I want to do and wherever possible I can choose where I do them
- I can access services and activities at evenings and weekends
- I am supported for as long as I need to be
- I can learn new things
- I feel safe.

20. The strategy aims to respond to the user and carer feedback by providing a broader range of opportunities for people to support the aspirations that people have to be a part of their community. Some of these developments will take time but the strategy sets out a direction of travel for the department to move towards along with people, communities and providers of services.

## Consultation

21. The strategy supports the already agreed departmental approach to strengths-based working and approaches to promoting independence and so the focus of the consultation exercise will be on the impacts to those responding. The consultation will be hosted online and depending on COVID-19 restrictions and guidance at the time some face to face activities may be able to take place. In addition to the strategy attached at **Appendix 1**, a shortened version will also be produced and carers have asked that some hard copies of that are made available on request. An easy read document will also be produced.

22. Legal advice has been sought on the process. The duty to consult can be either a statutory duty or an implied duty. In the present case there is not a statutory requirement but, as it affects a specific group of people, it falls within the implied duty provisions. There are certain requirements about how the consultation should be carried out, including that it should be carried out at a time when the proposals are at a formative stage, it must give sufficient reasons for the proposals, together with adequate time for the consultees to consider and

respond, and finally, the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.

23. If approved, the consultation will run from October to December 2021 and the results will be brought back to Committee in January 2022. Feedback from the consultation will inform a final version of the strategy as well as the future commissioning intentions. The commissioning intentions will set out what the Council will need to do, whether through procurement activity, community development, or changes to processes and approach which are required to implement the strategy. Policy Committee will be requested to approve the final strategy.
24. Future implementation will continue to be co-produced with users, carers and broader stakeholders by working with individuals and groups to identify, create and evaluate any alternatives. This will ensure that the services or activities meet the needs of those who will use them.
25. Further activities will be as follows:

Activity	Timescales
Adult Social Care & Public Health Committee	September 2021
Strategy consultation	October - December 2021
Consultation analysis and amendment of strategy	January 2022
Development of commissioning intentions	December 2021 – January 2022
Implementation including commissioning activity	January 2022 onwards
Policy Committee	March 2022

### Other Options Considered

26. Continuing with the day services current offer is a possibility but would limit the ability to create greater community opportunities, increase access to employment and thus impact positively on wellbeing, loneliness and provide the flexibility that carers and people who use services need.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

27. Working in strengths-based ways with individuals and ensuring the right opportunities are available will help to ensure services and activities are accessible to people in their community, enabling people to develop connections and relationships and thus build their resilience and contribute to a greater sense of wellbeing and reduced isolation. A broader range of provision should help to meet need more flexibly, responding to the feedback of those who use services as well as their carers.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

28. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

29. The 2021/2022 budget for Day Opportunities (covering both internal and externally provided services) is £16.4m per annum. Future developments will be made within that budget envelope as people's Personal Budgets will move with them where they choose an alternative option.

## **Human Resources Implications (SJ 17/8/21)**

30. At this stage of the work there are no identified Human Resource implications, but this will be assessed as the project progresses.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

31. An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken for this work and updated/refreshed at different stages of the project.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That Committee approves the undertaking of a public consultation on the draft Day Opportunities Strategy, attached as **Appendix 1**.

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### **Constitutional Comments (AK 26/08/21)**

32. This report falls within the remit of Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee under its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (DLM 01/09/21)**

33. The current budget for 2020/21 is comprised of £5.96m for External Day Services and £10.46m for Internal Day Services. This excludes the Day Services Fleet and other associated transport costs.
34. Any future plans will need to be reviewed and costed as they are developed, however it is envisaged they will be contained within this budget envelope and so will not impact the overall budget required.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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