

Nottinghamshire Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-2027

Connecting people in communities to live
the lives they want to lead



Our vision is for an inclusive society where mainstream leisure and employment is accessible to people who access care and support.



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Summary

We know that 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. Day opportunities can help people to have a fulfilling life, enable development of new skills, gain employment, pursue interests, make friends, gain relationships and peer support, and make a positive contribution to the community. Over the last 18 months we have been talking to people about their experiences of accessing day opportunities and what they wish to do and achieve (a summary of what people said is included below). The strategy will look at how people can best be supported to access the support and activities they need to achieve these and the lives they want.

COVID-19 has had a serious impact on the lives of people who use social care services and their carers. Disabled people more often indicated coronavirus had affected their life than non-disabled people in ways such as their health (35% for disabled people, compared with 12% for non-disabled people), access to healthcare for non-coronavirus related issues (40% compared with 19%), and access to groceries, medication and essentials (27% compared with 12%)¹. Among people who indicated coronavirus affected their well-being, disabled people more frequently than non-disabled people specified that the coronavirus was making their mental health worse (46% for disabled people and 29% for non-disabled people), they are feeling stressed and anxious (67% and 54%) or they are feeling lonely (49% and 37%)². Already marginalised people have therefore 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.


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

² [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain](#), Office for National Statistics, February 2021

The pandemic also meant that redesigning day services and opportunities was necessary to ensure compliance with restrictions and keep people safe. Whilst many of the changes, such as reduced socialisation were negative, others were welcomed by people who use services and gave them the chance to take part in new activities, learn new skills and do things in a different way.

The Council recognises that people value day opportunities. This strategy aims to provide a clear vision and intentions for future commissioning to support the development of day opportunities in Nottinghamshire enabling an increase in people's access to their local communities and services, ensuring there is enough accessible provision for those that need it, where they need it with the appropriate support.

Whilst the majority of people who have day support currently access building-based services there are a number of other options people utilise such as commissioning a Personal Assistant (PA) using a direct payment, accessing Shared Lives for daytime support or supported employment and volunteering opportunities. People also access a variety of community activities such as lunch clubs and activity-based clubs and services. It is our vision that in the future more people will access the available community options to have a meaningful day in order to live a fulfilling and "normal life".



Day services benefit approximately 1300 people across Nottinghamshire with a wide range of support needs including older people, people with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, and people with mental ill health across the county. Currently services are delivered directly by the Council as well as by 60 external providers. The majority of current day service provision is building-based which may limit the options available within the wider community for those wishing to partake in a broader range of daytime opportunities.

It is recognised that accessing day opportunities is a key source of support for carers who rely on this provision for respite and/or to attend paid employment, medical appointments etc. As such the strategy incorporates both the needs of carers and the people they care for into the future vision for day opportunities.

In summary, the key aspirations of this new strategy are to:

- Focus on the individual, their strengths, choices, assets, and goals through person centred planning
 - Focus on the outcomes that people who use services and their carers wish to achieve
 - Work with the whole family to ensure that the support provided works for individuals and their carers
- Support people to build relationships and avoid social isolation
 - Provide support that enables the person to access a range of opportunities in the wider, and their own, community as an active and equal participant
 - Create welcoming communities that understand the needs of those who access them
 - Focus on skills development, learning and improving independence in daily living i.e. travel training and employment where possible
 - Maximise the opportunity to use personal budgets or direct payments to access support or activities of the person's choice including employment of Personal Assistants (PAs)
 - Ensure choice and flexibility is available through a diverse range of opportunities and support mechanisms (e.g. people are supported to do the activities they want to do and, wherever possible, they can choose where they want to do them)
 - Develop services that are flexible to meet the needs of those who use them including during evenings and weekends

- Develop a range of services to support people short, medium, and long-term in line with their needs and goals
- Enable carers to continue in their caring role whilst maintaining their own health and wellbeing and employment (where applicable)
- Support people through their life course, ensuring that the right support is available at the right time and recognise that needs may change over time as people age or their independence increases or decreases
- Ensure that people feel safe



Why the need for change?

A clear strategy is required to start to redress the increased inequity faced by those who use social care services following the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure appropriate day opportunities are available for those who need/want them, increasing people's access to activities and services in their communities. These should be outcomes focused and meet the aims identified in people's support plans. Whilst it is recognised that building-based day services may be appropriate for some individuals, others will benefit from more diverse opportunities to learn new skills, participate in a wider variety of hobbies and interests, access the community and develop friendships and support networks. This can build on many of the initiatives that sprang up from within communities to support people during the pandemic and which have continued in many places. We know for example that loneliness reduces people's healthy life expectancy and that research shows that "loneliness and social isolation are harmful to health. Lack of social connections can increase the likelihood of early death by 26%. That risk is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and is higher than that caused by obesity and physical inactivity"³. One of the good things that has come out of the pandemic is a plethora of both informal and organised arrangements that have helped ensure those who may otherwise be lonely, have contact and support or friendship from those around them.

³[Recognising Loneliness](#), Royal College of Nursing

In addition to tackling these inequalities, a 2017 analysis of the Council's, 'younger adults' services' identified that:

- **37%** of people could achieve greater independence with some adjustment to their support, such as 'enablement' services,
- **35%** of people could achieve better outcomes with a care package that better reflects their needs, skills and aspirations,
- **28%** of people were benefiting from a package of care and receiving the right level of care appropriate to their needs was allowing them to live as independently as possible.

Although the above information is now dated, the principle that more work can be done to support independence remains. Whilst it is recognised that building-based day services may be an appropriate mechanism to deliver day opportunities for some people, less-intensive, community-based provision or enablement and reablement may be better suited to others to support them to maximise their independence and meet their outcomes more effectively. It is important that full time day provision is not utilised as an automatic progression from full-time education and that instead of focusing on care requirements (whilst recognising

the importance of supporting family carers), the strengths of the individual, the outcomes they want to achieve and their aspirations are the driving factors in the commissioning of support and services.

ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) suggest a series of changes for a more flexible approach that services can adopt including:

- The ability for people using services to be able to switch between services to maintain their original levels of service and support
- A wider variety of options available to people, so they can move to a more community-based model and become less reliant on building-based services
- More alternative ways of giving unpaid carers a greater say and choice in how they get support in caring
- Good digital access to services for those who don't want to go out during the pandemic
- The opportunity to move from traditional building-based to more personalised and flexible services

People who use services and their carers have told us what is important to them and this strategy enables the Council to respond to that feedback to meet the needs and expectations of the people in Nottinghamshire.



A review of Day Opportunities

Stage 1 Engagement: Day services and Covid

In June 2020 the County Council carried out an engagement activity to assess people's experiences of receiving day services during Covid. At this time, the building bases were mainly closed. However, when asked, the majority of people who use services said that they would return once they were able to. Of the 13% who said they would not want to return, the main reasons stated were 'worry about getting ill' and uncertainty about safety. Day services promptly responded to these concerns putting in place a Covid secure offer to enable people to return as safely as possible. People who use services reported that the things that were most important to them about attending day services were seeing friends in a safe place and help with learning activities. Additionally, carers reported that they needed support to access breaks (particularly if the person they cared for was not attending day services as they usually would) and securing a support network for themselves.

Stage 2 Engagement: 'What is a meaningful day'

In November 2020 people using day services, those in receipt of direct payments, users of short breaks, shared lives and mental health support services and their carers were invited and supported to participate in completing a questionnaire, online discussion, participate in a telephone call and to hold discussions within existing services to find out what a 'meaningful day' meant to them. This engagement activity built on that previously carried out as restrictions continued and people had returned to some form of day support.

The findings from the early engagement questionnaire identified that the most important thing that people wanted to keep doing was seeing family, friends and staff and socialising closely followed by attending day services. People identified a range of activities they either did or would like to do in the future including arts and crafts, cookery, exercise and sporting activity, evening and social events and community access (including day trips, going out for meals and visiting new places/places of interest). People most disliked staying in and feeling lonely and isolated. People also identified new things that they wanted to learn including cooking, carrying out domestic tasks, money management and learning to use IT. People were asked to identify any barriers they currently experienced with being able to access the things that they had identified. Things that were reported included physical and mental health, lack of support and finances.

Stage 1

Stage 2

ENGAGEMENT

Table 1 - Summary of findings from people who use services

What are the things you want to keep doing?	See family/friends/staff/socialise	43%
	Attend day service	41%
	Arts and crafts	37%
	Exercise/sporting activity	35%
	Community access	25%
What would you like to do more of?	See family/friends/socialise	21%
	Exercise/sport	17%
	Arts and crafts	13%
	Day centre	12%
	Day trips/visiting places	11%
What are the new things you want to try?	Arts and crafts	10%
	Cookery	7%
	Swimming	7%
	Evening events/social events	4%
	Gym	4%
Are there any new things you want to learn?	Cooking	16%
	Computer/phone/tablet	4%
	Arts and crafts	3%
	Domestic tasks	3%

Carers were also asked what they needed to carry out their own caring role. They reported that the things that were important to them were the person they cared for being able to access day services, socialising, carrying out the carer role, accessing breaks and having the opportunity for hobbies and leisure activities. They reported that having access to this support helps with their own physical and mental wellbeing, allows them to attend to their own personal care needs, provides time for them to socialise with friends and family, enables them to continue in paid employment and enables them to have a rest and "recharge their battery". Carers were also asked what they would like to see more of and reported a need for a wider range of activities for the cared for and at more flexible times, more carer breaks, the need to know what was available, and timely reviews and regular check-ins. Carers reported barriers to them being able to access the things they had identified including their caring role, the availability of support and services (e.g. for evenings and weekends), their own health conditions and time and finances.

"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."



Table 2 - Summary of findings from carers questionnaires

What are the things you want to keep doing?	Day service	21%
	Socialising	20%
	Carrying out caring role	19%
	Carer breaks	18%
	Hobbies/leisure activities	15%
What could the Council do more of?	Wider variety of activities for cared for	10%
	More carer breaks	8%
	Information/support advertised to carers	6%
	Timely reviews/regular check ups	4%

Stage 3 engagement: How would the things identified impact on you

Throughout March 2021 we asked people who use services, their carers, service providers and staff about the practicalities of implementing the things that people told us they wanted in the second engagement activity. People were invited to provide their feedback via questionnaires or through telephone conversations. Summaries of the feedback can be seen in the tables below.

Table 3 - Summary of responses from those who use services when asked where they would like to access services

Where would you like to do the things you told us about?	Number of responses	Percentage of total responses
Cafe/pubs	32	65%
Day centre	30	61%
In your local area with staff	30	61%
Shops	28	57%
In your local area with friends	28	57%
At home	25	51%
Libraries	18	37%
Leisure centre/gym	17	35%
College/school	10	20%
Work placement	1	2%
Guitar classes	1	2%
Concert	1	2%

People who use services have told us that in addition to accessing activities within the day service **65%** of people would like to access pubs/cafes, **61%** would like to access the community with staff, **57%** would like to go shopping and/or out with friends and **51%** would like to do activities at home.

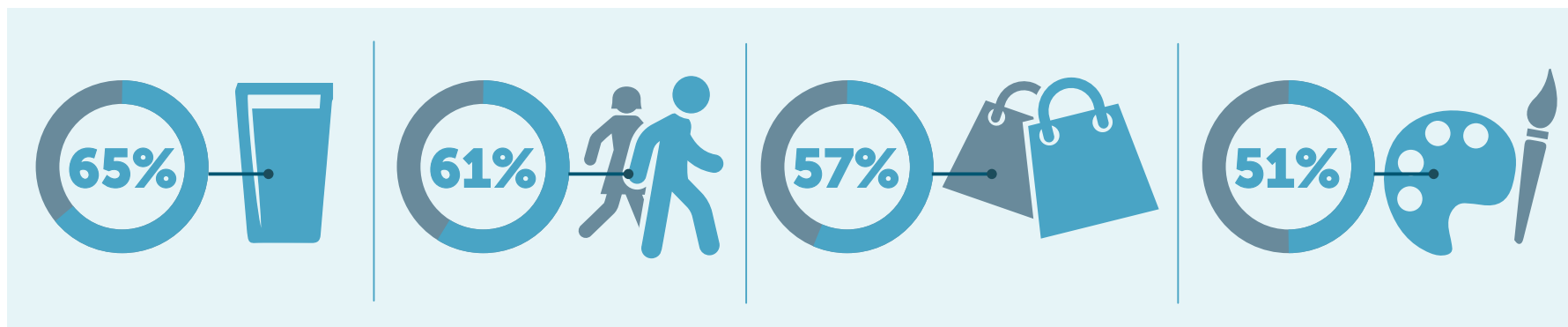


Table 4 - Summary of responses from those who use services regarding requirements for assistance

Would you need any help to do these things or get to these places?	Number	Percentage
Support worker/carer	16	33%
Yes	15	31%
Transport	13	27%
No	5	10%
Emotional support/anxiety management	2	4%
Familiarisation support	1	2%
Sometimes	1	2%
Friends	1	2%

There were some concerns raised over accessing community-based activities with **33%** of people saying they would need the support of a staff member, **31%** saying they would need some sort of support (type unspecified) and **27%** saying they would need help with transport.

Table 5 - Summary of responses to carers regarding impact of any changes to delivery model

If people were accessing these alternatives in shorter blocks of time and at a number of venues - how would this impact on you?	Number of responses	Percentage of total responses
Positive	17	32%
No impact	11	20%
Access issues/transport	5	9%
Wouldn't work	4	7%
Impact on work	3	6%
Weekends	3	6%
Able to accommodate	2	4%
Impact on siblings/wider family	1	2%
Need morning activities	1	2%
Online	1	2%
Anxiety issues	1	2%
Needs easy access	1	2%
Shorter times still need to be long enough to get a break	1	2%
Planning needed	1	2%
Base needed to run sessions	1	2%
Cost	1	2%
Needs constant care	1	2%

Of the 54 carers who responded to the survey **32%** thought that accessing community activities and venues would be positive for them and the people they care for and enable greater flexibility in the type of support they received. A further **20%** thought that any changes would have little or no impact on them as carers and **6%** stated that weekends in particular would be beneficial. A further **6%** did note that alterations to service may impact on their working day and a further **9%** were concerned about transport and accessibility. **7%** of respondents stated that changes would not work for their family.



32%

of carers thought
accessing **community
activities** and **venues**
would be positive

"This would be a huge positive for us all as Tom would be happier, meeting people and keeping busy."



Table 6 - Summary of responses to carers around overcoming potential barriers

Is there a way we could support you to make this work for you?	Number of responses	Percentage of total responses
Transport	12	22%
Range of activities	7	13%
Being local/accessible	6	11%
Flexibility	5	9%
Information	5	9%
Care/support	3	6%
Advanced notice to plan	3	6%
Support from family	2	4%
Evening care	1	2%
Unworkable	1	2%
Weekend support	1	2%
Day centre	1	2%
Smaller groups	1	2%
Community access	1	2%
Safety	1	2%

Carers were asked if there was anything in place that could support them if the person they cared for accessed services outside of a day centre. The biggest obstacle was around access to transport (**22%**) followed by requiring a range of activities (**13%**), the need for services to be local (**11%**) and to enable flexibility (**9%**). **9%** of people also stated that having access to information so that they knew what was available would be helpful.

“Would be great for my brother, providing he has assistance and transport sometimes.”

Stage 4 Engagement: Formal consultation on strategy proposals

During October to December 2021, people were asked what they thought of the proposals contained within this strategy. People were invited to provide their feedback via questionnaires, through discussions with their day service providers or by attending a focus group session. Summaries of the feedback can be seen in the tables below.

Table 7 - Summary of responses from those who use services when asked where they would like to access services

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The plan says we will support people to be more involved in their local community. What do you think about this idea	29.23%	29.23%	15.38%	13.08%	13.08%
The plan says there should be different options people can choose to help them meet their care and support needs. People might need to have the option to be supporting in both building bases and in the community. What do you think about this idea?	34.62%	38.46%	9.23%	13.85%	3.85%
The plan says that many of the activities that are important to people could be done in the community. We want to support people to do things like meeting friends and learning new skills in the community. What do you think about this idea?	25.98%	28.35%	11.81%	23.62%	10.24%
People said they wanted to learn new skills and be more independent. The plan says the support we provide will build on what someone can do and what they want to achieve. We call this strength-based approaches. What do you think about this idea?	30.23%	37.98%	13.95%	11.63%	6.20%
The plan says we will support people to move onto different opportunities as their life changes. This could mean getting less support as people learn new skills and become more independent. It could mean more support if their health or conditions become worse. What do you think about this idea?	24.81%	34.88%	21.71%	13.18%	5.43%

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The plan says we will offer support at different times on different days. This could be in the evening or at weekends. This could help people to have more choice over the activities they can do. What do you think about this idea?	32.28%	30.71%	13.39%	17.32%	6.30%
The plan says that providing different types of support, at different times and supporting people to be more independent will help carers. What do you think about this idea?	27.13%	38.76%	14.73%	13.95%	5.43%
We want to meet the needs of people we support better by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support at different times that work better for people • Doing things in the community • Supporting people to become more independent Do you think this will help you?	25.81%	38.71%	18.55%	10.48%	6.45%

Although the majority of responses supported the proposals, individual issues raised included:

- not feeling safe in the community because of Covid
- people who had accessed day services for 20+ years being concerned about change or if they were to try something different whether there would be an option to return to the day service should this not work out
- the need for investment in communities to support the vision
- concerns about the sustainability of existing services should there be a wholesale move to community support
- affordability of community activities, particularly when having to factor in transport costs

However, in the main people stated that they would like to access community facilities and options if they were close to home, easily accessible and had the appropriate facilities and support to get there. People also felt that there could be greater use of technology. People said that they often felt lonely and isolated and that this was often worse at evenings and weekends, they therefore welcomed the proposals around flexibility and developing natural networks and friendships. People also felt that the existing day centres could be adapted to become community hubs, offer activities at evenings and weekends and have activities specifically aimed at younger people.

Overall people were supportive of the proposals but clearly stated that people should be offered real choice and that changes should be carried out slowly. The final vision and how this will be implemented reflects the feedback and comments and concerns raised throughout the process.

The New Vision of Day Opportunities

To respond to what people have told us, Nottinghamshire will make a shift in practice in the delivery of day opportunities based on this feedback as well as national and local priorities and good practice evidence. The proposal is to move away from approaches of solely providing 'day care' to instead:

- Focus on the individual, their strengths, choices, assets, and goals through person centred planning
- Focus on the outcomes that people who use services and their carers wish to achieve
- Work with the whole family to ensure that the support provided works for individuals and their carers
- Support people to build relationships and avoid social isolation
- Provide support that enables the person to access a range of opportunities in the wider, and their own, community as an active and equal participant
- Create welcoming communities which understand the needs of those who access them
- Focus on skills development, learning and improving independence in daily living i.e. travel training and employment where possible
- Maximise the opportunity to use personal budgets or direct payments to access support or activities of the person's choice including employment of Personal Assistants (PAs)
- Ensure choice and flexibility is available through a diverse range of opportunities and support mechanisms (e.g. people are supported to do the activities they want to do and, wherever possible, they can choose where they want to do them)
- Develop services that are flexible to meet the needs of those who use them including during evenings and weekends
- Develop a range of services to support people short, medium, and long-term in line with their needs and goals
- Enable carers to continue in their caring role whilst maintaining their own health and wellbeing and employment (where applicable)
- Support people through their life course, ensuring that the right support is available at the right time and recognise that needs may change over time as people age, or their independence increases
- Ensure that people feel safe

People in Nottinghamshire have told us that they want to be able to say:

- I am treated as an individual
 - I am able to keep in touch with the people I want to see
 - I feel safe
 - I am asked about the things I can already do
 - I am asked about the things I want to do in the future
 - I am asked about what I want to achieve (what my goals are and what things I would like to learn) and how I can be supported
 - I am asked about what my family's and carer's needs are
 - I get the support that is right for me and this might change over time
 - I am helped to use support I already have like my friends and family
 - I am part of my local community and the area where I live
 - 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 so that I can buy my own support and services and have more choice and independence
 - 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



New model of Day Opportunities

Within this strategy the regaining and developing of new skills, as well as the promotion of independence and well-being are identified as essential elements. It is also recognised that people benefiting from day opportunities will have different levels of need and that this might change over time as people's needs increase due to age or illness or as people gain independence. Therefore, it is proposed that there are four levels of support in acknowledgement that some people require a relatively short period of support to realise their aspirations whereas others may need longer term specialist intensive support. It is anticipated that those who require lower levels of support will primarily access opportunities within their communities. Those requiring more specialist provision or higher levels of support may continue to require building-based in order to support their needs most effectively, but the aspiration will remain that everyone should be able to access their communities if they choose to. Provision of support will be built around the strengths of

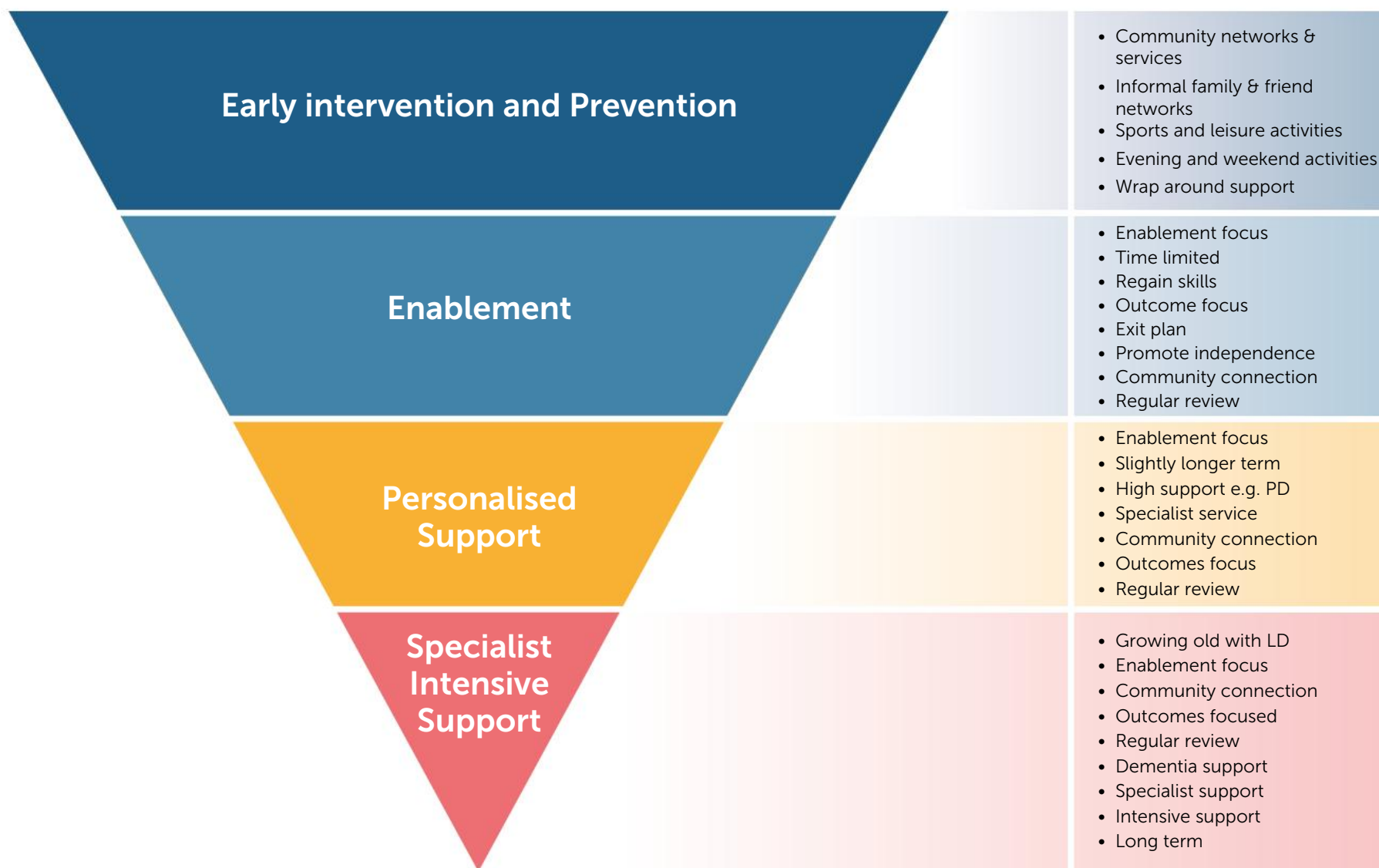
the individual, in a personalised manner within an inclusive society where mainstream leisure and employment support is accessible to people who access care and support and that through Shared Lives and PAs they are able to access this how they want, when they want. Support will be responsive to changes in personal circumstances such as a desire to access work, ageing with a learning disability or a change in the needs of carers due to their own health or ageing needs. Wherever possible planning will be carried out in advance of these life events to ensure appropriate transition is carried out.



The four levels are:



Day Opportunities Model



Successful delivery of the model will have the following outcomes:

- Person centred planning that supports individual aspirations and strengths
- Opportunities to make a positive contribution including employment opportunities
- Enablement focus including clear links with the Maximising Independence Service (MIS)
- Accessible community opportunities are available when they are required including at weekends and evenings
- Every person travels as independently as possible
- Focus on support not services
- Maximised use of community assets
- A clear information and advice offer of what is available
- Increase the proportion of carers who report that they have as much social contact as they would like
- Increase the proportion of people who use services who report that they have as much social contact as they would like

- Maintain the proportion of people who report doing things in their community that they enjoy
- Increase the proportion of young adults who are supported to access employment, education, training or volunteering across each of the primary need areas (i.e. learning disability, mental health support need, physical disability)
- Increase the proportion of adults in receipt of a Direct Payment employing a Personal Assistant



To deliver this model and achieve the above outcomes the Council has set out a number of implementation actions:

Commissioning Intentions and Market Development

Investment to support sourcing of Personal Assistants and setting up of Direct Payments

Employment focus and investment linking in with wider corporate employment programme including increasing access to volunteering and job carving* to ensure suitable employment options are available

Ensure investment patterns over time reflect the increase in personalisation for individuals and the adaptation of services for the life course

Work with communities, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and local businesses to ensure accessible communities are available

Work with social prescribers and Primary Care Networks to ensure community-based opportunities are known and used

Work with organisations such as Sports England and Active Notts to develop sport as a mechanism for community integration

Encourage the development of Micro Enterprise in relevant growth areas

New contracts and payment approaches to reflect the outcomes and support required (including evenings and weekends)

Development of new service specification for employment support

Development of strengths-based and outcomes-focused service specifications and approaches

Enhance the information and advice offer to ensure a full range of alternative options can be effectively communicated

Ensure services are available to meet a spectrum of needs including those with complex or specialist requirements

Develop the Shared Lives offer to provide greater choice and control for individuals including the option of Shared Days provision to support greater community involvement and the formation of friendship groups

Develop County Council owned day services to support the implementation of the vision outlined in this strategy including:

- o The provision of day services for those with complex needs
- o Working with others to support people through enablement/reablement to gain independence including accessing employment and community support
- o Continuing to provide support to those already utilising day services as appropriate
- o Reviewing Provision in line with the increasing shift to the community
- o Development of a Service Level Agreement for in house provision

Work with operational teams to identify gaps in provision and then in partnership with external providers of day services and wider day opportunity support such as micro providers and Community Interest Companies (CICs), to broaden the offer of support and choice for those needing it

Assess pilot activity to inform future developments for alternative provision

Ensure a diverse and sustainable day opportunities market is available for people to have real choice with regards to the type of support they receive and activities they access in order to meet their outcomes

Culture Change

Strengths-based approaches to assessments are utilised across all staff teams

Move away from fitting people to services

Work closely with existing services to coproduce new offers of support

Work with staff to ensure that the full range of day opportunities have been considered before the most appropriate service is commissioned

Ensure that services are commissioned based on needs and outcomes

Promote the use of “next steps” through regular reviews, when identified outcomes have been met

Personalised Planning

Strength/Asset based planning

Enablement focus

Ensure whole family approaches are followed to ensure both the carer and the cared for person’s needs are met

Work with individuals and their families to discuss wider day opportunities provision, offering alternatives at a pace relevant to the individual

Ensure planning considers transport and activity costs

* Job carving is used where the person can successfully undertake the majority of tasks in their job role but there may be an element of their duties which they are not able to complete

