

**CABINET REPORT**

9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

**DAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE  
WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

**APPENDIX B**

**※ Dudley Users Forum ※**  
**For Learning Disability Services**  
**Parents/Carers Forum**  
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At its meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, members of Dudley User Forum for Parents/carers discussed Richard Carter's Briefing Paper on Day Opportunities in detail and made comments on all the questions -they asked for it to be forwarded to him as soon as possible because of the consultation timescale. Here are their comments.

**Dudley User Forum for Parents and Carers – Response to Richard Carter Briefing Paper Questions – May 2009**

***RC Question1: How can we encourage more people to take up personal budgets?***

***Dudley Forum A:*** There is an underlying assumption that they will apply to all, but they may not be suitable for everyone. Surely, it will depend on the personal, individual assessment of each service user and carer? If the emphasis is on more choice, then why is the assumption that there should be more personal budgets i.e. giving no choice. Carers feel that the LA should challenge MP's and Government on this.

For those cases where it might be appropriate, the group felt there needs to be some effort made to explain more about them e.g. to give concrete figures, and explain who will administer them, and what help there will be?? Carers are already busy and often tired with caring – it feels like another task they will be expected to undertake. Also, how will the person and/or carer know what is out there 'to buy' as it were? What services are there – carers don't think there are many alternatives. They need information on this. Could social services publicise the 'in control pilot' information in some way?

***RCQuestion2: How can we carry out more reviews and make sure people know about personal budgets.....?***

***Dudley Forum A:*** Isn't this a staffing issue- better use of staff would also help. Also see comments under 1 above.

***RC Question 3: Should we agree that no new service users especially those under 25 should be referred to a day centre as a first option?***

***Dudley Forum A:*** No, the group doesn't feel this should be the case. If, under a person centred plan, it's appropriate for them, then they should have that option. Otherwise, the group felt it's discriminatory to exclude one particular group as a blanket directive.

***RC Question 4: How can we encourage new providers of day opportunities and other community services?***

***Dudley Forum A:*** The group felt this is the flaw currently in individual budgets as promoted at Transforming social care sessions. Even if people have the money there are few, if any, alternatives. Learning Disability services need to do some promotion with

existing and potential providers. What about the rates which are being or will be offered? Are they attractive?? There is a need to look at other areas and find best practice and innovate. There is also a need to promote the infra structure and make links with voluntary sector providers. What about using existing mechanisms e.g. DCVS to help new providers to grow. What about links with other council services etc to attract other monies in. Someone or organisation will need to help new providers through the uncertainty as they become established.

The group felt there should be someone who has modernisation as their responsibility who can promote and find new opportunities and make links as suggested above.

***RC Question 5: Can we develop any new employment services.. as social business.....etc ..run by people with learning disability...etc***

***Dudley Forum A:*** As above, there is a need to do some promotion work and link with other supportive groups/organisations e.g. voluntary sector and business. There is a need to use existing knowledge to build on e.g. Lunch on the run. What about some pump priming money? Look at other best practice and at staffing, because there will be some need for support and assistance even if only initially.

The group also felt that the LA itself could set an example as well as its partners in Dudley PCT and others, by employing people with learning disabilities –and ensuring they are proper jobs. What about one of the local Councillors being a champion of this within the LA?? And what about encouraging local businesses to act as entrepreneurs in setting up social businesses in conjunction with LA.

***RC Question 6: If day centres are going to focus on people with very complex needs do we need one, two, three bases.....etc***

***Dudley Forum A:*** If the service is to be truly individual and personalised how can these decisions be made without knowing how many people will require the services in the near future? Surely it depends on how many people have complex needs currently, and also some idea for the future of the complex needs of the young people in transition?? How many people are currently defined as having complex needs? What is the definition and who makes the decision??

The group feel that the correct way is to review of all people currently in the centres to find out how many fit the criteria of complex needs, then a decision can be made on future requirements.

It was pointed out by members of the group, that the new Valuing People now document does not specifically say that day services should be closed, but that people with complex needs should be enabled to use community services more. A similar comment exists in the recent Joint Review document.

There were strong feelings that the emphasis on community services is more beneficial to people with less complex needs and that the requirements of people with complex need will be overlooked. Even now more could be done within the day centres to improve activities for users. It was noted that in recent years there has been a decline in outings for users of the day centres.

Some members of the group again felt that the underlying assumption is not correct. Why not re examine the use made of existing day centres so they are used differently. They could be used as hubs for the people who are able to go out into the community, they have facilities and services which would be expensive and difficult to insert into the many community venues which seem to be being suggested. There are also health and

safety and protection issues which are more easily controlled than in community locations.

By changing their nature, people with complex needs could be accommodated in the revised hubs which would have appropriate facilities for them. There could be changes to what they do so that there is more interaction with the community for the people who are there e.g. more going out to local activities for them and letting the community in e.g. as community café.

With the revised hub/daycentre there may also be opportunity for people with learning disability to be involved in running them in some way; and perhaps they could act as a venue where some of the advice and information on alternative services, personal budgets etc. could be offered.

***RC Question 7 Which activities could be provided at satellites in community rather than day centre.....etc***

***Dudley Forum A:*** We refer to our comments above about the revised day centre being a 'hub' from which other activities can be accessed/organised etc. as well as providing for people with complex needs.

What is the object of the satellite? It could be difficult and costly to try and provide/arrange numerous community venues. There may be needs for alterations etc what about health and safety considerations. There is a danger, if activities are not properly organised, that satellites just become mini copies of what is being criticised (nb by outside regulators not carers) in the existing day provision – places where people sit around in groups with no meaningful activity.

**RC Questions 8,9 on Use of satellites.**

***Dudley Forum A:*** Members strongly felt that there should be a reconnection with the original purpose of PULSE which was – People Using Local Services Every Day- this is what was proposed and what service users and carers wanted. So what a person does each day depends on their locality, what the person wants to do and what help they need to do it.

The new idea seems to be to set up lots of 'mini' day centres – but the idea is for people to use services, so they should be mainstream if possible e.g. leisure centres, colleges etc.

One comment was made – why do they need fixed bases?- why couldn't they use a vehicle as a base? – which would give the flexibility that's lacking currently.

***RC Q 10. How can we enable people with learning disabilities to run their own satellites?***

***Dudley Forum A:*** Need to define what satellites are needed first- then look at promoting and supporting those who might want to be involves also use existing expertise e.g Lunch on the run.

***RC Q11: How can we increase locations with facilities etc.....***

***Dudley Forum A:*** The comments above apply, that the group feel this could be difficult and expensive process. It may be better to make links with existing local authority services e.g. leisure centres , libraries and Primary care trust health premises, as well as businesses /groups etc who already have or should have facilities for people with disabilities.

***RC Q 12: What is the best way to use staff to allow...etc .....***

***Dudley Forum A:*** There was a general feeling that staffing is a crucial issue in all this. They felt that the ideas for using community services, whilst good in theory, will be much more staff intensive. There will also be a need to cover the requirement of Health and safety, risk assessment and safeguarding. The consequence would seem to be that overall service users and carers would see a reduced service. How this can be managed while providing a better service to people with complex needs is difficult to see at the moment without employing more staff.

***RC Q 13. How can we encourage independent travel.....***

***Dudley User Forum A:*** The group asked how many people who currently go to Day Centres will be able to travel independently? What is the definition of independent travel? What about safeguarding – ensuring service users are not more vulnerable to abuse, bullying and hate crime?

Existing public transport is not great; in terms both of staff understanding the needs of people with learning disabilities and public reactions. The alternative, Ring and Ride is not ideal. There are many issues with how they can be booked easily, their regularity, problems with them not being able to be there when and where the person wants. There are also capacity issues now as people are being encouraged to use them instead of transport. The LA needs to sort these issues out before they encourage too many more people to make use of them.

***RC Q 14 How can parents/carers and service users be involved.....***

***Dudley User Forum A:*** Parent/carers felt that the services do not currently make great use of parent/carer input. There needs to be much more clarity over how and to who carers address comments. Mechanisms for feedback need to be publicised to all parent/carers. There will need to be checks put in place in any new systems as there is a feeling that they will be even less easy to influence. Some suggestions were of a person who is designated to collect feedback and do regular evaluations of services with carers and service users independently, as if feedback is given to someone known to them there can be reluctance to criticise.

***Dudley Forum Additional Comments:*** The group were very keen to stress that people with complex needs do need to be considered more and provision made for them, especially to do things they enjoy and are meaningful activities for them. The group feel this could be done within the existing day service setting now. It should not need to wait for all the changes to be made before this is done. The group are aware that Richard Carter said he would look at their comments that regular activities and outings for these service users have been diminishing over the last couple of years. The group also said that as well as service users needs, carers do have their own needs and that day centre and day activities also allow carers to have some time to themselves during the day while providing the meaningful activities that service users want and deserve. For carers who want to work the provision of appropriate, meaningful, day opportunities is also essential.

May 2009

# P.U.L.S.E



We wrote an easy read version of Richard Carter's document. We then visited all day centres and 2 Pulse places and asked people what they thought.

Thank you to the Day centre staff who helped the staff from Dudley Voices for Choice.

We asked as many people as possible in the time we had.

We didn't have time to talk to people with complex needs.



We talked to 98 people.

Stourbridge 21<sup>st</sup> April: 11 people  
Stourbridge 29<sup>th</sup> April: 5 people  
Amblecote 22<sup>nd</sup> April: 4 people  
Stourbridge 1<sup>st</sup> May: 8 people  
Lower Gornal 7<sup>th</sup> May: 4 people  
Lower Gornal 8<sup>th</sup> May: 11 people  
Lower Gornal 8<sup>th</sup> May: 15 people  
Lower Gornal 8<sup>th</sup> May: 10 people  
Amblecote 13<sup>th</sup> May: 3 people  
Amblecote 14<sup>th</sup> May: 2 people  
Lower Gornal YC 15<sup>th</sup> May: 10 people  
The Dingle 15<sup>th</sup> May: 15 people



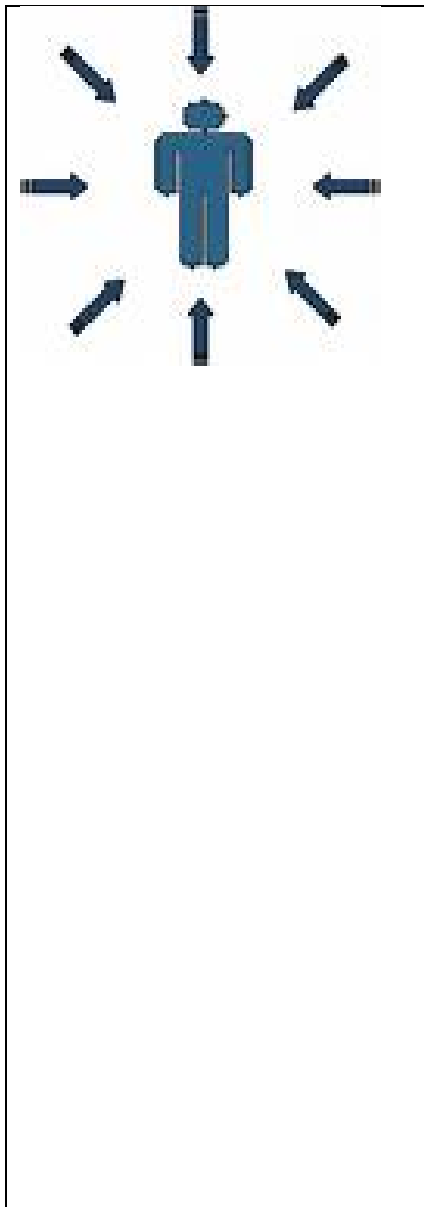
We put together the things people said.

Sometimes people said the same sort of things at different centres and sessions. Then we put '(all centres)' next to things people said.



1. How can more people have their own person budgets?

A lot of people did not understand what personal budgets were (all centres).



Most people said they had never heard of personal budgets.

We think that more work needs to be done about personal budgets and people need to be given more information.

People said they would like information in leaflets, on television, on the radio and on the internet in a way they can understand.

One good idea for this could be a video made by people with learning difficulties explaining about personal budgets.

People said information should be available in places they go to like the library and the post office.

People would like their social worker to help them to understand about personal budgets.

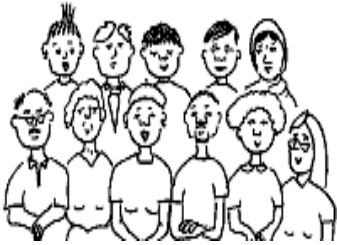
Some people are worried about money skills.



2. How can we do reviews more quickly? This mean more people will know about personal budgets.

A lot of people said they did not know who their social worker was.

Some people could not remember when they last had a review. People wanted to see their social workers more.



A lot of people said they did not have their own social worker and when they do it can be very hard to get hold of them.

Some people said they had very good contact with their social workers and had had reviews recently.

Nobody who had their reviews recently could remember talking about personal budgets much if at all.

At one centre most of people knew they had one review a year but would like more.



3. The council thinks it would be a good idea if people with a learning disability who are under 25 are not offered the chance to go to a day centre as first choice. What do you think?

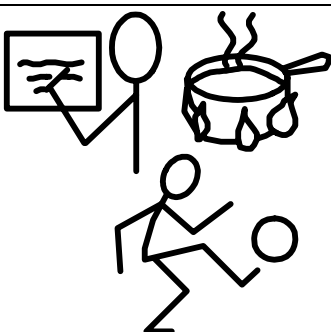


People think this would be a good idea. They thought people should be offered other things to do and other opportunities.

Some people who were under 25 said they would like more days at the centre.

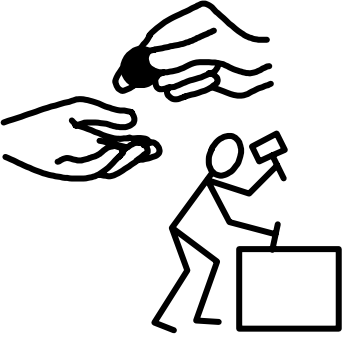


Some people think it would be a good idea but not work for everyone.



Some older centre members preferred the day centre but the younger people wanted a choice.



4. Who else could offer people with learning disabilities other things to do during the day?

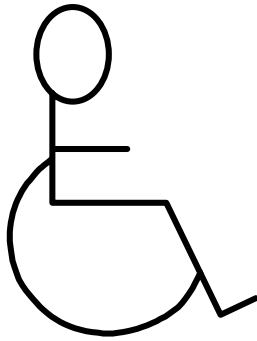


	<p>These are the ideas that people came up with.</p> <p>Doctors and leisure centres could help to make exercise programmes for people.</p> <p>Employers could offer job placements that could lead to real jobs.</p> <p>Colleges could offer courses as well as work.</p> <p>Places that offer activities in smaller groups during the day like Pulse.</p> <p>Charity shops could be a place to go as well as other volunteer work.</p> <p>Having support workers in the community to do different activities.</p> <p>Family members could also support people to do other activities.</p>
	<p><u>5. What jobs could people with a learning disability do?</u></p>
	<p>There are a lot of jobs people with learning disabilities can do. People came up with lots of ideas:</p> <p>Teach and help train people.</p> <p>Work in places like hospitals, leisure centres.</p> <p>Work for the post service.</p> <p>Do manual jobs or skilled jobs.</p> <p>Work for the council.</p> <p>Work in a factory.</p> <p>Work in a garden centre.</p>

	<p>Work in an office.          Work in a shop or cafe.          Work in people's homes.</p> <p>Companies could also give work experience with a job at the end of it.</p> <p>Most people said have never been given the opportunity to see what jobs they could do.</p>
	<p><u>6. What do you think about a drop in centre?</u></p>
	<p>Some people did not really understand what a drop in centre would be like.</p> <p>People found it hard to think about going to a drop in centre when they had been going to a day centre on the same days for a long time.</p> <p>Some people liked the idea but were worried about how to get there and what transport they could use.</p> <p>Other people said it would be good to have a place run by people with a learning disability for people with a learning disability, where people could come for a chat and a drink. Many thought this is a good idea.</p> <p>Some people already meet friends outside of the centres.</p>



7. Centres are going to be for people who need a lot of support. How many centres do we need?



People found this a very difficult question. They could talk about their own centre but did not understand the effect of closing other centres.

Most people think there is the right amount of centres. A lot of people did not want to leave their centres after being there most of their lives.

Some people who are more able said they would not mind the centres being for people with a lot of support needs as they could do something else.

Others said that they could just have one big centre for people who needed it.

Some said they thought they only needed enough centres for people with a profound learning disability.

Some people thought they did not have enough information to be able to answer this.



8. How can we make centres better?



Centres would be better with more staff, more variety of activities and the chance to learn new things.

People would like to go out on day trips more often. People would like to make better use of the outdoor spaces they have.

Some people think they do not have enough time to socialise with people at the day centre and would like more time in the recreation area.

Centre members said that they would like to have more choice and control over what they do in the centre. They would like to have more say to change the activities they already do.

The centres need to be updated and modernised with better equipment and a café style dining area.

People would like to do some paid work at the day centres.

People would like centres with no swearing, no fighting, no arguments, and people to be more polite and friendly. Others want the centres to be less boring and want to be able to get out more.

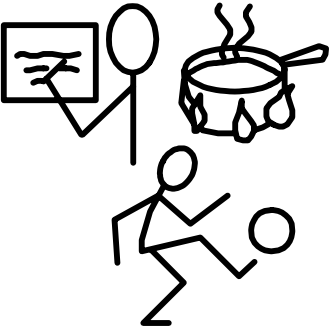

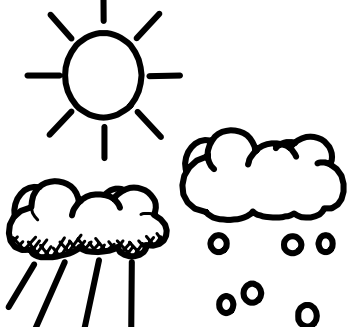

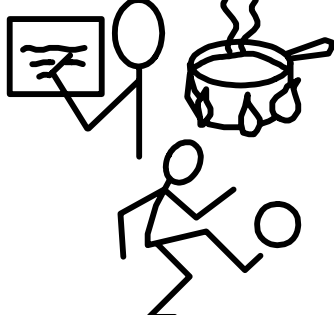
Some people are happy with the centres as they are.



9. What things could you do at local community centres?

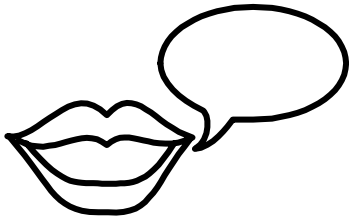
These are the things people said:

Meet up for a drink, meet people, play games, do keep fit activities, have discos, outdoor activities, different types of games, bingo, snooker, church services, evening activities

	<p>and computer activities.</p> <p>Do courses in reading and writing.</p> <p>Some people found it hard to think what they could do at community centres.</p>
	<p><u>10. Should you just meet at community centre and then go out from there?</u></p>
	<p>Some times people should stay at the community centres and other times they should meet and go out (all centres) it would also depend on money and weather.</p> <p>Access to community centres needs to be better.</p>
	<p><u>11. Should everyone no matter what their support needs be able to go to smaller places like community centres?</u></p>
	<p>Everyone should be able to go to join in activities at day centres no matter what their needs and get the support they need (all centres).</p> <p>There does need to be bigger more accessible toilets and better transport.</p>



12. Would you like to help organise your own centre?



A lot of people would like to help organise their own day centre where they had more of a say but would need to know a lot more about how to do it.

Some people are happy with the way there centres are.

Some people would not like to organise their centre.

Some people would like more choice in their own centre and less interference from the government.



13. What support would you need to do this?


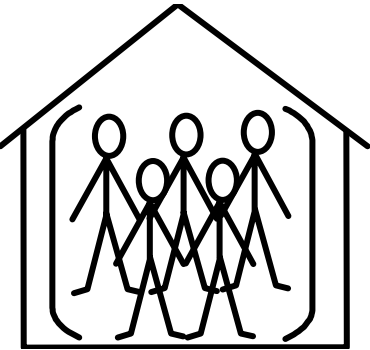




Staff need to support people. We would need enough money.

There should be paid jobs for people with a learning disability.

People would need to be trained to do new things and given help with transport.

Support from organisations like Dudley Voices for Choice.

	<p><u>14. What is the best way for staff to support people in the community?</u></p>
	<p>Staff need to give people as much independence as possible while making sure all their needs are met.</p> <p>Many people would rather do things on their own than have everything done for them.</p> <p>Staff could help with basic skills like road safety, shopping and money.</p> <p>People like staff to be flexible. Some people would like staffing to be 1:1 or 3:1.</p>
	<p><u>15. How can we help people to travel independently?</u></p>
	<p>People with a learning disability need to have more training on using transport. Also they need to have easy ways to pay.</p> <p>The bus passes should have not restrictions on when they can be used.</p> <p>Timetables should be easier to understand use.</p> <p>People need staff to help and support them to use transport.</p>

	<p>People would like ring and ride to be easier to use.</p>
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One idea was that there could be a buddy system where people learned from each other. Walking routes could also be planned.

A lot of people said they have never been allowed to catch the bus.



# “Having a Good Day... Every Day”

The Future of Day Services in Dudley for People with a Learning Disability Carers Consultation Event

**Amblecote Centre: Saturday 14 March 2009**

## **Introduction**

In October 2008 the Learning Disability Joint Review said that Dudley’s Day Services require further modernisation. This event was one part of a consultation with users, carers, staff and providers to decide on the way forward. The event was organised by Dudley Carers in Partnership in Learning Disabilities<sup>1</sup> working with Learning Disability Services.

Invitations were sent out to carers of people with learning disabilities whose details are kept on the Adult Services, Special Needs Register. Children’s Services also mailed an invitation to parents of young people with learning disabilities in transition to adult services. We decided to hold it on a Saturday to enable workers in paid employment to attend. Prior to the event, we sent attendees a briefing by Richard Carter. This set out the issues for the authority; the decisions that needed to be made and possible options. It was made clear that as this was only one part of the consultation process, there would be no answers on the day.

## **Attendance**

64 carers attended and we provided support at the Centre for 20 service users to make this possible for those you had no alternative care. A further 70 carers were unable to attend but requested that we send them papers relating to the consultation.

## **The Event**

Councillor David Vickers, Champion for Learning Disabilities, welcomed everyone to the event and stated that he too had come to the event to listen and learn.

Madeleine Cowley, carer and carer representative on the Learning Disability Partnership Board, set out what carers wanted from Learning Disability Services for the people they care for. She summarised this as time spent in meaningful activities, which might include a combination of leisure, social, volunteering and employment.

She said that carers wanted to know that whatever the person was doing, they were safe and supported. They also wanted their own lives, which would mean that they too could enjoy leisure, social activities, volunteering and where appropriate maintain or seek employment.

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<sup>1</sup> See end of report for more information about this group

Richard Carter, Assistant Director for Learning Disabilities, set out possible options for the future as outlined in his briefing. He repeated that no decision have been made about any Day Centres - this was what the consultation process was for - to help him make proposals for the Learning Disability Partnership Board to consider. He emphasised that he needed to find solutions that would enable the authority to support those with complex needs. He said that this could not be achieved while providing the same level of support to those with less complex needs.

Mollie Berry, carer and carer representative of the Learning Disability Partnership Board then presented some ideas from the Carers in Partnership consultation Group as to how services could develop and change.

- She invited attendees to imagine themselves in 2012 and what the modernised day opportunities might look like: when centres have become community hubs open to the public and offering a range of opportunities for users – including helping to run the 'hubs' and the activities within it.
- She envisaged an expansion of community based activities and suggested that a shift away from "services" would see other agencies meeting their responsibilities to people with learning disabilities.
- She felt that this would enable us to draw down funding from other sources, especially if we headed towards social businesses and the funding of facilities that these can lead to.

## **Workshops**

Geraldine Walker from Dudley Council for Voluntary Service explained the workshops. Carers were then asked to discuss in small groups a number of "cases" based on real families. They were asked to consider how these families could be supported in the future, taking into account what they had heard from the speakers. They were specifically asked to consider what would, in the future constitute 'a good day' for service users and for carers and what would Dudley need to do to make this happen. In addition we provided everyone with a blank 'case study' on which they could set out their own situation and what a good day would be for them

## **Results**

The results of their discussions were posted on a Board for people to look at and add to over lunch. They are attached to this report and have been forwarded to Richard Carter and Ann Parkes. 8 carers completed personal 'case studies' and these too have been forwarded.

## **What happens next?**

The consultation period continues with service users and staff - and it is not too late for you to have further input into the process. If, having read this report you feel that you wish to make further comments you can send them to me - the contact details are on the letter. All comments will be forwarded directly to Richard - and you can of

course write directly to Richard at Ednam House or email [richard.carter@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:richard.carter@dudley.gov.uk)  
He will be discussing some of the conclusions he has drawn from this consultation with the Carers in Partnership group on 19 May. If you would like to be involved in this group see below.

Richard has to take a report with proposals to the Learning Disability Partnership Board and to Dudley Council's Cabinet in June. The proposals will be implemented from autumn 2009, and carers will be fully involved in the process.

Thank you to everyone who attended and participated so enthusiastically. Special thanks to the carers who facilitated the discussions, to staff at the Centre who supported service users and to colleagues who helped with practical arrangements

Christine Rowley  
Carers' Co-ordinator  
01384 818723

### ***Carers in Partnership in Learning Disabilities***

This is the umbrella group that has been set up to enable carers to be central to the planning and development of services. The group meets once every two months and times and venues vary to accommodate the needs of as many carers as possible. The next meeting is Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00pm at Bank Street Methodist Church, Brierley Hill. Contact Christine Rowley if you are interested in joining this group.

### **Carer Representatives on the Learning Disability Partnership Board**

All of the carer representatives on the Learning Disability Partnership Board attend the above meetings to help them represent carers issues. We have one vacant place and so far, only one nomination - Alex Burns. If no other nominations are received by the 19 May meeting, Alex will be invited to be the 4<sup>th</sup> carer representatives on the Board