
Meeting of the Cabinet – 9th September 2009

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Day Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability

Purpose

1. To set out proposals for the further modernisation of the Services which deliver day opportunities for people with a learning disability, in order to achieve:
 - Better outcomes for people – social inclusion; promoting independence, choice and control; access to employment; enhanced support for carers
 - A specialist day centre service, which is accessible and fit for purpose and focused on those people with a learning disability living in the community who have the highest levels of dependency.
 - A programme to transfer most other people with a learning disability to personal budgets so that with support they can purchase and arrange their own services from a range of providers in a number of different settings.

Background

2. The Council provides day opportunities for an average of 330 people with a learning disability per day, in one of the Council's three centres at Stourbridge, Amblecote and Lower Gornal, and in a range of community based activities delivered by the PULSE (People using local services everyday) team. Over 200 people per day now have a flexible community based support plan which may involve attending employment; education; sport, leisure and arts; and volunteering facilitated by both PULSE and Centre staff; and there is scope to develop more opportunities in future. Examples of these activities are outlined in Appendix A.
3. The Council's aim is to deliver services, which meet people's needs for day-time activities and respite without creating unnecessary dependency and whilst ensuring the best possible use of resources. As far as possible, our aim is to enable people to lead ordinary lives and maximise their potential with minimal external support.

4. There has been significant progress since 2003 in modernising day services in line with the White Paper 'Valuing People' (2001). As demonstrated in paragraph 2, the Council now offers a much wider choice of activities and many more opportunities for people with a learning disability to participate in their local communities. These opportunities have already transformed the lives of some of our clients.
5. The Council's three centres date back to the mid 1970s. None of these buildings is ideally suited to deliver modern day opportunities. The buildings are too large and institutional in appearance; the configuration of rooms does not lend itself to delivering a flexible range of services. Two of the centres are situated in areas with limited access to public transport thus compounding the isolation of people with a learning disability in centre buildings. The centres require significant repairs / modernisation. Essential repairs at Lower Gornal, for example, would cost in excess of £400K. - location
6. In June 2007, a five year plan was agreed by Cabinet for the further modernisation of day services. The Five Year Plan envisaged a smaller buildings-based service catering for people with challenging behaviour and those with multiple and profound disabilities. The remaining clients would increasingly access day opportunities through a mix of personal budgets and services delivered by the independent sector. The Five Year Plan included closure of one centre and retention of two much smaller centres for people with severe disabilities, which would include the re-provision of Lower Gornal centre. A further key objective was to increase the number of people in paid work.
7. Good progress has been made with the five-year plan:
 - The PULSE team has been reviewed and re-organised as North and South teams.
 - Outline proposals were developed for implementing the re-provision of Lower Gornal.
 - Access to day services for people who live in residential care has been reduced to a maximum of three days per week. Two independent sector care homes have received a grant from the Council to help them to develop their own day service.
 - The number of people in paid work has increased; ten people have been helped into work during 2008-09, seven of them in DACHS. An employment project has been set up with a job coach funded under the Local Area Agreement, who supports people into work and works alongside individuals in their employment, showing them the job roles in a way that suits their needs.

- 8. There have however been four important developments since the Five Year Plan was agreed in June 2007 which mean that changes are necessary to the original Plan.**
9. Firstly, the collapse of the property market as a result of the recession has meant that it has not been possible to progress the re-development of Lower Gornal centre, which was included in the Five Year Plan. The re-development should have been funded by the sale of the Audnam and Grange House sites. The Audnam site has eventually been sold but at a reduced valuation. It has not yet been possible to sell Grange House.
10. Secondly, in December 2007, the Government published 'Putting People First' – proposals for the transformation of adult social care. Personalisation means that the client takes control of their own care through a support plan to be funded by a personal budget calculated according to the client's level of need. As a result, the role of day centre and other social care staff will change from providing care directly to advocacy, information, advice and 'brokerage' – i.e. helping people to arrange their own services.
11. Thirdly, in January 2009, the Government published 'Valuing People Now' : A new Three-Year Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities', which is a cross-government strategy for services for people with a learning disability. Valuing People Now sets the agenda across a range of issues, including health and well-being, housing, employment, education and community inclusion. It states that the Personalisation agenda must be embedded within all local authority services and developments for people with learning disabilities, so that they can benefit from a fulfilling life of their own, beyond services, that includes opportunities to study, work and enjoy leisure and social activities;
12. Finally, a Joint Review of Learning Disability Services in October 2008 was carried out in Dudley by the Health Care Commission and CSCI. The Review was generally very positive about Dudley services, but stated that improvements were needed in day opportunities. There was a concern that council day centres do not facilitate positive outcomes for some people with learning disabilities and complex needs. The Inspectors advised that day services for people with learning disabilities required further modernisation to ensure that people with learning disabilities and complex needs who used them could engage in more meaningful community activities that were tailored to their individual needs. As a result further changes are required, and are not an optional extra.
- 13. The change in national policy on adult social care, with a much stronger emphasis on personal budgets, taken together with the criticisms of large day centres in the Joint Review and the difficulties in redeveloping Council centres in the present economic climate, mean that some areas of the original Five Year Plan will require adjustments or a different approach to implementation:**

- We must enable more people to be supported to make use of personal budgets to buy and arrange their own day opportunities.
 - We must increase the use of ordinary facilities in the community e.g. by transferring some activities from day centres to community centres; and make better use of local organisations.
 - We must enable more people with complex needs to access the community and improve facilities in the community to make them more accessible.
 - We must reduce reliance on the use of minibus transport for people with a learning disability and support more of them to travel independently, with support from travel assistants where necessary.
 - We must support more people into work, work placements and volunteering.
14. In this way, over time we can reduce reliance on large day centres and provide people with a much wider and more exciting range of opportunities.

Consultation

15. Since the Joint Review, we have consulted with people who use the service and with parent/carers on the future direction for Day Services. The consultation with carers included a Saturday event in March attended by the elected Member champion. Further meetings with parents-carers have been arranged during August. Consultation with service users has been conducted by Dudley Voices for Choice, a self-advocacy group which has met with groups of users in all the day centres.
16. Reports on the outcomes of the consultation with both groups are attached at Appendix B. The feedback from the consultation may be summarised as follows:

Service Users

- People said they wanted more information about personal budgets in a format they could understand.. They would also like the opportunity to discuss what a personal budget involves with their social worker and at reviews.
- Some people said they would need help with managing a personal budget
- Many new ideas were put forward for extending the range of activities which could be offered.

- Many people thought it would be a good idea to have a place run by people with a learning disability where others could come for a chat and drink
- A lot of people are worried about leaving centres after being there for most of their lives, but some said they would not mind provided that they could do something else.
- The centres need to be updated and modernised
- People want more of a say in the way the day centre is run and more choice and control over activities.

17. Carers want day opportunities including personal budgets to :

- Provide a greater variety of constructive, varied and stimulating activities, close to home wherever possible.
- Encourage people to take part in these activities
- Provide evening and weekend activities
- Ensure people are safe
- Enable people to keep in touch with friends (and make new ones)

18. Carers have many ideas for activities, including sports, music, drama, painting, crafts, cookery, computing, country walks, meals out, trips to a pub or cafe, grounds maintenance etc. Some carers are positive about the idea of work (including social businesses), work placements and voluntary work. Others feel this is not a realistic option for their relative especially for those who have complex needs.

19. Carers value the respite provided by day services so they can have time for their other responsibilities (e.g. work, other family members), time for each other and time to recharge their batteries. Carers want a dependable service.

20. Carers would like more information about personal budgets, about the services which are available for them to buy and about other new options. Some pump-priming money would be helpful to stimulate the development of these services. Personal budgets are not the best option for everyone and decisions should be made on the basis of reviews with all clients who currently attend a centre.

21. Carers would like to be more involved in developing and evaluating services.

22. Some carers are naturally anxious about change. Some are worried that their son or daughter's day service may be reduced; others are concerned

that their relative will find it difficult to cope with any change in routine, unfamiliar places and possible loss of contact with friends.

23. It will be important for the anxieties of both service users and carers to be addressed and managed proactively during the change process. Full consultation with both groups will be integral to the next steps.
24. Meetings have also taken place with the Ward members for the three day centres.

Proposals

25. We will review all 100 service users, who attend **Lower Gornal Centre** by the end of December 2009. The reviews will involve the service users, an advocate where necessary and parents/carers. The review will consider the individual needs and wishes of each person with a learning disability. The review will consider what activities each person might want to pursue as an alternative to day centre attendance.
26. Until the reviews are completed, we cannot give firm numbers but the following figures are estimates:

28 people already receive a mixed package of centre and PULSE support, and would in future receive their entire provision from PULSE.

39 people should be capable of receiving their service via PULSE with an appropriate transfer of staff from Lower Gornal

Around 15 people have said they would be interested to receive a personal budget and this number is likely to increase

The remainder – approximately 20 - would continue to need buildings-based provision and would receive their service from Amblecote Centre.

27. Based on the reviews, we will then agree a phased programme for the transfer of all Lower Gornal service users to alternative activities. The transfer will take place in a gradual and planned way which people with a learning disability can cope with. For this reason it is not possible to be precise about how long it would take to complete the transfer but the target date would be October 2010. Only when all service users are settled in alternative activities would the centre finally close.
28. When the transfer of service users from Lower Gornal is well-advanced, we will begin a similar process for people who use the **Stourbridge Centre**. 95 people are 'on roll' at Stourbridge. 42 people already receive part of their service from Pulse South. They could be transferred to Pulse for their entire provision. Approximately 30 further people currently attending Stourbridge are felt to be capable of having their needs met by Pulse. 20 have complex needs and are likely to need a buildings-based

service. We would not expect this process to be completed until late 2011, and only when all service users are suited with alternative activities.

29. The Stourbridge Centre building would be retained as a base for PULSE, the employment project for people with a learning disability, and the newly developed independent travel scheme.
30. **Amblecote Centre** would be retained and re-furnished as the only building based provision in the longer-term. The capital receipt from Audnam would provide the funding for improvements to the building at Amblecote.
31. Amblecote Centre would provide a central resource approximately 50 people with more complex needs living in all parts of the borough, as well as supporting other service users with complex needs into community-based activities.
32. A programme of consolidation and expansion will be undertaken to further develop both North and South **PULSE**, with the objective of achieving provision in both the North and South of the borough which is entirely community-based and offered by an increasing mix of public, private and not-for-profit providers by June 2011.
33. The focus of the Day Opportunities Service would change over the next two years. PULSE would continue to provide some services directly, but in the main the role of Day Opportunities would be to assist service users via a brokerage scheme to arrange their own services through use of personal budgets. In this way a significant number of people would transfer over time from PULSE provision to personal budgets.
34. The Council would offer some clients a personal budget based on their assessed needs to commission their own day opportunities at a time and place of their choice. People could continue to purchase PULSE provision, but alternatively might want to purchase from the independent sector market in day care or other forms of support.
35. Alternative community bases – libraries, leisure centres, schools, colleges, church owned buildings, shops, etc. - would continue to be developed for use, as would links with more business and commercial organisations. The proposals would include PULSE working with potential independent providers to take-over established community activities, as well as looking to deliver day activities within independent residential homes prior to them taking over responsibility, with the target of withdrawing Council day service staff within pre-agreed timescales. A directory of services which people could purchase with a personal budget would be produced.
36. The **employment project**, working closely with PULSE, would promote the development of social enterprises for people with a learning disability in order to increase the number in employment. There may also be potential to develop some sort of social or even commercial enterprise from the Amblecote centre e.g. catering, gardening

37. Some of the funding currently tied-up in Council **transport** i.e. vehicles and the employment of drivers and escorts would be re-directed to the employment of 'Travel Assistants' to support more people to travel independently. Where necessary drivers and escorts could be redeployed to roles elsewhere in Day Services, assisting people to access activities.
38. Subject to the outcome of the Council's Pay and Grading Review, all existing care posts in the Day Service **staffing** team would be replaced with a single post of Development Worker, which would be graded in four bands based on a list of accountabilities linked to National Occupational Standards. This would create a career structure for front-line staff; eligibility to progress from one band to another would depend on achieving a recognised qualification.
39. Finally, it is proposed to develop a consumer **quality monitoring** scheme within statutory day services. This would see the development of a group of interested service users, and a number of parent/carer representatives who would undergo training and support to carry out regular announced and unannounced visits to all parts of the services, as 'experts by experience' with a view to 'inspecting' and commenting upon their observations/experiences.

Finance

40. An overall reduction in numbers of people attending day opportunities would release funds for investment in personal budgets, pump-priming independent sector providers to deliver day care, and improved staffing ratios.
41. The capital available from the disposal of Audnam and Grange House will provide sufficient resource to carry out refurbishment of Amblecote centre. Any remaining capital could be used to fund the upgrade of basic facilities in community centres and other community buildings used by people with a learning disability.
42. Changes in the grading for day services' staff set out in paragraph 35 will be cost neutral.

Law

43. The Council has powers and duties to support persons with a learning disability under its welfare function contained in a number of statutes including the National Assistance Act 1948, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, the Community Care Act 1990 and the Mental Health Acts and may do anything incidental to conducive to or which facilitates the discharge of its functions under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Equality Impact

44. The Councils Equal Opportunities Policy addresses our commitment to ensuring that all Dudley Citizens have access to services and opportunities that allow them to play as full a role as possible in our Local Community. By developing services for People with Learning Disabilities in the way recommended in this report, we are ensuring that our services support them to experience the same ordinary life opportunities that many of us take for granted.

Recommendations

45. It is recommended that Cabinet
- approve further service modernisation as detailed within this report, including the promotion of personal budgets, independent travel, and social enterprises.
 - approve the proposals for further implementation of the Five Year Plan for day opportunities in line with Valuing People Now and the recommendations of the Learning Disability Joint Review.
 - agree to earmark the Capital receipts for Audnam and Grange House for the refurbishment of Amblecote centre and improvements to other Council facilities in the community used by people with a learning disability.



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