

ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT

Impact of Covid-19 on Day Care/Community
Opportunity Services

Cllr Sarah Russell – Deputy City Mayor – Lead for Adult
Social Care

Martin Samuels – Strategic Director – Social Care &
Education

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Wards Affected: All

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on day centres and the people who attend them.

2. Summary

- 2.1 On September 8th, 2020, the Commission received a status report on these services. This report provides an update.
- 2.2 The majority of building-based day care services have been closed since March 2020, about 50% having remained open but with a reduced service between July and December. In Lockdown 3, most have closed completely except for their most vulnerable clients. In some cases, this has resulted in family/carers receiving additional support to help relieve the challenges posed by closure.
- 2.3 In the City, day centres have been offering alternative services and this is the case across the region, with regional discussions facilitated by ADASS confirming this and enabling sharing of good practice.
- 2.4 This report sets out the present situation and particularly the support offered to these services by the City Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission is recommended to:
 - a) note the content of the report and to provide comment/feedback.

4. Report

- 4.1 Adult Social Care (ASC) funds in the region of 400 individuals to attend day care services, who are eligible for support as defined by the Care Act 2014. An additional 600 people attend day services via a Direct Payment.
- 4.2 The City Council operates one 'in house' day care service for individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities at Hastings Road. There are usually around 30 people attending the service but currently between 4 and 10 people attend the service on a regular basis and some of those are funded by health due to the severity of their condition. In terms of the others that attend the service, the authority is currently undertaking welfare calls and an outreach

service where possible.

- 4.3 Most individuals funded by the Council are supported by the independent or voluntary sector. There are 14 providers of day care with whom we contract but there are thought to be an additional 26 (approximately) with whom we have no contractual arrangement.
- 4.4 Most external services have been closed since March 2020 although they have been offering services virtually. These include welfare calls, delivering activity packs, online (Zoom) activity sessions and groups chats, advice and information for carers and food delivery. A few external services have remained open to a very small number of high need individuals to support those people and their families. Whilst all services report that this virtual offer has been extremely valuable, some family/carers have been reporting concerns about the current arrangements and their inability to cope without a break. All concerns have been responded to.
- 4.5 Council officers and health colleagues continue to work together to prevent carer/family breakdown by commissioning additional support, usually in the form of domiciliary care, which enables the family carer to take a break. Many carers have been signposted to other services for advice and information and to support their emotional and physical resilience. The number of carers registering with their GP practice and with the Leicester Carers Support Service has increased during the Covid period which is good as it enables carers to receive priority services, including vaccines.
- 4.6 The Council has continued to pay contracted providers at pre-Covid rates to support their business stability, support the delivery of alternative services and to ensure their responsiveness should restrictions be lifted, and reopening occur.
- 4.7 Anecdotal intelligence suggests that some of our smaller, non-contracted providers are feeling the impact of loss of income due to closure, although some groups, particularly those run by BAME communities are benefitting from community funding. Most providers have taken advantage of the government's furlough scheme.
- 4.8 Council officers are in regular (weekly) contact with day service providers, supporting them to understand and implement the government guidance on:
- Safe opening of day centres
 - Testing of staff
 - Vaccinations
 - Obtaining and use of PPE
 - Applying for grants from the Government's Infection Protection Fund
- 4.9 Whilst some providers remain partially open to their most vulnerable

customers, the majority are closed (other than for virtual services). This is because most of the people who access their services are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and therefore shielding in line with government guidance. Current social distancing requirements mean that it would be difficult to ensure the safety of customers should they wish to return to a centre.

- 4.10 Most contracted providers have indicated that they intend to welcome people back into services in April, but this will be subject to government guidance in force at that time.
- 4.11 Anecdotally we hear that most people are looking forward to returning to services as they miss their friends and the activities offered by groups. Sadly, some people have passed away and others are now too frail to be able to resume attendance at groups.
- 4.12 The support that these groups offer to family carers i.e. giving them a break whilst the cared-for attends the service has been missed and in some cases the council has commissioned extra support for the family, usually domiciliary support which usually either undertakes jobs around the house that the carer would have done but now needs to keep the cared-for company, or alternatively, undertakes an activity with the cared-for to give the carer a break. Some people have continued to attend a service as their needs are complex and the risk of family breakdown too great. The in-house service, Hastings Road, has welcomed two new people who previously attended an external service which has had to close for precisely this reason.
- 4.13 Covid testing has been rolled out for providers and is being taken up by those providers who remain open for face to face contact with people using their services. This is facilitated by council officers. Staff testing will be required before services open in due course.
- 4.14 Council officers have been supporting the rollout of the vaccination programme and encouraging staff and people using services to avail themselves of the vaccine as soon as possible. A proactive communications exercise has taken place informed by national and local good practice, including information in community languages and myth busting.
- 4.15 Providers have been offered free PPE for Covid protection and council officers have been coordinating and fulfilling requests. Officers are satisfied that providers understand the importance of this and the associated guidance.
- 4.16 It is hoped that these different actions will all support the resumption of services which will be of benefit to people using them, family carers and providers.
- 4.17 The Association of Directors of Adult Social Care Services (ADASS)

for the East Midlands region appointed consultants (at no cost to the City Council) to look at the recovery of day care services, including new models of support with the following objectives:

- Audit the current work on co-production and understanding the impact of Covid on individuals and their family/carers focused primarily those with learning disabilities who access day services or short breaks.
- To identify new types of support and identify what could be built into transitional and new models of care
- To identify best practice both regionally and nationally

4.18 The work found that there had been:

- Good relationships and closer working with providers in response to crisis situations,
- The development of creative solutions to deliver support and care during the crisis
- Adapting offers and adopting new ways of working, including the use of digital solutions, and providing more outreach support to individuals
- Implementation of regular welfare telephone calls to individuals and carers

4.19 As a result of this, Council officers are actively engaged in regional work to improve and increase targeted engagement with people who use services and carers to identify wants, needs, restrictions, and must haves to define potential service structures and service responses. This includes leading work on recruiting carers to a specific coproduction group – the response to this from the City’s carers has been tremendous with over 20 recruited. The group will be a reference group informing service design, policies and so on.

4.20 The learning from the Covid pandemic and the ADASS work is also being incorporated into the current review of day services/ community opportunities, particularly in relation to changes to the service model to reflect the ‘new ways or working’ which have been valued by people.

4.21 Feedback from providers and people using services and their carers tells us that the virtual offer is liked, and they would like to see this incorporated into the present and new model of service.

4.22 We will therefore learn from the ADASS and Covid messages and adjust the current model to take account of these. We will also incorporate them into the new service (to start in April 2022). This will include bringing in the virtual, digital offer which has appealed to many people; retaining the welfare calls and outreach which will support a more personalised approach to the service that a person receives; ensuring the model has a greater focus on enablement, building on individuals’ strengths and aspirations to support them to maintain and/or increase their independence, using community assets wherever possible.

5. Scrutiny Overview

An overview of the impact of Covid-19 was presented to the ASC Scrutiny Commission on 8th September 2020, which included information relating to day care services.

6 Financial

The report is just providing an update on the impact of Covid-19 on day centres and those who attend them, so have no direct financial implications, at this stage.

However, this may need to be revisited as new ways of working are accepted going forward, and if these impact on our finances.

Yogesh Patel -Accountant (ext. 4011)

7 Legal

The Council should ensure it has contractual arrangements in place with providers in delivering day care services. In respect of the review of the services and any proposed changes to the service model, this may be subject to consultation therefore early engagement of legal advice and assistance should be sought.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, ext. 1423

8 Equalities

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The report provides an update on the impact of Covid-19 on day centres and

the people who attend them, it also lists the work carried out by the council during the pandemic and the support which has been incorporated into our services to ensure we continue to provide a service to vulnerable people, who will be from a range of protected characteristics.

Going forward the learning from the Covid pandemic and the ADASS work will be incorporated into the current review of day services/ community opportunities, which should lead to a positive impact for people from across a range of protected characteristics and take into account equality considerations throughout the current review.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4175

9 Climate Change

There are limited climate change implications associated with this report. However, continued provision of services online in the future has the potential to reduce carbon emissions from the operation of buildings and travel to services, where this is judged to be safe and appropriate.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

10. Appendices

None

11. Background Papers

None