

**From:** Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director, Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

**To:** Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**Decision No:** 14/00010

**Subject:** Outcome of formal consultation on the closure/variation of Service of Dover Learning Disability Day Service

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway:** Adults Social Care & Public Health Cabinet Committee, 2 May 14

**Electoral Division:** Dover

**Summary:**

A report on the outcome of formal consultation undertaken at Dover Learning Disability Day Service and seeking Cabinet Member approval to proceed with moving from the existing base at The Walmer Day Centre, Liverpool Road to a more accessible community based service model.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health is asked to:

1. NOTE the outcome of the 14 week period of public consultation and the comments and endorsement from the Cabinet Committee.
2. AGREE the proposed decision to proceed with moving the Dover Learning Disability Day Service from its existing base and to continue the service as a more inclusive, accessible community based service that operates from community hubs.

**1. Introduction**

This report outlines the views expressed during a 14 week formal consultation regarding Walmer Day Centre where the current Dover District Learning Disability Service is based.

The Consultation focused on the proposal to move the Learning Disability Day Service from its current segregated site to a community based service offering community hub facilities.

The service has been in its current location since 1978 and is attended by a total of 78 service users with an average of 24 people attending on any one day.

The proposed model has already been implemented in other districts by The Good Day Programme and has afforded people with learning disabilities greater access to mainstream activities and enhanced community networks.

## **2. Financial Implications**

### **2.1 Capital**

The Good Day Programme has identified and secured £375K capital to enable the service to obtain dedicated spaces within community hub buildings.

The capital is being invested in a minimum of two multi-use hubs, one sensory multi-use space, one adult changing place, and enhanced accessible features in both community hubs; which will not only open up the service to those with additional physical needs but also enable existing Service Users greater community presence, together giving greater opportunities to the wider community.

It is important to note that Changing Place facilities in public buildings will also benefit other Dover District residents as well as visitors with disabilities.

### **2.2 Revenue**

The 2012/2013 Property Subjective Outturn for the current Walmer Day Centre service building (as supplied by corporate landlord) totalled around £28.8k including rental and utility costs.

It is anticipated revenue costs will be suspended for the potential community hubs for a period of time. The Capital Grant investment will be off-set by a calculated free rental period together with additional benefits to the people attending the service. After the free rental period KCC Corporate Landlord will resume responsibility for the rent.

The facilities management and on-going maintenance of the community hubs will be the responsibility of the landlord. In addition, the landlords of the community hub premises will be able to increase their revenue by renting out the hub spaces to community groups outside of the Learning Disability Service usage.

## **3. Facing the Challenge: Whole Council Transformation**

a) Facing the Challenge: Whole Council Transformation (formally Bold Steps for Kent)

Sets out KCC's response to the increasing financial pressures facing local authorities as public sector austerity continues beyond 2015. 'Facing the Challenge: Delivering Better Outcomes' is the first whole-council transformation plan for KCC and sets out three themes for KCC's transformation:

- putting customers at the heart of what we do, delivering what they need and value most
- bringing services together around customer groups and life stages

- taking a businesslike approach to what we do and the decisions we make with an absolute focus on outcomes
- putting in place a single, consistent and coordinated approach to delivering transformation.

Learning disability transformation is part of the wider Social Care, Health and Wellbeing transformation, the remodelling of Dover Learning Disability Day Service is in line with the overall strategy.

b) Valuing People - March 2001 / Valuing People Now 2009

Valuing People is the government's plan for making the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers better. It was written in 2001 and it was the first White Paper for people with learning disabilities for 30 years.

c) Think Local, Act Personal - Next Steps for Transforming Adult Social Care

This is a proposed sector wide partnership agreement moving further towards personalisation and community based support. This document sets down the thinking of policy direction in adult social care. The priority for adult social care is to ensure efficient, effective and integrated partnerships and services that support individuals, families and the community.

The two main focus of reform are:

- A community-based approach for everyone
- Personalisation

d) The Good Day Programme - KCC's strategy for improving days for people with learning disabilities, linking to the five key principles of the programme and the nine programme standards.

## 4. The Report

### 4.1 Background

Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate are engaged in a process to modernise the way it carries out its responsibilities in order that the service outcomes for the people of Kent are improved. In 1999 and 2008, Members agreed to a Kent wide strategy (in line with national strategy) to move away from segregated centres for people with a learning disability to a range of services in the community. The Good Day Programme was devised in order to deliver this across Kent and its vision statement 'Better Days for People with Learning Disabilities in Kent' 2008 looks at how individuals can be supported to be part of their local communities and have the same opportunities as others, in employment, education and training, leisure etc.

In line with other districts, Dover Learning Disability Day Service has been working towards community inclusion for a number of years, partnering with a range of local organisations in order to promote opportunity and participation for people with learning disabilities in Dover, Deal and the surrounding area.

The day service is currently based on Liverpool Road, Walmer; a building which is owned by Kent County Council. The site is shared with the Meadowside Short Breaks Unit. The Meadowside Service is part of a strategic review of all Short Break services.

## **4.2 Community Capacity**

Prior to consultation, The Good Day Programme has already invested Capital in order to ensure new opportunities are accessible and sustainable for not only existing service users, but other members of the community;

- Deal Library - A contribution to a Changing Place
- Dover Leisure Centre – A mobile hoist, mobile changing bench and adaptations in order to provide more accessible changing facilities.
- Training for Leisure Centre staff has been funded in order to support sustainability

The Good Day Programme has already worked with a Focus Group to carry out an extensive programme of informal scoping over a period 11 months to review the programme needs for Dover District and identify community hub opportunities. Members of the group include people accessing the service, family/carers, and staff members.

## **4.3 Consultation Process and timetable**

The purpose of the Dover day service consultation was to:

- Find out from service users and other interested groups what they valued about their existing service.
  - Gain people's views on the proposed relocation of the service.
  - Explore any suggested developments that might enhance the service.
- a) The Variation of Service Procedure was invoked on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013. A 14 week consultation period followed, ending on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- b) Consultation has been extensive, with information and questionnaires cascaded to all relevant groups and individuals with a total of 531 consultation packs distributed. This included people accessing the service, Parent/Carers, Staff, Trade Unions, Advocacy Groups, Local Residents, Community Partners, Integrated Teams, Parish Councillors, Borough Councillors and KCC Members. All consultation information was published on the Kent County Council website.

## **4.4 Outcome of the Consultation and Issues raised during the Consultation**

- a) Advocacy services undertook thorough consultation with Service Users, working in a variety of ways; with individuals, as well as group workshops, ensuring that Service Users not only understood the proposal but have had a very real opportunity to develop their own viewpoint and to express this.
- b) Views have been collated in a variety of ways, including adapted questionnaires, flip charts, verbal feedback, communication boards, etc.

- c) A Total of 19 completed questionnaires were received from stakeholders (excluding people who access the service)
- d) Two information sessions were held at the Dover District Partnership Group

#### 4.5 Service User Feedback

- a) Advocacy for All were commissioned to provide independent support to those currently attending the Service. Two advocates worked with Service Users in group and 1:1 sessions to promote understanding and gather feedback.
- b) Advocacy worked in an unbiased way, using photographs and drawings to ensure people understand what is being proposed and are able to give their views using a range of communication methods.
- c) The people accessing the service told advocacy that they are on the whole feeling positive about the proposed service as long as they continued to take part in the activities they valued, have a place to go which is nearer to where they lived. At present approximately 90% of people access activities outside of the current day centre building.
- d) The advocates held 65 1:1 meetings and three information events with people within the service.

Comments included:

“ . . . lots of places more in the community. It will be good. . . ”

“I love being here’ ‘we might have another place to go’ ‘ I might be alright actually’ ‘carry on with what we’ve being doing now’ ‘don’t mind where we go”

“My friends’ are important to me rather than the building”

“I have been to Walmer DOS for 37 years’ ‘I’ll be upset when Walmer shuts, I’ve been here since it opened’ Hubs: ‘it will be strange at first, will I get used to it? I think I’ll like it, will I share the hub with my friends and staff”

“alright’ would be happy doing craft and cooking elsewhere. Know Dover Sports Centre, would be happy there”

There are 16 people with complex needs within the Dover Day Service; some of their comments are supported by advocacy with the following:

It would appear to be important to X to have the same staff supporting the activities and meeting friends wherever the service may be. The advocacy worker supported this by mentioning staff names when certain activities were mentioned.

X Needs a changing area, needs full support with all mobility. Position of the hubs would increase his ability to take part in more activities. He has no verbal communication and communicates through behaviour and vocalizations. In Person Centred Plan ‘I hope to have a support worker to enable me to access the community more’

Detailed summary of all service user feedback can be found in the Advocacy for All report about Dover Day Services **Appendix 1**

#### **4.6 Family Carers Feedback**

- a) Of the 51 Parent/Carers invited to take part in the consultation three requested 1:1 meetings.
- b) 10 returned completed questionnaires. One parent/family carer submitted a DVD which detailed 'A Day in the Life' of her son.
- c) The parent/family carers who requested a meeting, they felt that the move was a good idea in the long term and being in a more central location is a positive step. They also felt transition was very important and must be completed slowly.
- d) Mostly the feedback (whether verbal or written) has been positive and constructive, two parent/carers said the Walmer Day Centre should stay open for older people within the service.

The following comments were made:

"I was very impressed with the facilities at this hub and it would be nice to see something similar in Dover. Change is going to happen and we have to be realistic" [Following a visit to the Folkestone Sports Centre where Shepway Learning Disability Day Service has a community hub]

". . . services which was once provided that enhanced health and fitness was yoga and gardening. . . they have been much missed."

"this is amazing, if you can created this in Dover, this would be wonderful" [Following the visit to the Folkestone Sports Centre]

"more outside interests and hobbies of their choice."

". . . if you deliver everything you have said you will and friendships will not be lost and there will be more time for activities it seems sensible."

#### **4.7 Staff Feedback**

The staff team have expressed the fact that they see relocation as a positive move and have shown a strong desire to support the people in the service through any future changes. Two staff members have been particularly proactive in identifying community hubs or satellite venues with people in the service.

Staff wanted to ensure the service provides positive outcomes for people with complex needs, and ensuring the hubs had sufficient space to enable these people to get out of their wheelchairs. Also, staff were committed to ensuring activities were reflective of people's person centred plans.

## **4.8 Wider Feedback**

- a) Five stakeholder workshops were held to talk through the proposals and support the completion of consultation questionnaires and collating feedback. 22 people attended across the five workshops.
- b) Two additional stakeholder workshops were held at Folkestone Sports Centre to support the understanding of the community hub model and to give an opportunity for parent/family carers and other stakeholders to look at an example of a successful community hub. Giving the opportunity to speak to staff and people using the service about the change process and the everyday pattern of the day service within the hub. 15 people attended these visits.
- c) Nine local residents attended the workshops, with six returning completed questionnaires. They expressed concerns about the future of the building if the Walmer Centre was closed. They gave extensive details about concerns with drainage in the area.
- d) An individual meeting was held with a Dover District Councillor as she had been approached by one parent/family carer. She felt reassured and was impressed with the future proposals for the day service.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- a) The public sector equality duty created by section 1 of the Equality Act 2000 came into force on 5 April 2011. The section provides that:

"An authority to which this section applies [which includes county councils] must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage"

- b) Section 149 of the Act provides that:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessments**

The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Dover Learning Disability Day Service is in addition to the overarching Good Day Programme EqIA.

- a) There is a requirement on all public bodies to comply with the 'due regard' duties. To take account of the impact of the decision to implement the new service model and consider practical measures that might lessen the impact on existing and new service users. The consideration of equality issues must inform the decisions reached. The

impact assessment can assist in ensuring that the 'decision-maker' comes to a decision with reference to 'due regard' and is able to do so in a considered and informed manner.

- b) In line with equality duty and KCC's Equality Impact Assessment Policy, an assessment was carried out for SDS Service Users during the formation stage of the new service model. This impact assessment will be revised again at each stage of the remodelling to ensure it addresses the range of need.
- c) Full Adult Changing Facilities will be placed in the new hub to increase accessibility for individuals with a learning disability and the wider community. Designated space will be available to provide an area to maintain privacy and dignity for those requiring additional support.
- d) It is considered that other specific groups with protected characteristics (based on gender, ethnicity, religion or belief and sexual orientation) will not be disadvantaged by the changes.

## **7. Risk and Business Continuity Management**

The majority of the service user's time is spent accessing community activities with the Walmer Centre providing a meeting place. In the event that any of the future community hubs become inaccessible, it is anticipated that service users will be able to continue to access their chosen activities and contingencies will be identified in the Business Continuity Plan.

## **8. Sustainability and rural proofing implications**

- a) The new model for future services is based on personalisation, with everyone having choice and control over the shape of their support. Capital investment across the area (in a range of hubs and partnerships) will also provide sustainability for the future. Sharing facilities will ensure better use of the existing revenue, value for money and more personalised support.
- b) It is important to note, evidence from "Valuing People Now" and learning disability groups, highlights that a lot of young people leaving school do not want to go to traditional style building based services. In addition we also know that those coming through transition have additional physical disabilities and cannot currently access the Dover day service building.
- c) The service already supports individuals from across the Dover and Deal areas and this will continue, with the new service model anticipated to offer greater capacity to those individuals with additional needs.

## **9. Conclusions**

(1) The 14 week consultation has proved beneficial in that it has meant that people with an interest in Dover Learning Disability Day Service have been afforded a sufficient period in which to understand what is being proposed, gather their views and comment through meetings, questionnaires, website and email.



(2) Over this period the service has had the opportunity to address some of the practical issues raised and to make considered plans for the future. Throughout this, individuals have continued to be encouraged to speak up and inform future opportunities.

(3) The number of written responses from carers and other stakeholders has been low but the majority of those that have taken time to feedback have been very positive about the proposal.

(4) Whilst capital is required to make existing and new facilities fit for purpose, this is seen as a worth while longer term investment, as it will;

- Make Dover and Deal town centres accessible to a wider range of individuals
- Future proof Learning Disability Services by providing town centre enhanced facilities and greater choice and opportunity across a wide range of need.

## **10. Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health is asked to:

1. NOTE the outcome of the 14 week period of public consultation and the comments and endorsement from the Cabinet Committee.
2. AGREE the proposed decision to proceed with moving the Dover Learning Disability Day Service from its existing base and to continue the service as a more inclusive, accessible community based service that operates from community hubs.

## **11. Background documents**

- Appendices: 1 – Easy Read Advocacy Report  
2 – Proposed Record of Decision

## **12. Contact details**

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