

## **ADL2022 – Community Offer Programme**

### **Citizen and Carer Feedback Summary**

#### **Why did we want to talk to people?**

As part of Staffordshire County Council's ALD Community Offer Programme, officers wanted to talk to citizens who attend day opportunities (including building-based opportunities and personal assistant support, provided via an agency) and their carers to better understand:

1. What is currently working well for them?
2. What currently is not working well for them?
3. What could the future look like?

We wanted to talk to citizens and carers to help shape the future of Day Opportunities. Based on the feedback, we can put together a series of options that will help us improve and strengthen the Day Opportunities Offer.

As per The Care Act and Whole Life Disability Strategy, we will ensure that eligible citizens receive the right support, in the right place at the right costs that maximises their independence and wellbeing, while recognising that this looks different for everybody.

#### **What did we do?**

During September and October 2018 officers invited citizens who attend Day Opportunities, and their relatives, to meet on a 1:1 basis across the county.

We were able to write to citizens who attend the council's Complex Needs Services directly.

We asked a range of key stakeholders, including Independent Marketplace Providers, to promote the opportunity to citizens who access Independent Marketplace opportunities. *In response to the feedback received from a number of carers of citizens who attend Independent Marketplace opportunities, officers are considering how they can be contacted directly in future.*

Officers visited 4 user groups and received survey responses from other groups (53 attendees in total).

We met or talked to, on a 1:1 basis:

- 39 citizens / relatives who receive support from SCC Complex Needs Services
- 41 citizens / relatives who receive support from the Independent Marketplace

In addition, officers have also spoken directly to the council's workforce, Independent Marketplace Providers and other key stakeholders.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who took the time to speak with us.

We would also like to apologise for this report being a little later than planned – due to the number of meeting requests and level of information received, it took us a little longer than planned to pull this together. Where there were quality issues raised, we have sought to address these.

This report is intended to provide an overview of common themes that citizens and carers told us, whilst maintaining confidentiality. If you would like more specific detail about the area you live in or the specific feedback you provided, please don't hesitate to contact us.

### **Common themes**

Regardless of the type of Day Opportunities accessed, most citizens and carers told us they felt:

- That the quality of support provided was good. Reference was made to a 'trusting' relationship and it was noted that good communication with staff is critical;
- That the support enabled attendees to participate in a range of activities, which might not be possible without the provision of support / services;
- The support for users provided a form of carer relief / respite (including enabling carers to maintain paid employment) – and without the provision of these services some citizens might not be able to continue living in the family home;
- The support provided helped to maintain the physical health and wellbeing of citizens, preventing further decline, which might otherwise result in the requirement for increased levels of care;
- The support provided helped to build the skills, confidence and wellbeing of citizens;
- Citizens and carers involved in the 2014 Modernisation Programme said they were both hesitant and anxious the programme would result in the closure of services across Staffordshire.

### **Common themes – SCC Complex Needs Services**

In addition to the above feedback, carers of citizens who access the Council's Complex Needs Services told us they felt:

- The quality of staff support (including communication and continuity) was of an extremely high standard – tailored to meet the complexity of individual needs;
- The current service was person centred and individualised. This was attributed in part to the smaller service size and compatibility of attendees;
- The activities facilitated within the building i.e. sensory stories as being beneficial to the citizen;
- Pleased that local community resources were being utilised frequently, i.e. the library, in certain districts;
- Concerned that provision of activities outside of the building appear to have decreased, but would be beneficial to the citizen, in some districts;
- Concerned that transport is unreliable / old – affecting pick up and drop off times.
- Some felt that the overall the day appeared to have shortened without knowing the reasons why, in some districts;
- Concerned that these services will close (for reasons including the previous references to 'short to medium term', East Staffordshire and the seemingly low level of referrals) and that they were 'hesitant' and 'sceptical' about the independent sector;

## **Common themes – Independent Marketplace**

In addition to the above feedback, citizens who access opportunities in the Independent Marketplace, and their carers, told us they felt:

- The quality of staff support (including communication) was of a high standard – although some carers told us they were worried about sharing negative feedback / concerns with either the provider or the council because they were worried services may stop;
- Really happy with the activities offered and providers were good at involving them in making choices about the things they could do. Favourite activities included drama, dance, music-based sessions, life skills, employment skills and outdoor based activities;
- Occasionally some timetables can be repetitive and not reflective of ‘everyday life’ (including expense) but recognised in some localities there are only limited options;
- Concerned around the security of tenure of some venues currently utilised and the fact a change could have a negative impact on users;
- Not always sure about what the service offer, and associated price includes – e.g. meals, transport, activities, hours of operation, absence and closures;
- Unclear about the current price differences for services;
- Some carers told us they either did not wish to manage a Direct Payment currently or were concerned about who would take this role on when they were no longer able to manage this;
- Concerned and disappointed that there appears to be a disparity in offer across districts – with a perception that other localities have more opportunities;
- Concerned that these services are un-regulated and there is no visible and consistent quality assurance by the council;

## **Ideas for the future:**

Here are some of the most common things it was suggested we explore:

- Introduce contracting and quality monitoring with the Independent Marketplace;
- Introduce a ‘catalogue’ of activities – in multiple accessible formats - so people know what’s on offer, including development of a PA register;
- Request the Independent Marketplace issue contracts with citizens who buy services using a Direct Payment – clearly detailing ‘the offer’ and expectations, which should be the same as the terms & conditions between the council and the provider;
- Consider how we can better use the existing resources of the council for the benefit of all i.e. drop in sessions and use at evenings / weekends;
- Share / promote training opportunities between all services;
- Citizens and carers participate and help to deliver training opportunities / share their knowledge and experience directly with Providers;
- The council is clear, honest and transparent in its ‘offer’ – including clarity about costs;
- Promote Personal Responsibility consistently i.e. personal contributions towards the cost of activities should be the same regardless of the service you attend;
- The council to work with local businesses and opportunities to seek concessions / raise the profile of opportunities for citizens and carers;

- Development of Community Hubs / Drop ins i.e. for citizens who don't wish to attend for a full day or are looking to have a safe space when in the community by themselves or with their PA.

### **What's next?**

Officers will be talking to both Cabinet and Senior Managers in December and January about what we have found so far and what options we need to explore. We will be seeking permission to talk to all key stakeholders about these options in an appropriate and proportionate way, in early 2019.

Carers also took this opportunity to share their thoughts with us on Building Based Respite – we will look further at this feedback in early 2019.

**December 2018**