



Community Activity and Day Centre Consultation response report

Executive Summary

This document brings together responses from 43 individual survey respondents and 47 stakeholder survey respondents on the proposed Community Activity Strategy and the future of day centre provision. It also reflects wider views captured through drop-in sessions and email correspondence. Across the 10 events, Adult Social Care and Commissioning Officers spoke to 12 people who attend services, 17 parent, carers, and six wider stakeholders, including staff and volunteers. Some of these individuals also completed a survey, so care has been taken to avoid double counting.

Overall, the responses indicate broad support for the aims of increased choice, flexibility, community access and more personalised support, particularly where this could enable people to take part in a wider range of activities, including evenings and weekends. At the same time, the findings show significant uncertainty and concern about how the strategy would be delivered in practice, especially for people with complex needs and for carers who rely on current provision for routine, respite and continuity.

Across both the individual and stakeholder responses, several recurring themes emerge. Respondents welcomed the principle of more person-centred and flexible support, with many recognising the value of greater choice and access to community-based opportunities. However, many also emphasised that this ambition must not come at the expense of those who need building-based provision, specialist facilities, familiar routines, or highly consistent support. A common message is that one model will not suit everyone, and that any future service offer must retain the ability to meet a range of needs, including those of people with profound disabilities, autism, sensory needs, behavioural support needs, and people requiring personal care and changing facilities.

The strongest concerns raised relate to implementation. Respondents repeatedly identified a lack of detail about what the new model would look like, how support would be arranged, what transport and staffing arrangements would be available, and whether people with complex needs would continue to have access to safe, appropriate and high-quality support. Feedback also highlights the importance of preserving respite for carers, maintaining trusted relationships and routines, and ensuring changes are communicated clearly and co-produced with those most affected.

Taken together, the consultation feedback suggests support for the direction of travel in principle, but only where future arrangements are clearly defined, inclusive, properly resourced and capable of meeting both flexible community-based aspirations and ongoing specialist support needs.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council proceeds with a two-year co-produced implementation phase for the Community Activities Strategy, focused on building confidence in the new model and ensuring that changes are informed by lived experience. As this consultation was undertaken at a strategic stage, the information gathered will be used to inform the future direction of the strategy.

This should include the establishment of a People's Panel to strengthen the voice of people who use services and improve shared understanding of what good flexible support looks like in practice.

It is also recommended that market engagement is enhanced through a two-tier approach, comprising of the continuation of the operational framework provider forum to support delivery and the sharing of best practice, alongside a new strategic stakeholder group to bring wider partners into the discussion on market development, implementation and longer-term service transformation.