

Executive Summary of Innovations and Good Practice Report for BCP Day Opportunities Strategy

Introduction

The day opportunities strategy for BCP Council workstream 2b was tasked to focus on innovations and good practice in England to help inform the Day Opportunities Strategy Project and promote innovation in our practice regarding the provision of these services.

This executive report is a summary of conversations and desk top internet research into the general direction of travel for day opportunities across both young adults and the wider working age cohorts and response to the impact of the pandemic on the provision of support and services across other local authority areas in England.

Methodology

The research initially started as a desk top activity looking at the online information across other local authorities:

Birmingham, Bristol, Camden, Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Essex, Hampshire, Haringey, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester City, Newcastle, Nottingham, Rotherham, Sefton, Sheffield, Somerset, Southampton, Wigan.

The second stage of the benchmarking activity involved gathering information via meetings and e-mails. Active engagement took place with colleagues from Birmingham, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, and Southampton local authorities.

Regular attendance at monthly Self-Directed Support (SDS) Networks - Developing Micro-providers also enabled access to other local authorities across England. Additional desk top research was used to follow up about information gained from the above. Meetings were arranged to visit a range of local day opportunities.

The full report details information from all the above local authorities and providers who were engaged. For the purposes of this report, the following summarises the key findings from this engagement.

Resistance to change

Across the communication there was discussion about challenges to the transformation programmes coming, generally, from a position of mistrust, anxiety, and fear of the unknown. Carers, and particularly working carers, were nervous about how changes to the established

daily routine would impact on their ability to maintain regular working patterns (this applied to parents of younger adults more) and impact on stable state benefits arrangements. Concern was expressed about the need to keep their family members safe as day care staff were known and trusted, so concern was about new providers guaranteeing the same level of experience. Access to reliable and safe transport was often referred to, as was the issue of finding and keeping personal assistants when required.

From the local authority perspective there are the issues of encouraging people to join them on the journey, how to manage the pace of change, manage the political appetite (or lack of it) for change, how to address carer reliance on day care as respite and to promote day opportunities as a people focused/centred support. In addition, whether day opportunities are commissioned by the local authority or individuals with a personal budget, there is a need to consider how to shape and engage with the market and to be able to assure levels of quality and pricing.

Conclusion

The consistent messages received across authorities were as follows with mitigations for BCP Day Opportunities Strategy suggested in italics:

- Planned move away from a reliance on building-based day care centres and create alternative opportunities for people to try out. *To be determined through consultation with all stakeholders October – November 2022.*
- Increased sustainable opportunities for employment and volunteering for younger adults. *Planned review of Supported Employment in 2023.*
- New accessible day opportunities to be based in the community. *To be determined through consultation with all stakeholders October - November 2022. If so, consider how these will be established e.g. directed via BCP Council engagement or an outside organisation such as Community Connections.*
- Accessible transport and travel training to be available. *Identify need through engagement exercises and focus on travel training schemes if greater community access is desired. Consider the logistic impact on BCP Council transport services.*
- Move away from a solely Monday to Friday, 9-5 model and provide support in the evenings and at weekends. *Some BCP providers already have this provision in place, and this will be needs led. Included in the consultation exercise.*

- Keep all of the different levels of need and support on the agenda to avoid accusation of exclusion and taking “one size fits all” approach. *Reflected in membership of all groups established for the BCP Day Opportunities Strategy review.*
- Engage people and carers and providers from the outset. *Co-production group has been established and engaged at the outset of the project with a wide range of stakeholders and a mailing list set up to keep all updated. A Communication Plan for the project is in place.*
- Provide accurate and accessible information and support about personal budgets. *All documents provided in easy read version for the co-production group. Established work with Direct Payments and Personal Budget manager regarding personal budget access and inclusion in the steering group for the project. Attendance at the Self Directed Support Network where this is a focus across authorities on how ease of access to personal budgets can be achieved.*
- Sustainable change takes time. Where successful change had happened, it was over a period of a few years. *Timeline for project has been revised to provide more time for the work to be carried out and co-production to be meaningfully achieved.*

The aspiration nationally was to harness the changes brought about by the pandemic and move forward with increased community based and virtual activity. Logistically, there will be different challenges across the different local authorities, but the commitment to continue with, or start, the process of change was clearly demonstrated.