



Day Opportunities Strategy and future of Tricuro Day Centres Consultation

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Research and Consultation Team

Analysis and Report by Darmax Research

Executive Summary

BCP Council ran a consultation that asked respondents their views on the proposed Day Opportunities strategy and changes to Day Centres.

There were 665 responses to the Day Opportunities Strategy and future of Tricuro Day Centres Consultation survey. In addition, there were 50 responses gathered from meetings, email responses and impact letters that were received throughout the consultation period.

Respondent type

23% of respondents were someone that attends a day centre, while 19% were an unpaid carer for a person that attends a day centre and 18% were someone who lives with a person who attends a day centre. 10% of respondents were a member of staff at a Tricuro day centre.

106 respondents indicated that either they attend or were an unpaid carer for / someone who lives with a person who attends one of the five Tricuro 'Plus' day centres. 219 respondents indicated that either they attend or were an unpaid carer for / someone who lives with a person who attends one of the three Tricuro 'Connect' day centres.

Strategy

Key strategic priorities

During 2022-23 a co-production group made up of people with lived experience, advocacy groups, providers of day opportunities, councillors, colleagues from neighbouring local authorities, and NHS Dorset produced a draft Day Opportunities Strategy. The strategy identifies six key strategic priority areas to focus on:

- Day Opportunities Review
- Supported Employment Review
- Day Opportunities Standards / Support
- Cost / Eligibility of Day Opportunities
- Transport
- Accessible Information

Priority

Respondents were asked to prioritise the six key strategic priorities. 81% of respondents felt that the Day Opportunities Review was a high priority, while 76% felt that the Day Opportunity Standards was a high priority. Just over 60% of respondents felt that Cost / Eligibility of Day Opportunities, Transport and Accessible Information were high priority. Supported Employment Review was the key strategic priority that the fewest respondents felt was a high priority (48%).

Other feedback

Respondents were then asked to provide any other feedback about the draft Day Opportunities Strategy. Comments were themed and assigned to the strategic priority that they related to. Some respondents commented on their views regarding the proposed closures to the Tricuro Day Centres within this question as opposed to directly relating to the strategic priorities.

Day Opportunities Review

There were 398 comments that related to the Day Opportunities Review. Respondents felt that day opportunities are vital and that they should remain open. Respondents were concerned about the support that would be available for the elderly, vulnerable and those with complex needs, including those with dementia, learning disabilities and those who are neurodiverse. Continuity of care is important for many of these individuals, familiar staff recognise changes in individuals and changes in setting, staff and activities can be distressing. Respondents also commented that Plus centres specialise in the type of care that they provide and that it was not appropriate to mix people with different needs. Day centres are important to respondents because they help foster friendships, provide socialising opportunities and reduce loneliness, while they also benefit the mental health and wellbeing of those who attend. Family members and unpaid carers benefit from service users attending day centres as it provides them with their only respite from their caring responsibilities, prevents them having a breakdown and they feel reassured that the person they care for is in a safe place where they are happy and looked after. Reduced day centre provision would result in a need for more residential, full-time and hospital care as carers would not be able to cope, which could result in increased costs to the council.

Supported Employment Review

There were 20 comments that related to the Supported Employment Review. Respondents commented that the provision of employment opportunities is vital and that they have benefited from employment support opportunities previously. However, respondents commented that the supported employment review priority lacks detail, supported employment is not as much of a priority as the other key strategic priorities, employment is not suitable for many service users and that it is a different service to day opportunity provision.

Day Opportunities Standards

There were 114 comments that related to the Day Opportunities Standards. The majority of these comments related to the current standard of day opportunities provision rather than about creating a set of standards. Respondents commented that the current quality of care provided by staff at day centres is good, while day centres provide a safe and secure environment. Individual needs cannot be met in community based settings and community buildings lack specialised equipment and appropriate facilities. A one size fits all approach is not suitable as people have varying needs.

Cost / Eligibility of Day Opportunities

There were 31 comments that related to the Cost / Eligibility of Day Opportunities. Respondents commented that the proposals impact on those who pay for services privately, day opportunities need to be provided to those who have already been assessed as having a need, while others commented that the assessment process needs improvement. In addition, respondents commented on the impact that the two proposals would have on day opportunities provision. Respondents were concerned for the staff who work at day opportunities. Comments related to whether the staff would continue to have a job and concern as to the skills and qualifications of staff at alternative service providers.

Transport

There were 29 comments that related to Transport. Respondents commented that it is important that transport is provided to service users. Service users and carers lack their own transport, there is a lack of public transport and they are unable to travel or use transport independently. In addition, day centres and services need to be local and close to home.

Accessible Information

There were 12 comments that related to the provision of Accessible Information. Accessible information is important and there needs to be greater awareness and promotion of care services that are available locally. The provision of information online is not suitable for the elderly, those with learning disabilities or those who do not have access to the internet.

Overall / other comments regarding the draft Day Opportunities Strategy

There were 161 other comments that related to the draft Day Opportunities Strategy and the Tricuro day services review proposals. Respondents commented that they do not like the proposals or strategic priorities, they had been poorly thought through and criticised the late addition of the proposals to close Tricuro day centres without discussion with the co-production group. The suggested benefits do not justify the closure of day centres and savings should be made elsewhere. Respondents were critical of the length of time the consultation was open for, as well as it being undertaken in December and across Christmas and New Year, while there had been not enough promotion of the consultation to service users and their carers. Respondents also felt that the strategy and proposals lacked detail, were confusing and were difficult to understand.

Tricuro Day Centres Proposals

Proposal One: Close five Tricuro 'Plus' day centres

The draft Day Opportunities Strategy recommends providing more community-based services, therefore reducing the need for building-based services. Proposal one looks to close 5 Tricuro Plus Centres. The services that people access from these centres would still be delivered, either in one of the three Connect Centres (located in Boscombe, Christchurch and Parkstone) or in the community.

By closing these buildings and supporting people to access day opportunities in their community the council could save £1.1m a year. The day centre buildings would return to the council's property portfolio and could be used for another council purpose or sold.

Agreement with Proposal One

Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the proposal to close these Plus day centres. 71% of respondents disagree with the proposal to close Moordown Plus, while 65% disagree with the proposal to close Poole Plus. More than half of respondents disagree with the proposal to close Westbourne Plus, Wallisdown Plus or Highcliffe Plus.

Reason for disagreement

Respondents who indicated that they disagree with the closure of any of the Plus day centres, as well as those who indicated that they accept the proposal but have some concerns were asked why they disagree or what concerns they have. The main reasons for disagreeing or having concerns with the closure of any of the Plus day centres were:

- Some people might not feel confident or comfortable in a community setting (71%)
- Not getting the same level of support in a bigger day centre (67%)
- Loss of a community facility (66%)
- Difficulty travelling to another location (65%)
- Losing relationship with staff at Plus centre (64%)
- Worried about change / not knowing what service can be accessed in the future (62%)
- Losing relationship with other service users at Plus centre (61%)
- Worried that carers won't get a break (61%)
- Connect centres are too busy – need / prefer a quieter environment (59%)
- Worried for staff jobs (58%)

The reason that the least number of respondents gave for disagreeing or having concerns with the proposal were that they were worried how the building might be used in the future (32%).

Impact of Proposal One

Respondents were asked how they will be affected if this change goes ahead.

Support proposal

There were 43 comments that related to support for the proposal. The majority of these respondents commented that they would not be affected/impacted by proposal one, while others commented that the proposals seemed reasonable because service users at three Plus centres have already been relocated to nearby Connect centres following the pandemic in 2020.

Keep day centres open

There were 136 comments that related to keeping day centres open in general. Respondents commented that all day centres should be kept open and that everyone deserves to be able to attend a day centre that makes them feel safe and secure. 17 respondents specifically commented that the Plus centres should remain open, while 29 respondents specifically commented that the Connect centres should remain open.

Reduced access / level of support

There were 371 comments that related to reduced access / level of support should the Plus centres close. Respondents commented that the closures would impact on vulnerable people and specialist centres are required. Connect centres would become too busy and the same level of support would not be provided in bigger day centres. Community facilities lack the required equipment and facilities, while some people won't feel comfortable or confident in a community setting. Respondents also commented that it would be difficult to travel to another location.

Concern for relationships at day centres

There were 156 comments that related to concern for the relationships built at day centres should the Plus centres close. Respondents commented that they would lose the relationship they have with staff, while respondents were also concerned for staff jobs. Respondents commented that they would lose the relationships they have built with other service users and would increase isolation, while their current venue improves their mental health and wellbeing.

Uncertainty that closures bring

There were 98 comments that related to feelings of uncertainty should the Plus centres close. Respondents commented on a need for familiarity within their routine and were worried about change and not knowing what service can be accessed in the future. Respondents commented that there was a lack of detail in the proposal, while some respondents questioned how the building will be used in the future.

Concern for the impact on carers

There were 119 comments that related to concern for the impact on carers should the Plus centres close. Respondents were worried that carers won't get a break as a result of the Plus centre closures and would result in an increased demand for residential care. Some respondents commented on the cost of private care should the Plus centres close.

Proposal Two: Close all eight Tricuro day centres

The council are also considering whether they could close all eight Tricuro day centres. This means that in addition to the five Plus centres mentioned in Proposal One, the council would also close Boscombe Connect, Christchurch Connect and Parkstone Connect. All service users would move to either community-based services or a day centre operated by an independent provider.

It is estimated that this could save the council an additional £1.1million above the savings from Proposal One (£2.2million in total).

Agreement with Proposal Two

The vast majority of respondents disagree with the proposal to close the three Connect centres in addition to the five Plus day centres.

Reason for disagreement

The main reasons for disagreeing or having concerns with the closure of any of the three Connect centres were:

- Difficulty for service users travelling to another location (77%)
- Some people might not feel confident or comfortable in a community setting (74%)
- Losing relationship with other service users at my day centre (72%)
- Losing relationship with staff at my day centre (71%)
- Loss of a community facility (70%)
- Worried about change / not knowing what service can be accessed in the future (69%)
- Worried for staff jobs (64%)
- Worried that carers won't get a break (63%)
- My needs can't be met in a community-based service (56%)

The reason that the least number of respondents gave for disagreeing or having concerns with the proposal was that they were worried how the building might be used in the future (35%).

Impact of Proposal Two

Respondents were asked how they will be affected if this change goes ahead.

Overall impact of Proposal Two

There were 16 comments that related to the overall impact of proposal two. Respondents commented that they would not be affected/impacted by proposal two and were critical that proposal two was not co-produced.

Keep day centres open

There were 205 comments relating to the need to keep day centres open in general. Respondents commented that all day centres should be kept open and that the centres provide a safe and secure environment. Respondents specifically commented that the Connect centres should remain open, while others commented that the Plus centres should remain open.

Funding

There were 138 comments relating to the funding of day centres. Respondents felt that the proposal was focused on cost savings as opposed to providing suitable care provision, while others commented that the proposals would result in increased costs to the council in the long run. The council should ensure that day centres receive appropriate funding and that cost savings should be made from other services and

schemes. Some respondents commented that day care should be funded by the council and not private or voluntary organisations.

Reduced access / level of support

There were 358 comments relating to reduced access and support if the Connect centres were to close. Specialist centres are required, the closures would impact on vulnerable people and community facilities lack the required equipment and facilities. Respondents commented that the needs of service users cannot be met in community settings, while it would be difficult to travel to another location. Some respondents commented that the day centres provide them with hot meals that they may not otherwise have.

Concern for relationships at day centre

There were 297 comments relating to the impact the closures would have on the relationships they have built at their day centre. Respondents commented that they would lose the relationship with staff who know them and their needs, while respondents were also concerned for staff job losses. Respondents commented that they would lose the relationships they have built with other service users and would result in increased isolation, while their current day centre provision improves their mental health and wellbeing.

Uncertainty that closures bring

There were 148 comments relating to uncertainty that the closures would bring. Respondents commented on a need for familiarity within their routine and that they were worried about change and not knowing what service can be accessed in the future. Respondents also commented that there was a lack of detail in the proposal.

Concern for the impact on carers

There were 168 comments relating to being concerned for the impact the closures would have on carers. Respondents were worried that carers won't get a break as a result of the Connect centre closures and it would result in an increased demand for residential care. Respondents also commented on the cost of private care should the Connect centres close.