

Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 1 November 2022

Subject: Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities Programme

Lead officer: Gillian Moore, Head of Integrated Learning Disabilities Service

Lead member: Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Contact officer: Gillian Moore

Recommendations:

A: To note the Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities Programme as outlined within this paper.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. For a number of years, the national and government intention in legislation and associated frameworks has required health and social care to improve services for Adults with a Learning Disability.
- 1.2. In 2019 Adult Social Care identified the need to review and expand the current offer of community options for people with a Learning Disability and or Autism. This recognised the need to modernise Merton's current facilities and commissioned services. Work began to plan a programme looking at the needs of those locally with a Learning Disability and the potential options for modernising the services offered.
- 1.3. The pandemic impact; a reduction in day centre usage, and increased operating costs have all compounded the need to review Community Options in Merton.
- 1.4. Merton currently has 3 in-house day centres and purchases a range of other day services and community provision, both within the borough and other local boroughs. However, the choice for customers remains limited to traditional options. It has also been recognised that Merton's in house day centre provision requires some modernisation to enable an optimal model to build better health and community relationships and increase independence.
- 1.5. This paper outlines the work that has been undertaken to date in the Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities Programme, and the options for moving forward.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Nationally, there is an intention to ensure that services for people with a Learning Disability are improved and support greater choice and independence. The range of needs of this group of people is extremely varied and wide ranging, and this must be reflected in the choices available to them.

- 2.2. A comprehensive offer of support is also important for carers who may be providing extensive care to their relative or friend with a Learning Disability/Autism.
- 2.3. There has been a range of guidance over the years that has sought to provide an improved direction for services. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) produced a practice guide on community-based day activities and supports for people with learning disabilities which was published in June 2007. The guide was to ensure that people with learning disabilities 'have a good day'. It includes:
- Building community opportunities and support so that people can have ordinary daily lives
 - Day service modernisation
 - Community-based services
 - Employment, lifelong learning, leisure, relationships and more.
- 2.4. It is also clear that COVID has had an impact on the life of people with a Learning Disability. An Association Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) survey in October 2020 found that COVID restrictions had led to a 47% reduction in day centre capacity. Closures were estimated to have contributed to 42% of people with a learning disability and / or autism losing or having a service withdrawn. A rapid learning review was conducted in March 2021 and looked further at COVID's impact on services. This found a widespread determination to use this as a moment to re-assess, rather than simply re-open in the same way.
- 2.5. ADASS have started work on a programme called 'Beyond Building Based Services'. There has been a recurring theme to achieve a shift away from building-based support to buildings used as hubs/pods and increasing the availability of outreach. This has been an aspiration for Merton both prior to the pandemic and subsequently.
- 2.6. There is a need for a wider range of provision for younger people who have a Learning Disability and especially for younger people with Autism who do not have a Learning Disability. This group of people often prefer less traditional day service options. There is a range of work being done in relation to 'Preparing for Adulthood', and an intention to ensure that models can support young people to achieve as much independence as possible. It is particularly important to ensure that young people can be supported to access training and employment as part of their transition to adulthood.

3 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1. In September 2021, Merton commissioned Community Catalysts (a social enterprise company specialising in Social Care and Health) to support with engaging a range of stakeholders in a consultation on what people with a Learning Disability/Autism would like to see developed in Merton.

- 3.2. The consultation, called “**The Big Conversation**” “was held in Summer 2021. This was extremely successful and was highly effective in obtaining views.
- 3.3. 381 responses from people with learning disabilities, family carers and community organisations / service providers were evaluated in a report for Adult Social Care called “**The Big Explore**” Report.
- 3.4. The following future principles were identified from the Big Explore for consideration when commissioning the future service model:
- **Provide a greater range of choice of options in the community**
 - **Make better use of council and other buildings and facilities**
 - **Support day centres to become community hubs**
 - **A focus on people’s strengths, purpose, and life aspirations**
 - **Services and supports that are better connected and joined up**
 - **Extend services to young people in transition services and people with Autism**
 - **Better connect current work within the daytime agenda**
- 3.5. Following this, a report was produced by officers for the directorate, outlining a potential way forward, and options to achieve change. These principles informed a Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities and Community Options – Options Appraisal document, which was written in May 2022.
- 3.6. A commissioning framework paper has also been developed during 2022, setting out a way forward for commissioning a range of options.
- 3.7. In 2021 a stakeholder reference group was established to ensure the programme was provided in co-production with customers, carers and other partners.
- This has subsequently changed in 2022 to form two groups to avoid any conflict of interest. These are
- Stakeholder Reference Group – supported by the Programme Leads
 - Provider Reference Group – supported by the Commissioning Team

3.8.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.5. The proposal for moving forward and achieving change to the model is under consideration within Adult Social Care, including the Lead Councillor.
- 4.6. The proposal is to ensure a programme of work within the Learning Disabilities service that seeks to:
- **Explore the potential options for creating a community hub.**
 - **Implement a modernised day opportunities model that encourages independence and is in keeping with a strengths-based model**

- **Commission services that support increasing choice and personalisation,**
- **Is inclusive**
- **Contributes to long term savings.**

4.7. A proposed savings target of £700k has been identified against the Day Opportunities Programme as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Department is currently reviewing all existing savings proposals as part of the upcoming annual refresh of the MTFS to ensure that the quantum of savings from individual proposals remains deliverable.

4.8. Following agreement in principle to the programme set out in this paper by leaders a further analysis of the investment costs required for the development of the Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities Programme is required. Development of a new model would then proceed.

5 GOVERNANCE

5.1. Following a decision on this proposal, a governance structure to ensure accountability for delivery will be put in place.

5.2. The current Learning Disability Offer Steering Group, which has met fortnightly since March 2021 will oversee the programme and report into the Directorate Transformation Board.

5.3. A continuation of the existing Reference Groups will ensure stakeholders are consulted and are part of the development of the new model as follows

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. To note the Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities Programme as outlined within this paper.