

Cabinet Member for Adult Services

17 March 2022

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Adult Services - Councillor M Mutton

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of Adult Services and Housing

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Day Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities

---

**Is this a key decision?**

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

---

**Executive summary:**

The Council directly provides or commissions a range of day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism which are a combination of centre-based activity and more flexible community activity related opportunities.

The provision of day opportunities serves an important function in meeting our responsibilities to Adults with Care and Support needs and their carers in two primary ways:

1. The provision of meaningful activities including learning, stimulation, and recreation.  
These activities all help in promoting the independence of service users
2. The provision of valuable daytime respite for informal carers

The expectations of people with care and support needs and their families have been changing. Where day centres that provide solely 'in centre' support were traditionally the only available support model, user and carer expectations have changed. For many the provision of centre-based support with additional complimentary activities, with support, outside of the centre environment now provides the most effective service.

This move to a more blended approach was accelerated over the Covid-19 pandemic when in response to the closure of centres during the first lockdown in spring 2020 and subsequent partial reopening of centre-based day opportunities. The City Council has modified its model of direct service delivery and also worked with providers to adapt day centre-based approaches. These blended approaches optimise safe interaction but minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection, an issue that many service users and carers remain concerned about due to pre-existing health conditions despite the lifting of all national restrictions.

The Council has responded to this changing position by operating on an interim basis from fewer centres and providing alternatives to centre-based activities where required. Such an interim position was implemented for Wilfred Spencer Centre and the Community Zone which used to operate from two centres but since summer 2020 have only operated from Wilfred Spencer Centre in Allesley. This interim measure has proven popular with many people that use the service, and permission was gained from Cabinet Member in September 2021 to formally consult on making the approach permanent. The focus of the formal consultation was the proposal to mainstream this way of working and permanently close the day centre provision that operated from the Community Zone at Frank Walsh House in Hillfields.

This report seeks permission to implement the proposal to consolidate building based Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities delivered from two establishments: Wilfred Spencer Centre in Whitaker Road, Allesley and Frank Walsh House annex Jenner Street, Hillfields into a single hub at Wilfred Spencer Centre.

As well as consulting on the consolidation of two Learning Disability Day Centres the September Cabinet Member report also included the proposal for Older Peoples Dementia Day Services at Maymorn. The outcome of this will be reported separately as the consultation exercise is not yet complete.

### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services is recommended to approve the consolidation of Learning Disability Day Centre at Community Zone and Wilfred Spencer Centre to a single hub at Wilfred Spencer Centre in Allesley.

### **List of Appendices included:**

The following appendices are attached to the report:

None

### **Background papers:**

#### **Other useful documents**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?**

No

**Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Day Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Expectations of people with care and support needs and their families are changing where a more balanced approach to centre based and non-centre based opportunities is required.
- 1.2 This move to a more blended approach was accelerated over the Covid-19 pandemic where in response to the closure of centres during the first lockdown in spring 2020 and subsequent partial reopening of centre-based day opportunities.
- 1.3 Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen a reduction in service users wanting to attend building-based services and more interest in a flexible /outreach-based support.
- 1.4 The Council has responded to this changing position by operating on an interim basis from fewer centres and providing more alternatives to centre-based activities where required. Such an interim position was implemented for Wilfred Spencer Centre and the Community Zone which used to operate from two centres but since summer 2020 have been based at Wilfred Spencer Centre in Allesley. This interim measure has proven popular with many people that used the service, and as a result a formal consultation exercise commenced in September 2021 to mainstream this way of working and permanently close the day centre provision that operated from the Community Zone at Frank Walsh House in Hillfields.
- 1.5 This consolidation on an interim basis has helped the development of a more diverse day opportunity offer which includes a range of alternative and creative therapeutic, educational outreach services exploiting the opportunities afforded by technology which are delivering better outcomes for many of our service users. Virtual day services have also become more popular and will remain a future offer for service users, their families, and carers.
- 1.6 The changes in demand for centre-based services has been significant. Prior to Covid, Wilfred Spencer offered 170 places per week which supported 34 service users over 5 days, and the Zone offered 125 places supporting 25 service users over 5 days. Currently the combination of both services in the limited space at Wilfred Spencer is offering 120 places per week which is meeting current demand as we recover from the Covid 19 pandemic. After the refurbishment the new model aims to increase capacity to 260 places per week over 5 days and will be able to offer a wider variety of activities. Extra capacity will be realised as a result of the refurbishment and also as the use of the centre combines with activities in the community. We are starting to see increased demand as we recover from Covid and a robust and varied day service offer will support people who want to remain in their own home, it will also provide valuable respite for carers many who are older carers, thereby supporting carer resilience and helping to avoid admissions to care homes and supported living as a result of carer breakdown.

1.7 On 29 September 2021, following Cabinet Member approval Coventry City Council entered a consultation process on consolidation of the services. The formal consultation period ended on 29 October 2021 and since then questions and answers have been collated and shared with Trade Unions and staff and a small number of 1:1's have taken place with staff who wanted to discuss their personal circumstances.

1.8 All issues raised during the consultation were responded to on 17 December 2021 and there have been no further questions or issues raised in respect of the proposal. Examples of the issues raised, and responses are included below:

Issues	Response
Will staff who have worked at Wilfred Spencer, who are substantively based at Community Zone be required to move on a permanent basis to Wilfred Spencer Centre	Yes, the staff at The Community Zone are employed on city wide contracts that either state city wide and/or in any place of employment.
Could the Zone be kept open a little longer, whilst the work at Wilfred Spencer Centre is being completed?	No, as too much work needs doing to the Zone, during COVID service users have been attending Wilfred Spencer Centre, so if go back to Zone would be difficult. Alternative options will be explored so service users can access other services on days not safe for service users to attend.
What options will be provided to staff who can't work their full contracted hours at Wilfred Spencer Centre due to caring responsibilities or reasonable adjustments due to health conditions?	Normal council policy would apply in respect of flexible working and reasonable adjustments.
Some adaptations are required to the building at Wilfred Spencer Centre. When building work is being completed, what will happen with service users?	There may be some closure days if major work is required, for example when breakthrough for installing a through floor lift. Other adaptations are outside i.e., Transport Barrier to be installed.
Could the Zone be kept open a little longer, whilst the work at Wilfred Spencer Centre is being completed?	No, going back to the Community Zone even on an interim basis would be difficult as it has not been used for approaching two years so some interim work would be required.
Can we change the name of the service?	Yes, but not building name. This can be a matter dealt with once the outcome of consultation is confirmed.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

### **2.1. Option 1 – Recommended Option - Consolidation of Services to a Day Services Hub at Wilfred Spencer Centre**

This proposal would see consolidation of building based Learning Disabilities day opportunities delivered from two establishments; Wilfred Spencer Centre in Whitaker Road, Allesley and Frank Walsh House annex Jenner Street, Hillfields to focus on a single hub at Wilfred Spencer Centre. The proposal includes the re-design of the service into a vibrant “hub and spoke” model incorporating community access and leading to improved outcomes for service users and their families.

This option is recommended as it embraces the new ways of working which developed during the pandemic and makes the most of enhanced building-based services, whilst building support for people at home and equally exploiting technological solutions for delivery of support.

### **2.2. Option 2 – Not recommended. Revert to delivery at both Wilfred Spencer Centre and the Community Zone.**

Whilst some stakeholders may support a return to delivery from two centres this option has the following disadvantages:

- Most service users/families do not wish to return to a two-centre building based model and operating building-based services with lower numbers would not be financially sustainable and may adversely impact on the quality of experience for service users
- Any future requirements for limiting numbers of attendees in buildings may not permit a return to previous numbers
- This option would compromise service improvements, flexibility and personalisation brought about through community based and virtual models of support which have been welcomed by many service users and their families.
- To return to the Community Zone would require investment as the facility has not been accessed since the initial lockdown in March 2020.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Several engagement exercises were conducted prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019/early 2020. This included 9 families and 29 staff who showed broad support for the consolidation proposals.
- 3.2 The plan to create a vibrant Community Hub, which will incorporate Citizens attending for daytime activities, community access, the continuation of the virtual offer and the option for people with care and support needs to join just for specific sessions and events was welcomed by service users, families, and carers.
- 3.3 Local amenities offer many opportunities for people with care and support needs to be involved in the local community.

- 3.4 Family carers felt incredibly positive about the move, and more recently families have fed back that they are happy with the current service model, they have seen this as an improved location and improved facilities for their family member. Families also fed back that they were appreciative about being kept informed throughout the process.
- 3.5 Staff have advised that service users that have moved from the zone have settled into Wilfred Spencer well and families and carers are also happy.
- 3.6 Staff and Trades Union colleagues have been involved in engagement sessions
- 3.7 Following consultation several questions were asked and responses were provided to Trade Unions and staff, no further questions were asked following this communication.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1. Should Cabinet Member endorse the recommendation implementation will commence March 2022. Some building adaptations will be required which is dependant of contractor availability, but the work orders will be placed promptly should approval to proceed be given.

#### **5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance**

##### **5.1. Financial implications**

There will be further investment into Wilfred Spencer to create a modern facility that can better meet the needs of people with a learning disability particularly to the second floor so it can start being used to its full potential, all of which is being funded by Disabled Facilities Grant.

To return to the Community Zone would require investment as the facility has not been accessed since the initial lockdown in March 2020.

Delivery of these proposals would realise potential revenue savings of £85K from a total budget of £1003K:

- Reduction of 1.0 FTE G5 management post releasing £26,446 (posts already vacant)
- Reduction of 1.0 FTE G3 Support Assistant posts releasing £22,892 (posts already vacant)
- No longer responsible for building maintenance costs associated with Frank Walsh Annex releasing £35,000

##### **5.2. Legal Implications**

The Care Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to meet the assessed eligible needs of service users and their carers, but discretion over how to do so. This enables each Authority to respond to the needs of its population and provide personalised care and / or support packages to individuals. In many circumstances, day opportunities are an

appropriate way to meet individual needs and ensure that the Council discharges its responsibilities to service users and informal carers

The Council also has a responsibility to consult with stakeholders in connection with proposed significant changes to service delivery to ensure that anyone who may be affected is able to contribute to the discussions and comment upon the proposals.

Public authority decision makers are under a non-delegable ongoing duty to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and decision makers must be consciously thinking about these aims as part of the decision-making process, with rigour and an open mind. The duty is to have "due regard" not to achieve a result, but to the need to achieve these goals and consideration must be given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures (if any) that are available to minimise any discriminatory effects. Members must therefore ensure that they read all relevant papers to enable them to assess the risk and extent of any adverse impacts and the ways in which any such risk can be eliminated. This requires more than just an awareness of the equality duty, it requires rigorous analysis by the public authority, beyond broad options. This is important both at this consultation stage and at any point when Members make any final decisions on any proposals that may be presented to them.

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1. How will this contribute to the achievement of the council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan / scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)?**

Should the proposal be enacted they would support several the Council's One Coventry objectives i.e.

- ✓ Improving health and wellbeing
- ✓ Protecting our most vulnerable people
- ✓ Reducing health inequalities
- ✓ Availability of appropriate and relevant advice and information.

### **6.2. How is risk being managed?**

As service users have not been to Frank Wash House since the start of the pandemic the risks associated with the transition to Wilfred Spencer Centre are limited. However any risks will be overseen by the service and team overseeing the implementation.

### **6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?**

There are no contractual changes to employee's and there are no proposed redundancies as posts identified as savings are already vacant. A reduction in staff will be required but this will be achieved through not recruiting to vacant posts.

There will be estate implications due to no longer requiring the use of Community Zone. This is an annex to Frank Walsh House which is owned by Citizen Housing and



occupied by the City Council under a lease. Community Zone will be returned to Citizen Housing which gives the opportunity to use as part of the wider housing provision at Frank Walsh House.

#### **6.4. Equalities / EIA?**

EIA was completed in September 2021 to understand implications for service users and informal carers, it is considered that if enacted the proposals would have a positive impact on reducing inequalities/health inequalities through improved support to people with disabilities/mental-ill-health.

Impact on workforce would be minimal as there are no redundancies but for some it is a change in work location which has been discussed with individuals and no further issues raised.

#### **6.5. Implications for (or impact on) the environment?**

None

#### **6.6. Implications for partner organisations?**

Statutory and voluntary partner organisations have been engaged on proposals to date. Should the proposals be enacted there would be positive implications for partners including opportunities to deliver their services from Council buildings

#### **Report author(s):**

Name and job title: Tracey Denny Head of Service Localities and Social Care Operations

Directorate: Adult Social Care

Tel and email contact: 02476 977392 tracey.denny@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Gerda Dunn	Service Manager Learning Disabilities and Mental Health	Adult Social Care	14/02/2022	16/02/2022
Sally Caren	Head of Social Work- Mental Health and	Adult Social Care	14/02/2022	16/02/2022

	Sustainability			
Lisa Lawson	Adult Services Programme Delivery Manager	Adult Social Care	14/02/2022	16/02/2022
Jon Reading	Head of Commissioning and Quality	Adult Social Care	14/02/2022	18/02/2022
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance: Ewan Dewar	Finance Manager		14/02/2022	17/02/2022
Legal: Janice White		Law and Governance	14/02/2022	
Director: Pete Fahy	Director of Adult Services and Housing		14/02/2022	02/03/2022
Members: Councillor M Mutton	Cabinet member for Adult Services		03/03/2022	03/03/2022

This report is published on the council's website: [www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings)