

The future of learning disability day opportunities in Staffordshire

Have your say

We want to know what you think the future of day services for people with learning disabilities should be like.

We are committed to making sure people get the best services possible, tailored to meet their individual needs.

We are considering **three options** and want to know what you think.

Below we describe each option, and tell you some of the things which are 'for' or 'against' each one.

At the moment **Option 3** is our preferred choice. This is based on conversations we have already had with many of you and our expert knowledge of what is 'best practice'.

However, we have not yet made a decision because we want to know what you think of all the options.

We also want to know if you think any of the options can be made better, or if we have missed anything out. And if you have an alternative option we will be happy to consider it.

We will be talking to people about the future of services for people with learning disabilities until November this year. All of the feedback we get will be considered before the council's Cabinet makes a decision on how best to support people in the future.

When you have completed this form please return it to:
**The Communications Team, Staffordshire County Council,
1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, ST16 2LP**

You can also complete this form online and find out more information here:
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/consultation

You can also contact us by phone or email:
Phone: 0300 111 8000
Email: communications@staffordshire.gov.uk

Option 1

Leave services as they are

There is no legal or regulatory requirement to modernise the current County Council provided day services for people with learning disabilities. So we could leave services as they are.

For:

- Many people have attended the same service for many years. The 'do nothing' option would provide stability for people with learning disabilities and their carers.

Against:

- More people are asking to try different options and are leaving council run day services. As fewer people attend a day service this will mean:
 - Less choice of activities.
 - Fewer people to interact with, so less chance to socialise.
 - Increased costs per person as large buildings are being under- used and staffing costs can't be reduced.
- Resources are currently tied up in expensive services which have to be based in buildings. This means that new, more flexible options can't be created. This would prevent us from delivering the improvements required in the council's 'Putting People First' strategy.
- People would not be able to benefit from an increased range of community options as staff would still be tied to buildings.
- If people continue to choose to leave services at the current rate they would become unsustainable within one to two years (sooner in some districts).
- Young people are not choosing to use these services. If we make changes, they could benefit from an increasing choice of services.

Questions for option 1 (no change)

Do you think this option would provide improved more personal support and make sure that people with learning disabilities have more independence and choice?

What do you think of this option?

If we chose this option, how would it affect you?

How could we improve this option?

Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share with us?

Option 2

All Day Services to be provided by charities, community groups and private companies, not the county council

All eligible people currently using council run services would have a careful assessment of their individual needs. With our support they would then be able to choose from a range of alternative local services available from independent providers.

All council run services would then close once people have moved to their chosen alternative.

For:

- The diversity of providers in the independent sector means innovative services would be more likely to be developed.
- The diversity of providers would offer a greater range of choice for people.
- Costs in the independent sector are generally lower. This means that savings would be released which could then be spent on developing more options and types of support.

Against:

- There are currently few independent sector providers able to deliver support to people with more complex needs, such as people with profound learning and multiple disabilities or people with challenging behaviour. People with learning disabilities and their carers could be at risk without such support.
- There are currently few independent sector providers who are yet able to deliver support which enables people with learning disabilities to develop new skills that support them to be more independent.

This is particularly the case in the areas of travel training and basic life skills training. People with learning disabilities would continue to be dependent on paid support. Resources would not be released to develop new support options.

- There are currently no independent sector providers who are yet able to deliver short term occasional support to people in temporary crisis to prevent them needing long term intensive support.

Questions for option 2 (only use independent providers)

Do you think this option would provide improved more personal support and make sure that people with learning disabilities have more independence and choice?

What do you think of this option?

If we chose this option, how would it affect you?

How could we improve this option?

Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share with us?

Option 3

Support most people to transfer to independent providers, but maintain some county council support in the medium term

This is a balanced option in which most individual support will transfer to independent providers.

Where not enough providers are ready (for example in the provision of more complex support) the council will continue, in the medium term, to provide that support from smaller, better buildings.

In the longer term, options for transferring the operation of these residual services to independent providers would be developed.

For:

- Council day services staff and managers have the skills and expertise to support people with more complex needs. This includes people with profound learning and multiple disabilities or people with challenging behaviour.
- Council staff and managers can also support people with learning disabilities to develop new skills that support them to be more independent, particularly in the areas of travel training and basic life skills training. People with learning disabilities would become more independent, releasing resources to develop new support options.
- Council day staff and managers can deliver short term occasional support to people in temporary crisis. This could prevent them needing long term intensive support.
- Costs in the independent sector are generally lower so some savings would be released

Against:

- This would extend the period of uncertainty for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers and staff.
- This could be seen as preventing market development.

Questions for option 3 (a balance between council and independent providers)

Do you think this option would provide improved more personal support and make sure that people with learning disabilities have more independence and choice?

What do you think of this option?

If we chose this option, how would it affect you?

How could we improve this option?

Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share with us?

About you

To help us understand your views on the proposals we would value the following optional information. If you would like us to keep you up to date by email or post please be sure to supply your contact details.

Your name _____

Please keep me informed by:

Post: E-mail: e-mail address: _____

Post address _____

Postcode: _____

I am (tick one):

A person with a learning disability. A carer of a person with a

learning disability.

An employee of Staffordshire

Representing a partner

organisation.

An interested member of the

public.

Do you, or the person you care for, use a Day Service at the moment? Yes No

If 'Yes', which one?

Moorlands Newcastle Kidsgrove

Stafford/Marsh East Codsall

Court Staffordshire/Burton

Chase Lichfield Tamworth/Halford

Court

A different Day Service Please name it: _____

Gender: Male Female

How old are you? _____

To which ethnic group do you belong? _____

Thank you.

Learning Disability Day Services Consultation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What about people with complex needs, how will the council make sure they are involved in consultation?

A: Communicating with people with complex needs is always challenging. We will always make sure that we use the best method for each individual based on our knowledge of that person.

Where appropriate the advocacy service will be able to support people to express their views. Of course we are also making sure we offer all carers and families the chance to make their views known during the consultation.

Q: If public meetings are needed, can we have alternative venues, not meet in the Day Service?

A: We will ask local managers to make recommendations for their district about the best venue for any public meetings. In some areas that may be in the day service, in others it may be best to choose another venue. If you have strong views about this please let your local manager know so we can make arrangements as needed.

Q: We've heard it all before, why should we believe you?

A: This is the first time we have organised a formal consultation about the future of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities. However the themes of that consultation will be familiar to all of you as we have had informal conversations with you about this before.

As this is a formal consultation, the decision to be made at the end of it will be made at a meeting of the council's cabinet.

Q: It's already decided so there's no point getting involved, why should we believe you?

A: No decision has yet been made about the future of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities. At the end of the consultation all the views that are made known to us will be considered. A recommendation will then be made to the council's Cabinet who will take the decision.

Q: We want to see how the decision has been made; who makes the decision?

A: If it is needed at the end of the consultation a recommendation will be made to the council's Cabinet about any changes that may be needed. The Cabinet will meet in public to make their decision on any recommendation.

Q: We should have let carers tell their family members about the consultation

A: Our experience in the past is that us giving the news has worked well when we have told people who use Day Services about other things. For some people, they are more likely to understand news if it is given in the appropriate location. They are even more likely to understand the news if carers also tell them about it, so we would encourage everyone to discuss all the issues at home.

Just as importantly, by telling people in the centre, they have the opportunity to ask us questions and also to tell us what they think and how they want to be involved.

Q: What about peoples' friendships and socialising?

A: Whatever happens in the future, and whatever choices people make, we will support them to maintain friendship groups where we can. We are already working to ensure that we know who is important to them and ensure that they know how to make contact with each other.

More and more people are starting to see each other outside of day services and in the evenings. Many districts are already organising very popular evening and weekend social events, and we expect this sort of activity to become increasingly popular with families as well.

Q: What's the timescale for the decision?

A: The consultation will start in August and finish in November. The results will then be considered and a recommendation will be taken to the council's Cabinet. It is expected that Cabinet will make their decision in January, but we will confirm this provisional timetable towards the end of the consultation.

Q: Can we have face to face, 1:1 or carers group meetings?

A: We are organising a variety of events and meetings during the consultation. We expect to be able offer you the type of meeting you want, although if the demand for 1:1 meetings is very high we may need to ask people to attend in small groups.

Q: We need at least a week notice for meetings

A: We think this is very reasonable and we will do our best to ensure that every one gets at least a week notice of events. Some small and 1:1 meetings may be organised at shorter notice if this is convenient for all parties.

Q: We think a base is very important

A: Modernisation is about ensuring everyone gets a personalised service. For some people, particularly those with complex needs, their personal support plan will need access to specialist equipment and resources. By their nature these will have to be located in a building.

On occasions having to use a base can mean people spend more time traveling and less time taking part in activities, particularly if you have to travel to a base and then go back out to go to an activity.

Q: Are you going to make us have Direct Payments/P.A's?

A: It is a basic legal requirement that you must be 'willing' to have a direct payment. We do not want to force anyone to have a direct payment. In the future everyone will have a personal budget. This means you will know how much money is available to buy the support you need. And you will be able to have choice and control about how that money is spent. Anyone who needs support to have that choice and control will get it.

Q: It's confusing: what's the difference between Direct Payments, personal budgets and the new Personal Independence Payment?

A: A Direct Payment is when a someone is given an agreed amount of money to buy their own care and support directly from independent providers or to employ a personal assistant directly.

A personal budget is a way of letting people know how much money they have to spend on their care and support. It also makes sure they have 'choice and control' over how their money is spent. We will usually still manage the money on your behalf.

Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA). PIPs are to be phased in over the next few years. PIPs and DLA are administered by the Department of Work and Pensions not the council. See <https://www.gov.uk/pip/overview>

Q: How are independent providers vetted?

A: If you have a Direct Payment you can use any provider you like. Providers which offer personal care in your own home must be registered with the Care Quality Commission and you can check their registration details at www.cqc.org.uk. Registration only shows that at the time of inspection the provider met the CQC's minimum standards. CQC no longer make quality judgements of providers.

Providers of day opportunities and personal assistants do not have to be registered and you will need to satisfy yourself that they offer the right quality of service. However good providers will be able to show you how they work to ensure the quality of their services through their own quality standards and should be able to give good examples of satisfied customers.

We also work with an organisation called Care Match which provides training and support for Personal Assistants and Employers. They can also support with finding a Personal Assistant. You can find more information at www.carematch.org.uk.

If you have a personal budget the council will buy services on your behalf from one of the providers who have been accepted on to one of our 'framework contracts'. This does not guarantee service quality, but it does mean that the council continues to work with the provider to monitor quality and can offer support if the provider needs help to improve.

If you have concerns about any adult care provider in Staffordshire please contact the Quality Assurance Team on 01785 276 965 or e-mail them at qualitystandards.adult@staffordshire.gov.uk

Q: What about transport?

A: Whatever comes out of the consultation, some people will always need support to travel to and from activities. We will continue to offer travel training to people who may be able to learn to travel independently. Travel training can take some time, and our specialist Community Connectors have an excellent track record in working with a person at their own pace to support them to develop new skills.

If you are eligible for travel assistance some people will have an allowance for this in their personal budgets. Some may choose to use providers who include travel assistance in their service offer.

Q: We want some continuity and security of care

A: We recognise that for people with complex needs continuity of care is important to the delivery of safe and high quality care. Any proposals we make will need to take this principle into account.

This may mean that if changes in provider are needed, they happen slowly to allow new staff to get to know people properly first.

Q: It might be selfish but the Day Service lets us have a life too, whilst we know our son/daughter is safe and happy

A: We understand that as well as providing personalised support for people with learning disabilities, day opportunities also support parents, families and informal carers to have a break from caring and to support them to continue caring.

We will work to ensure that the support offered strikes an appropriate balance between supporting people with learning disabilities and their carers.

Q: We need local solutions, we don't want to travel to other districts

A: Travelling long distances will not provide quality personalised support. We are committed to providing support as locally as possible. Some more specialist types of support which are only needed by a very few people in any district may be more difficult to provide locally.

In such circumstances we will work with families to develop solutions using a variety of methods, including Direct Payments or through Community Connecting workers supporting new providers to offer new types of service.

Q: What about people for who 1:1 is not enough?

A: People who need very high levels of support due to their complex needs will still be supported as required.

Q: If we can prove other ways are more expensive can we save the service?

A: The changes proposed to day opportunities are not driven by the need to save money. Our primary aim is to ensure everyone is offered personalised support. For some people this will cost less, for others it may cost a bit more. We think that by releasing resources tied up in large expensive to run buildings that are now nearly empty, we can offer more choice and more tailored support to more people.

Q: There is a lack of Social Workers, we don't have one/can't get one/ have to wait too long/they keep changing.

A: As you may be aware Independent Futures is currently developing its new way of working. This will mean that each person with a learning disability who is eligible will have a keyworker who will remain constant as far as possible. You can find further information about Independent Futures at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/independentfutures