

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Having A Good Day?

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- Will the Day Opportunities service be more expensive than the current way of delivering services?
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- Is the development of Day Opportunities linked to Self Directed Support (SDS)?
- What are personal budgets?
- If everyone has a personal budget what will happen to people who continue to use the service?

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- How long will it be before we start to see the changes happen and how long will it take to complete the transformation?
- When and how will families and carers be informed about the consultation?

## **THE SUBJECT OF THIS CONSULTATION**

### **1. What does ‘having a good day’ mean’?**

Research carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence(SCIE) on day activities for people with learning disabilities indicates that ‘*Having A Good Day*’ means:

- Being in ordinary places, doing things that most members of the community would be doing.
- Doing things that are right for them personally.
- Receiving support that meets their individual and specific requirements and overcomes inequalities.
- Meeting local people, developing friendships, connections and a sense of belonging.

We believe that this definition of ‘*Having A Good Day*’ is one that most people with all forms of disability, including people with mental health needs or experiencing frailty and vulnerability in old age, will agree with.

### **2. What are day opportunities?**

Day Opportunities is a way of describing the whole range of social, leisure, learning and other services individuals need to live as independently as possible. Day Opportunities includes social and leisure activities, skills development and education, daily support including the provision of intimate personal care (where this is part of an individual’s care plan normally carried out in a Day Centre) or any other service which helps a person lead an ordinary life. In many ways Day Opportunities is about enabling people with disabilities and vulnerable older adults to access the full range of services and activities that other people take for granted.

### **3. Why change?**

The way our existing Day Services are provided dates back to the 1980s and while many people benefit from current services, the case for change is strong. The main reasons for change are:

- ***An increase in the demand for Day Services:*** The County’s population is growing and ageing. More people with increasingly complex needs are living longer and will require support throughout their lives. This will lead to an increase in demand which cannot be met without change.

- **Buildings:** Large parts of the Day Services estate are not *'fit for purpose'* and require considerable maintenance.
- **Facilities:** Some buildings are poorly designed for the provision of high quality care.
- **Community Opportunities:** Day Services tend to separate service users from the communities in which they live. People need more choice and opportunities to participate in local communities, to have improved occupational opportunities and better access to community facilities.

#### **4. Have you already made the decision about the future of day services?**

No decisions have been made about the future of Day Services, nor will they until the end of the public consultation. It's vital that we hear your views. These will be really influential in shaping the future of service provision in Buckinghamshire. We are not simply asking you to say whether, or not, you agree with the proposals for change, but also, asking you to comment on the different aspects of Day Opportunities and how this new approach to service provision can be designed to best meet the needs of disabled people of all ages. We want to have a dialogue with people who use Day Services and their carers that will carry on after the consultation closes.

#### **5. How do you know Day Opportunities will work in practice?**

Once the formal consultation period has ended and the model is agreed, we will introduce the new service gradually, monitor its success and make any necessary adjustments. We know that a similar model has been introduced in other parts of the country (for example Thurrock, Essex, Leeds) and we are determined to learn from them, while we have shared experiences with other authorities (for example Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Stockton and West Sussex) who are undertaking similar initiatives.

### **THE BUILDINGS**

#### **6. Are you closing down the day centres?**

The independent expert advice we have taken tells us that most of the Day Centres used by the County Council are in a poor state of repair and *'not fit for purpose'*. We can do better than this and are looking at delivering services in different ways, including making more use of community buildings.

This does mean that some of the existing day centres will close. However, no buildings will be closed without alternative arrangements being put in place. We will develop a smaller but better range of purpose-built buildings that sit alongside our use of other community buildings.

## **7. What are these ‘purpose built’ buildings?**

Day Opportunities will use three different kinds of buildings:

- **Community Hubs** are large multi-purpose centres serving the Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham/Chesham areas. Hubs will support the most disabled people while also being a resource that the whole community can use. They will also be places where people can go to access a range of different services (for example: social care, health, housing, advice). It is proposed to introduce two or three Community Hubs.
- **Community Satellites** will serve the more sparsely populated parts of the County (for example Buckingham and Burnham) to meet the needs of people who would find it difficult to travel to the town centres. They will support people with complex needs, provide respite to carers, offer a resource that members of their local communities can use and bring a range of services together.
- **Community Bases** will be located in ordinary community facilities like community centres, church halls and leisure centres. Bases will be places where people can meet with or without support, offer drop-in facilities and will help people participate in community life. It is proposed to establish Community Bases in all parts of the county where there is both a need and an opportunity to do so.

## **8. Are there examples of Community Bases that are already working and how will the Council ensure they are in place?**

Community Bases are already an established feature of Day Services in Buckinghamshire. Village and community halls are used throughout the county to provide lunch clubs for older people. Church facilities are used for some day services that support people with mental health needs and people with physical and sensory disabilities who also attend a full range of activities based in recreational and educational facilities as do people with learning disabilities. Working examples of Community Bases include a supported housing scheme in High Wycombe where older people meet regularly for friendship and to undertake activities they enjoy, while people with sensory disabilities in Aylesbury attend regular coffee mornings run by a voluntary organisation. In the Chiltern District people with mental health needs have started a support group which meets regularly at a coffee shop and in South Bucks people with learning disabilities have been supported to make links with their local FAB group which has helped them make much more use of leisure facilities. The County Council

will work with local communities to identify where Community Bases should be located and to play a part in their running.

### **9. The building used by my day centre is fine so why can't it be kept?**

No decisions have been taken about the future of any of the day centres, but we cannot look at any of the centres in isolation. We must look at them collectively to understand how much money is available with which to put in place the new Day Opportunities Service. We are confident that the new buildings we want to establish will be better than what we now have.

### **10. Will Community Hubs, Satellites and Bases provide a more flexible service?**

Yes. Community Hubs, Satellites and Bases will offer extended hours of opening and be available for use at weekends. This means that more people can use them when they want and need them. In addition, as Community Hubs and Satellites will be used to provide a range of advice and information, health, leisure and other community services, they will be able to respond to a broader range of service users' needs than current Day Services. In addition current services may be delivered from Community Hubs, Satellites and Bases provided by the voluntary, independent and statutory sectors.

### **11. Who will run Community Bases?**

We want to be really imaginative about who can manage Community Bases. While this might be the County Council, a District Council, Health or some other statutory body, we want to encourage, where they want to, communities and voluntary agencies to take on this responsibility. As Community Bases will be very much part of local communities it is only right that those communities should have the chance to run them.

### **12. How will the service users have their lunch/ obtain refreshments?**

Lunch and refreshments will be provided as part of Day Opportunities. However, where the service is being provided in ordinary community facilities, service users may, as now, be asked to bring a packed lunch or contribute to the cost of their lunch and refreshments.

### **13. How would private meetings be facilitated?**

Each of the Community Hubs and Community Satellites will have facilities where private meetings can take place to protect confidentiality.

**14. What would happen if the service users need support until 5.30pm/ 6pm? Where would they go? What if someone else/ other groups want to use the room?**

Unlike current Day Services, many Day Opportunities programmes will be available on an extended-hours basis and at weekends. Service users will always have first call on Day Opportunities resources.

## **RECEIVING A SERVICE**

**15. Who will be able to use Day Opportunities?**

Day Opportunities will be available to a wide range of people. The services will need to be able to support people to maintain their independence, health and quality of life. You may also be eligible for a service if you find it difficult to take part in the life of your local community or could benefit from improving your living skills or if you need support to access work, education or leisure activities. Typically, the people who use our services will have some form of disability; or experience poor mental health; or be frail and vulnerable older adults over the age of 65 years.

**16. How do you decide whether I'm eligible for Day Services?**

An assessment of your needs has to be carried out. This will be done with the help of a care manager who will talk to you (and possibly to your family or carers) about any difficulties you have with day-to-day life and help you to complete a Self-Directed Assessment Questionnaire. If the assessment shows that you have a substantial or critical need, which means that there are serious risks to your health or independence, or would be unless you receive support, you will qualify for a service.

**17. What if I am not eligible for a service, but still need some support?**

If you do not meet the criteria for Day Opportunities to access support services we will still offer you assistance in a number of ways. We will help you access services within the voluntary sector or, if you require them, signpost or refer people to other specialist services for support. We will also make sure that an up-to-date directory of existing community based services is available for people who wish to arrange support themselves. In addition, individuals may make use of the facilities available to the general public in Community Hubs and Satellites which include one-stop shops for advice and information and a cafeteria. This means that people who do not attend these buildings for Day Services can meet their needs on an informal basis, provide each other with support and still have access to qualified staff if required. A good example of

how this can work is provided by some service users with mental health problems who have formed a self-help group which meets in a cafe.

### **18. Will there be a change in how much I can use the service?**

The amount of time will depend on what is specified in individuals' Support Plans. These will be different from one person to another, but the replacement service will still aim to meet a person's identified eligible needs.

### **19. What happens if my support needs change?**

Day Opportunities offer a flexible range of support that can be adjusted as individuals' support needs change. Everyone receiving a service will have a regularly reviewed Individual Support Plan which is particular to them and can be changed in line with their wishes, needs and aspirations.

If the support needs of a person attending a Community Base increase they can, if necessary, be offered a place in a Community Hub or Satellite. In contrast, if the support needs of a person attending a Community Hub or Satellite reduce, they may be provided for in a Community Base. Care Managers/Coordinators will make sure people receive the right levels of support. More frequent reviews of an individual's needs will mean that any deterioration in their situation will be identified early and responded to.

### **20. How will the Council make sure that the needs of individuals are not lost when making changes to services?**

The Council will keep the people who currently use Day Services and their carers informed of changes to services throughout their development and they will be encouraged to contribute to the design of the new service and to that of Community Hubs, Satellites and Bases. This will enable them to play an active part in planning for the future, including ensuring that the support needs of individuals continue to be met. Therefore, individual transition plans will be developed with advocacy and support provided to help people exercise and make decisions about their future service provision which suit them best. Transition plans will also specify the actions to be taken to guarantee continuity of care to individuals.

### **21. If the needs of other people increased would I be denied a service I had been receiving?**

No. If you have a support need which means that you are eligible for a service the County Council will meet that need.

## **STAFF AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **22. Will staff have the skills needed for Day Opportunities?**

We will develop a training plan so that all staff have the skills to deliver a service that most suits the individual. We hope to enable service users to participate in some parts of the training.

### **23. What will you do when there are staff shortages?**

There is a workforce plan to support staff delivering day opportunities to service users. Day opportunities will be sufficiently well resourced to cover staff holidays, absences and vacant posts.

### **24. What do the changes to Day Services mean for voluntary and independent organisations that provide these services?**

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 all new service users have been allocated Personal Budgets. Existing service users will be transferred to the new system of Personal Budgets when they have their annual review between April 2010 and March 2011. With the Personal Budget the service user will know how much money is available for their care and support and choose which services they want to purchase.

How service users decide to use their personal budgets will have an important bearing on the future demand for services provided by voluntary and independent organisations. However, we believe that the change offers these organisations enormous opportunities as they could run Community Bases and play a part in running Community Hubs and Satellites. Voluntary and independent organisations will also have a chance to provide services in and from these buildings and to make use of their facilities. We expect voluntary and independent organisations to play a significant role in the provision of Day Opportunities.

See also the section on Self Directed Support

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

### **25. Will Day Opportunities be able to appropriately and safely care for people who have the most serious disabilities, including dementia?**

The County Council is dedicated to providing the most seriously disabled and people with dementia with the support they need. Nothing in the proposals we are consulting on should reduce this commitment. People needing building based provision will continue to receive it with the establishment of Community Hubs and Satellites. These state-of-the-art, purpose built buildings will be

specially designed to meet the care needs of people with serious disabilities and dementia. Although there will be fewer Hubs and Satellites than Day Centres they will be far better buildings, will provide more services and have sufficient places for all who need them. For example, there will be the full range of equipment and skilled staff needed to safely provide high quality care. The quality of this care will be enhanced by closer working relationships with Health professionals who will be able to use Hubs and Satellites.

**26. How will the service support people with their personal care needs?**

Staff will be fully trained to carry out support with respect to a range of needs including personal care.

**27. How will you support service users who exhibit challenging behaviour?**

For those people who exhibit challenging behaviour an Individual Support Plan will be in place to manage and support them. This reflects current practice and helps ensure that difficult behaviours are well managed and the individuals concerned are safe and supported.

**28. Are you doing away with the services disabled people need?**

No. We understand that Day Services offer many people a 'life-line' and we will not take this away from them. In the future, some services may be provided from different places, but they will still be provided to all who need them. For example, Community Hubs and Satellites will be available to the most disabled people while Community Bases will be widely distributed across Buckinghamshire for use by people with less complex needs.

**29. Why do your proposals seem to pay so little attention to the needs of older people?**

Our proposals for the future of Day Services are about people with disabilities of all ages. Though some older people experience disabilities not all do and we believe old age should NOT be treated as a disability. However, we recognise that older people enjoy meeting other people similar to them and may have different interests to younger people. Therefore we will develop services that not only meet the needs of older people that are linked to their disabilities but also meet their social needs. For example, in the Wycombe area we successfully use sheltered housing facilities to bring older people together who have made friends and undertake activities they enjoy.

**30. How have you considered the needs of BME groups?**

The County Council is dedicated to ensuring that its services are appropriate and responsive to the particular requirements of all groups within the wider community, including BME groups. This will be reflected in the design of Community Hubs and Satellites and the specification of Day Opportunities services. They will take into consideration religious and dietary needs, while some Community Bases may offer ethnically specific services. We want to work with our BME communities to make sure that their needs are catered for now and in the future.

**31. How will the service users keep in contact with their friends and how will they make new friends?**

We recognise that friends are an important part of Day Opportunities. Every effort will be made to ensure that individuals can maintain their existing friendships and staff will help service users to make new friends. This will be a part of each person's Individual Support Plan.

**32. Will Day Opportunities continue to include respite for carers?**

Yes. Buckinghamshire is dedicated to supporting carers and planning for Day Opportunities will ensure that their need for respite continues to be met in line with Individual Support Plans.

**KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE**

**33. Will Day Opportunities be safe?**

Yes. All buildings will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure accessibility in and out of the building. Staff will be fully trained to meet the needs of all service users. In addition, our staff will carefully assess people who use Day Opportunities to try to make sure that they are not exposed to anything that will put them in danger.

**34. How do you avoid the possibility of people using services being exposed to some members of the public's negative attitudes and intolerance?**

There is a responsibility on all of us to challenge and address negative attitudes and associated behaviours within our community that discriminate against vulnerable people. These behaviours should not deny them the same opportunities that we all enjoy. As a Council we are committed to reducing discrimination and to supporting people to access communities and services as true and equal citizens.

**35. Some service users are already vulnerable. Won't they be even more vulnerable in a community setting?**

Risk assessments will try to ensure that no service users are subjected to inappropriate risks because they are in a community setting. We will support people to be as independent as possible and put in place systems to help this to happen safely whatever their situation.

**TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL**

**36. Will I be able to get to my Day Opportunities?**

If the Individual Support Plan shows that you require transport and have no way of getting to Day Opportunities yourself, then we will organise transport to get you to where you need to be.

**37. Will I have to travel further to get to my Day Opportunities?**

The combination of Community Hubs, Community Satellites and Community Bases means that there should always be a Day Opportunities facility within reasonable travelling distance of most people. The County Council will work with its transport provider to make sure that journey times are acceptable and will use its knowledge of where people live, who currently use Day Services, to identify where the new buildings should be located.

**38. What about car parking?**

Each of the Community Hubs and Community Satellites will have the car parking they require.

**FINANCIAL ISSUES**

**39. Will I have to pay for Day Opportunities?**

You may be asked to pay depending on the results of an assessment of your financial circumstances. No one will be asked to pay more than they can afford.

**40. How are you going to pay for Community Hubs and Community Satellites?**

The proposals being consulted on are affordable. To meet the cost of Community Hubs and Satellites we propose to sell some of the existing day centres and reinvest the funds raised in these new buildings. Before going to public consultation we undertook a lot of work, which was vetted by

independent committees, to arrive at an initial estimate of the cost of the new buildings and believe this approach will work.

**41. Will the new Day Opportunities service be more expensive than the current way of delivering services?**

No. The Council has to deliver the new service within available resources and, as already stated, the proposals for this service are affordable.

**42. Is this just a money-saving exercise?**

No. Within a tough financial climate the County Council has to provide Day Opportunities within a shrinking budget, but we are determined to improve our services. As we have already said, Day Opportunities for people with complex care needs will be provided from a smaller, but much better estate of purpose built buildings. Each of these will be developed as centres of excellence from which social and health care services can be accessed along with any other help they may need. We shall provide more options for the people who use Day Opportunities so they can achieve objectives that are important to them and *'have a good day'*.

**SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT**

**43. Is the development of Day Opportunities linked to Self Directed Support (SDS)?**

Yes. SDS is one of the main reasons why we needed to modernise current day care. The new Day Opportunities services will be able to offer choice to the individual who can use his/her budget on any aspect of Day Opportunities to meet eligible needs. Accompanying the introduction of SDS will be the use of personal budgets.

**44. What are personal budgets?**

The Government has asked that everyone receiving social care services be allocated a personal budget, which is the equivalent of the estimated cost of meeting their support needs. Individuals attending Day Opportunities will be provided with their own personal budgets that will make clear how much money is available to spend on meeting their needs. This money can be managed by the individual or, on their behalf, by the County Council. It is up to the individual to decide how much of their personal budget they want to spend on Day Services. The introduction of personal budgets does not undermine the Council's legal duty to meet the needs of people who are eligible for services, irrespective of budgetary considerations.

**45. If everyone will have a personal budget what will happen to people who continue to use the service?**

The answer to this question depends on how people decide to spend their personal budgets. If everyone who now uses day centres decides to spend them as they do now a similar service will be available. On the other hand, if everyone with a personal budget decides to spend them in some other way we would need to re-shape the provision in line with personal choice. In reality we expect there to be a continuing significant demand for the new Day Opportunities service from people with serious disabilities and dementia and from carers requiring respite. We do not regard personal budgets as a threat to service provision while the Council's duty and commitment to meet the needs of individuals, which meet the eligibility criteria, is unchanged.

**TIMESCALES**

**46. How long will it be before we start to see the changes happen and how long will it take to complete the transformation?**

If, after the consultation, the County Council decides to introduce Day Opportunities there will be no sudden change to Day Services. We will talk to people who use services, and their carers, to ensure that they continue to receive the support they need and are kept informed about when any changes will take place that will affect them.

**47. When and how will families and carers be informed about the consultation?**

The consultation ends on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and everyone who has indicated that they want to know the results of the consultation process will be informed of these within 28 days. The results will also be on our website on the 'Have Your Say' pages.