

Easy Read



ADSS Cymru

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Leading Social Services in Wales

Our review of Day Opportunities and Respite Services

How COVID-19 affected day services



This document was written by the ‘Association of Directors of Social Services’. It is an easy read version of ‘Review of Day Opportunities and Respite/Short Break Services.’

November 2023

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 27**.



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What this document is about



We were asked by the Welsh Government to look at how the Covid-19 pandemic affected day services and **respite** services.



Respite is when someone who needs support stays somewhere for a short time. It may be to give a carer a rest.



We did this in 2021.



The Government then asked us to do another **review** to see if anything had changed.



Review means to look at something and see if it has made a difference. It looks at what was done well, and what could be made better.



We looked at what was good and what was bad about services after the pandemic.



We looked at the whole of Wales in this [review](#).



But because of time and money we couldn't talk to every local authority.

Why we did the review



The **review** was to look at how the pandemic changed or affected services.



And to see if the pandemic has still made a difference to services.



We checked if there were new ways of supporting people.



We found out if people were receiving the support they needed.



We looked at how these things made people and their families feel.

How we did the review



We spoke to different people including:

- A small number of people who use services
- Local Authorities
- Organisations providing services
- Staff



We used different ways to carry out the **review**.



We sent out questionnaires and surveys to local authorities and organisations.



We organised focus groups asking people their thoughts and experiences.



We went to visit different services in different areas.



We made sure we visited different types of services, in different parts of Wales.

We saw lots of examples of change in services since the pandemic. For example:



- People using outdoor spaces more.



- People using their local areas.

- Services linking to local community opportunities.



- And people with learning disabilities being supported into paid employment.

What we found out



Many organisations said that there was a need to change the way day services and **respite** were offered.

How the Covid-19 pandemic affected services



The pandemic had a very big impact on day and **respite** services.



Some services had to close.



When they reopened, some services had to offer a smaller service. For example, fewer sessions or shorter session times.

What we found out:



Few people came back to services after they opened up again.



Some buildings were not really suitable for the services being provided.



Some types of services were not helping to develop people's independence.



Many services said they used different spaces during the pandemic such as community spaces and outdoor areas.



But many people also wanted the services back to how they were.

Money and Staffing Problems

Some of the problems were:



- Not having enough money.



- The price of things going up.



- Not having enough staff.



- Staff needing more training to make change happen.



Local authorities and support providers should work together to make things better.



We think there should be a pot of money for local authorities and support providers to share equally.



This would help make things better.

People have more needs than before



Lots of services said that people that receive support had more needs than before.



Some people's needs changed due to the pandemic.

Employment as part of day services



We think that helping people with disabilities to get paid work and opportunities is an important part of day services.



We think more needs to be done by day service providers and businesses working together.



We think more can be done to make sure businesses know about equal opportunities.



And that businesses can see the benefits of employing people with disabilities.



We think there should be a mix of centre-based support, community facilities and more technology to help support people.

Technology



When day services stopped in the pandemic, people used video calls and telephone technology a lot more.



This made people feel more connected.



But some people found this hard to do or did not have technology or a good internet connection.

Transport



There was less transport provided by services during the pandemic.



This was especially the case for people living in the countryside.



Even after the pandemic, some providers offered less transport.

Day services provide families with respite



We found out that day services and short break services helped families as well as the people needing support.



We also found out that sometimes the person who receives care did not have a say.



We think it's important that people make their own decisions about support.



When they can not make decisions, a decision should be made for the person. It must be what is best for them.

Person Centred care and Co-production



Most providers said that **person centred planning** and **co-production** are important.



Person Centred Planning means putting the person at the centre of planning for their lives.



Co-production means people using services are included in all decisions. They are seen as equal partners with professionals.



During our visits we saw some good examples of **co-production** and **person centered** ways of planning.



Co-production should be used in planning, delivering and **reviewing** services.



Not all staff and professionals understand **Co-production** or **Person Centred** ways of planning.



They should be given more training to understand.

Commissioning day opportunities and respite services



Commissioning is the way services are planned, organised and paid for.



Local authorities told us that they worked closely with providers during the pandemic. This helped to build better relationships between them.



Commissioners need to work with providers to make sure a range of services are available.



Services should be for people in different times in their lives and in different places.

What we think should happen



1. **Commissioners** and providers should use **person centred** ways of planning, delivering and making changes to services.



Coproduction will be really important for this.



2. **Commissioners** and providers should think about using community services, open spaces and other local resources.



3. Local authorities and organisations should work together to **review** services. And involve people who use them.



4. Helping people get paid employment should be an important goal for services.



Local authorities and organisations should think about how they can make this easier for people.



Local authorities and organisations should also think about how they can employ people themselves.



They should also work with employment services and business owners to help make opportunities.



5. There should be plans for staff to be trained and supported to make things better.



6. Digital technology should be used more to make services better. This means computers and the internet.



7. Welsh Government should look at ways to make funding of services better.



They should also look at making the funding more equal and fair.

How we can make things better in future



We think that some issues we found could be solved with better **commissioning**.



We think that there could be better ways of reporting back about services.



For example, reporting numbers of people attending services doesn't really tell us much about the quality of support.



Changes to services should be managed slowly so that people can get used to new ways of receiving support.



We know sometimes change needs to happen quickly. For example, if services aren't good.



Changes should be managed carefully and should be **co-produced**.



When plans are made for changes, they should be shared with the communities and people using the service.



Plans should be easy to understand.



Changes should be **co-produced** and **person centred**. And people should be asked about what changes they want.



Staff working in the services should be told about changes as soon as possible so that they can plan for them.



Staff should also receive training so that they can manage the changes well.



We think that services could use different community spaces.



Families and unpaid carers should be informed about changes.



Families and unpaid carers should be involved in discussions about the services.



This will help families and unpaid carers to make plans for the changes.

Hard words

Commissioning

Commissioning is the way services are planned, organised and paid for.

Co-production

Co-production means people using services are included in all decisions. They are seen as equal partners with professionals.

Person Centred Planning

Person Centred Planning means putting the person at the centre of planning for their lives.

Review

Review means to look at something and see if it has made a difference. It looks at what was done well, and what could be made better.

