

# Birmingham City Council Report to Cabinet

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021



**Subject:** BCC DAY OPPORTUNITIES SERVICES UPDATE 2021

**Report of:** Professor Graeme Betts CBE,  
Director of Adult Social Care

**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Cllr Paulette Hamilton - Health and Social Care

**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Cllr Mick Brown - Health and Social Care

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: N/A		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 a phased re-opening of day opportunity services commenced, and this report provides an update on the progress to date. The report will highlight the impact Covid 19 has had on the approach to re-opening and share the feedback received from citizens, carers and their families.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **2.1 The Cabinet:**

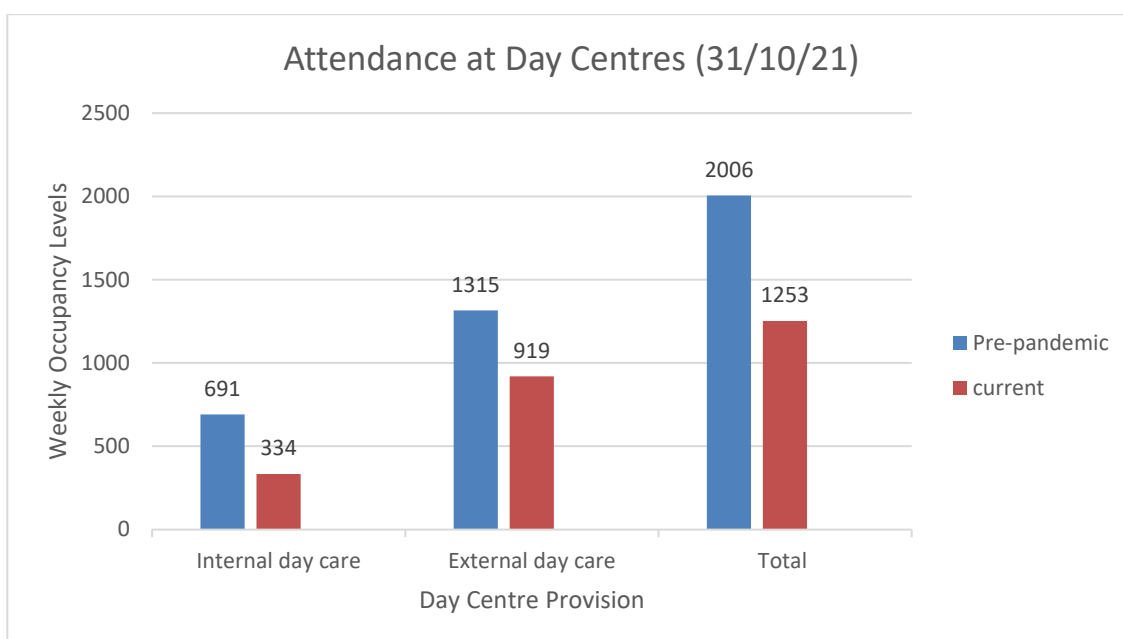
- 2.1.1 Notes the progress to date with the re-opening of building-based day opportunities services (day centres) for the citizens of Birmingham.
- 2.1.2 Approves permission to commission a co-production partner to support the delivery of a review of Day Opportunity Services in the light of the pandemic and any lasting impact.
- 2.1.3 Notes that a report will be presented to Cabinet in July 2022 with a proposal that will describe how the review will be co-produced and the required timescales for this to happen.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Following government guidance in March 2020, building based day opportunities services (day centres) were closed to comply with national government guidance and public health protection and infection control measures related to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 3.2 Following the relaxing of restrictions announced by Government on 22nd February 2021, and published Covid 19 Response – Spring 2021 ‘Roadmap out of Lockdown’; the Director of Adult Social Care under ‘**Covid 19 delegated decision making under part E3.3 of Birmingham City Council’s Constitution**’ approved the re-opening of building based day opportunity services (day centres) (**Appendix A**)
- 3.3 Building based day opportunity services (day centres) commenced a phased reopening from 26th April 2021.

## **4. Building Based Day Opportunity Services (Day Centres)**

- 4.1 Day Centres are provided both internally by Birmingham City Council and externally by a range of providers.
- 4.2 There are 9 internal day centres, 4 of which also have gardening projects. These centres are accessed primarily by citizens with a learning and/or physical disability.
- 4.3 In addition, there are 45 external day care providers in Birmingham and neighbouring authorities offering building-based day centre services from 57 separate sites, which support citizens funded by Adult Social Care. These day centres are accessible to adults with dementia, learning disabilities, autism, sensory impairment and physical disabilities and older adults.
- 4.4 As of 31st October 2021 all day centres have reopened. Figures for both pre-pandemic and current attendance are shown below (Table 1).



**Table 1** – attendance at day centres

- 4.5 The table above shows that attendance at day centres is currently below its pre-pandemic levels. This is partly due to building based restrictions in some centres that limits the capacity that can be accommodated to allow for physical distancing. It is also the result of a range of service user risk factors that are reflected in Section 7 Risk Management. Notwithstanding this, the numbers of citizens attending day centres (weekly occupancy), as well as the numbers of day centres that have re-opened has gradually increased since phased re-opening began from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021. By July 2021, as reported to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 88% of internal and 86% of external day centres had re-opened. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, all day centres are now open.
- 4.6 It must be acknowledged that some day centre users are still hesitant to return to day centres whilst the risk of Covid 19 remains prominent. Other citizens have returned and receive both building based contact as well as access to outreach day opportunity services (see section 5 hybrid recovery model). This approach is helping to manage infection control and prevention requirements and enable continued physical distancing within day centres.
- 4.7 To protect citizens and staff from Covid 19, whilst also trying to keep day centres open, providers have formed unique 'care bubbles' of citizens and staff for each day centre. The care bubble ensures that the same citizens and staff have face to face contact with each other. Care bubbles have been highly effective at minimising the spread of Covid 19 infection to other service users within day centres. If someone within a care bubble develops symptoms or tests positive with Covid 19, the whole care bubble will follow government stay at home guidance. Other service users, however, can continue to use the day centre as part of their care bubble.

## 5. Day Opportunities hybrid recovery model 2021:

- 5.1 Like many other services across the city, building based day opportunities services have had to adapt in response to Covid 19. During the first lockdown in March 2020, the requirement for social distancing alongside the heightened vulnerability of the citizens using day centres, meant that providing building-based services posed significant risk to citizens, their carers and day centre staff.
- 5.2 Day centre providers at this time had limited options available to support citizens and their families. In response, providers were asked to consider how they could design and implement programmes of outreach support for citizens such that they could continue to provide much needed support. Throughout the closure period, providers innovated and rose to the challenge, by developing and offering a range of practical, creative, therapeutic and educational outreach services. These included the provision of phone and online services, supply of meals, safe and well checks, door-step and garden visits which were Covid 19 compliant, support to carers as well as assistance with medical appointments and shopping deliveries.
- 5.3 During the period March 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 day centre providers reported regularly on their programmes of outreach support. Table 2 below demonstrates the support provided to citizens during this period. It shows that 28,495 activity packs were distributed, 56,009 phone calls made to citizens and carers and over 9,500 meals provided.

Phone calls	Online contacts	Home / garden visits	Shopping trips	Meals provided	Medication drop offs	Activity packs
56,009	21,069	15,481	2,452	9,593	206	28495

Table 2: Outreach/online provision

- 5.4 As building based day opportunities services started to re-open from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 providers have continued to offer a hybrid service to citizens. The hybrid recovery model offers citizens access to both building based and outreach / online day opportunity services. The hybrid recovery model has been pivotal to enabling providers to keep citizens and staff safe, whilst allowing for adherence to infection prevention measures and offering providers the flexibility to pivot their provision in response to Covid 19 outbreaks or positive test results amongst staff, citizens or their carers.
- 5.5 Outreach support is continuing to be provided for citizens when not attending the centre-based day opportunity services because of restrictions, and for those who choose to delay returning to their centre because of anxiety or health reasons. Where families have chosen not to engage, contact will be maintained via regular check in telephone calls. As an example, during the month of September 2021, a total of 2176 contacts were reported by internal

and external providers to have been made with citizens, outside of the day centre by telephone, online, or through home and garden visits.

- 5.6 Monitoring of both centre-based and outreach activity will continue so as to inform the Council about impact on citizens and carers and how the service can continue to respond.

## **6. Communication**

- 6.1 Fundamental to our approach has been keeping citizens and carers at the forefront of our communication plans. Feedback gathered by providers and social workers during 2020 quickly highlighted the significant negative impact that day centre closure was having on many citizens and their families. In response, letters were sent to carers to keep them up to date with the day centre situation. This included information about how to contact Adult Social Care. There were regular welfare calls to citizens and their families. In advance of reopening a team of social workers were allocated to review citizens to support their return to their day centres.

- 6.2 Following the phased reopening of day care centres, carers reported:

*“sighs of relief”*

*“by and large settling in well.”*

*“During lockdown I was so sad, I missed my friends. I am so happy with coming back.” (Citizen)*

*“For the first time in 12 months they ate their evening meal and slept through the night.”*

*“His challenging behaviours, his swearing & shouting have decreased overnight. This has happened in the first week.”*

*“He is really happy and has adapted to new measures really well.”*

*“For the first time in 12 months my son looked happy.”*

*“Returning to day centres will enable to get back into the office as I have been working from home since March 2020.” (Carer)*

*“Lockdown and closure of the centre has taken its toll on their mental health. Now that the centres has reopened on a limited basis they are so happy to be going back and seeing all the people they have missed so much and doing projects within their bubbles! It has given us an insight into how secluded their lives would be without the support of their day service.”*

- 6.3 Citizens have also shared their experiences of having access to the hybrid recovery model of building based and outreach/online activities:

*“I love it. I can work with my Mommy and then I can bring it into the centre when I come in, I love the quizzes because my brother sometimes does it with me!!!”*

*"I love it because I work on my pack in the office, we do our homework together and then she can get rid of me the next day!!! I love having my outreach work assessed by Kim in the centre"*

*"I work on my day off with my brother's girlfriend and we love working together. She helps me with some of my outreach work and puts it on Facebook for me, I like coming into the centre for 3 days though!!"*

*"I work on my pack to do my art and craft. I love painting and drawing. The quizzes keep me busy and I love growing my plants that I have from the centre"*

*"I would rather come to the centre, but I don't mind working on the packs at home because they make me feel better."*

*"It upsets me that I cannot come to the day centre every day. I will be glad when things get back to normal"*

*"I'm happier back at the centre as I couldn't get on with zoom very well with everyone talking."*

6.4 Following re-opening, providers have reported that being back in the centre has had a number of benefits for citizens including improvement in; -

- Self-esteem
- Confidence
- Behaviour
- Communication skills
- Mental health and well being
- Physical health and well being

*"Citizens are happy to return and enjoy some independence and activities of their choice. Enjoyed local walking, enjoyed conversations with staff. Enjoyed being back in a day centre setting."*

*"It's been good to see citizens happy, interacting and having structure and routine again."*

*"The highlight has been coming back into the centre and seeing one another again."*

*"People are happy to be back, there has been good compliance with Covid rules. Students are enjoying activities, spending time outdoors and interacting with others."*

6.5 Since 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when all of the external providers were directed to prepare for immediate suspension of day centre activity - over 150 group e-mails have been sent to inform the providers and the market about all relevant Covid-19 matters.

6.6 Since reopening, communication and engagement with external providers has been maintained. An on-line provider meeting was established to enable

providers to raise concerns and issues, as well as to share good practice and learning, whilst problem solving together.

- 6.7 Over the pandemic Commissioning Officers have attended monthly day opportunities networking meetings led by ADASS WM. This provided an opportunity for region wide colleagues to share learning and collectively discuss the range of issues affecting day opportunities during lockdown and consider the approaches being used as reopening commenced in the different local authority areas.

## **7. Risk Management**

- 7.1 Birmingham City Council has and continues to be cognisant of the risks to vulnerable citizens, their carers' and day centre staff due to Covid 19. The Council's approach to managing risks has considered both local and national evidence of the disproportionate impact of Covid 19, balancing this alongside the risk to mental and physical wellbeing.
- 7.2 In November 2020, the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board discussed the impact of Covid 19 on diverse and vulnerable service users and citizens across Birmingham. It highlighted the unintended consequences of the measures aimed to protect and shield the most vulnerable noting a disproportionate impact on individuals with mild to moderate learning disabilities, carers, older people and individuals with mental health needs.
- 7.3 Day Opportunity services benefit approximately 2000 citizens, over 65% of whom have a primary care need listed as a learning disability and/or autism. Nationally, the LeDeR (Learning from Deaths Review) programme reported that 43% of deaths of people with learning disability were attributed to Covid 19 between March – June 2020, compared with 24% of deaths in the general population. Of these deaths, the majority were aged between 50-74, in contrast to the general population where most deaths were of people aged 85+.
- 7.4 The LeDeR review concluded that age, ethnicity and multi-morbidity were notable in the deaths during this period and that it would seem appropriate to consider people with learning disabilities and epilepsy as being at increased risk of death from the virus. In addition, it noted that , the key symptoms of COVID19 in the general population (fever, new continuous cough, loss of sense of smell or taste) may not be as apparent in people with learning disabilities making it more difficult to know if someone has been infected and for timely infection prevention measures to be implemented.
- 7.5 This evidence painted a worrying picture of the risk to both service users as well as their carers' from accessing centre-based services in closed environments. Individual risk to the service user due to their disability and co-morbidities was further compounded by risks associated with travel and transport to day centres, risk to many of our older carers, alongside the

challenge of implementing social distancing and infection control within some of the buildings from which services are delivered.

- 7.6 In response to these risks, day opportunity services adapted their centre-based offer to citizens to provide socially distanced home visits, provision of meals, shopping, on-line activities and classes in addition to safe and well checks. This approach sought to help citizens to retain their independence, support carers whilst also seeking to address the impact of isolation on mental and physical wellbeing.
- 7.7 With the easing of restrictions by the Government, the risks to Day opportunity service users and their carers still remains a concern and the Council has taken a cautious approach to re-opening to ensure it continues to protect the most vulnerable. This is in keeping with Government guidance: *“Maintaining physical distance indoors is still encouraged and the risk of reducing the need to distance needs to be balanced with factors such as an indoors setting, ventilation, number of people, client group and the risk to them and face coverings/PPE.”* Updated 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021. **Current government guidance**
- 7.8 In preparing to re-open day centres and to minimise the risk to citizens, carers and staff, robust risk assessment processes were and continue to be implemented by each day centre. The key issues emerging from the initial risk assessments are identified below but it is worth noting, that these are compounded by the ability of some day centre citizens to fully comprehend and / or adhere to measures implemented to protect them. These measures include:
- a) Having timely access to, and ability to wear PPE to protect staff and citizens (aprons, masks, face coverings, gloves)
  - b) Maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene.
  - c) Access to safe and efficient transport to and from day centres – with consideration for social distancing whilst using transport.
  - d) Limiting provision of meals and refreshments whilst in day centres
  - e) Maintaining robust cleaning regimes to minimise spread of infection.
  - f) Appropriate signage to support social distancing and maintain distancing of care bubbles within day centres.
  - g) Maintaining social distancing within day centres which due to size of rooms can severely restrict capacity within rooms/facilities.
- 7.9 In undertaking the risk assessments, Trade Unions and BCC Safety Officers have supported the process for the BCC internal centres. Some BCC internal and external providers operate across multiple sites and these risks were also considered in the re-opening risk assessment process.



## **8. Testing and Vaccinations**

- 8.1 All of the centres are applying rigorous testing regimes for staff and, where consent is given, citizens. Birmingham City Council has passed on £253,514.70 to day centre providers to assist with infection control and testing for re-opening.
- 8.2 Across September 2021, there were 18 incidences of staff testing positive and 11 citizens across all providers. In all cases the Local Health Protection Unit was notified as required and infection control responses initiated.
- 8.3 All internal and external providers are registered and signed up to the NHS Test and Trace national covid 19 testing programme for staff within day centres.
- 8.4 At 25th October external providers report 83% of staff having had first vaccination and 77% the second. Internal services report 74% of staff having had first vaccination and 73% the second. The vaccination rates change on a weekly basis and as such, Cabinet Members will be provided with the most up to date figures in December when the report is presented.

## **9. Next steps**

- 9.1 At the time of writing, it is recognised that there will, for the foreseeable future, continue be reduced capacity in day centres in line with current government guidance.
- 9.2 Additionally, as the threat of Covid 19 infections remains prominent, continuation of a hybrid recovery model will help to ensure continuity of service provision should there be further requirement to restrict access to building based services. It will therefore be essential for providers to continue to offer some level of outreach support for citizens when restrictions on numbers prevents their ability to access building based services. This means that citizens will continue for now, to have access to both building based and outreach / online day opportunity services.
- 9.3 With Winter approaching, regular communication will be maintained with providers to ensure that if there is any adverse impact because of increased infection rates and potential additional winter pressures then a timely response can be made to ensure citizens remain supported.
- 9.4 Equally important will be the need to capture and learn the lessons from the Covid 19 pandemic and any lasting impact on day opportunity services after at least 12 months of their being re-opened. The approach used to capture the learning will need to be co-produced with citizens, family, carers and providers as they have lived knowledge and experience of day opportunity services prior to and during the pandemic.

## **10. Recommended Proposal**

### **10.1 That Cabinet approves:**

Permission to commission a co-production partner to support the delivery of a review of Day Opportunity Services in the light of the pandemic and any lasting impact.

To report to Cabinet in July 2022 with a proposal that will describe how the review will be co-produced and the required timescales for this to happen

## **11. Consultation**

### **11.1 External**

There has not been any external consultation about the report. There continues to be regular communication and sharing of information with providers of day opportunities

### **11.2 Internal**

The Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee were briefed about the re-opening of day centres on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021.

## **12. Compliance Issues:**

### **12.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

Ensuring access to Day Opportunities is consistent with the Council's Plan and Budget for 2018-2022 and supports the priority 'Birmingham, a fulfilling city to age well in'.

### **12.2 Legal Implications**

The Council will continue to meet individual's unmet eligible needs in compliance with the Care Act 2014.

### **12.3 Financial Implications**

- I. The recommendations in this report does not commit the Council to expenditure outside confirmed allocated budgets.
- II. Our external day centre provision has a budget of £6.7m p/a. Covid restrictions and required health protection measures have limited the capacity of many day centres which, is creating a financial pressure. This cost is being mitigated within the Adult Social Care budget. While ongoing payments to providers is necessary to maintain stability in the market and comply with national covid relief

guidelines, the phased reopening of day centres is financially beneficial.

- III. The commissioning of co-production partners will be carried out by existing staff and within existing resources, or where further resource is required this will be funded within the existing Adult Social Care budget and will consider the wider interplay with other programmes of work.

#### **12.4 Procurement Implications**

The procurement of a Co-production partner will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement Governance Arrangements.

#### **12.5 Public Sector Equality Duty**

An Equality Assessment was carried out when the intention to reopen day centres was proposed. This has been reviewed. (**Appendix B**).

#### **13. Appendices**

**Appendix A** - Delegated Decision-Making Report

**Appendix B** - Equality Impact Assessment

#### **14. Background Documents**

Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information Briefing: Update on the Re-opening of Day Centres (23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021)