Appendix 4: -

Draft Day Opportunities Strategy Consultation

Consultation Findings Common Themes

Common Themes from Comments and Questions

Appendix 4 will examine common themes that have emerged from the comments and questions received by respondents throughout the consultation process.

Over 700 questions were received, and over 3600 comments gathered from a range of sources which included; returned Standard questionnaires, returned Easy Read questionnaires, event feedback sheets, e-mails received to the Consultation e-mail address and notes taken at consultation events.

The number of questions and comments analysed in this section differs slightly from the number stated above. This is because when a comment or question covered several different themes, these have been split and assigned accordingly. All comments and questions received have been reviewed and analysed.

Comments and questions have been categorised according to 9 identified themes plus one additional heading for miscellaneous comments that could not be easily categorised.

The themes identified from the comments and questions are;

A.   Carers
B.   Closures
C.   Community Activities
D.   The Consultation
E.   Direct Payments
F.   Draft Strategy
G.   Funding / Savings
H.   Social Work
I.   Transitions
J.   Miscellaneous

In addition to the 9 themes a range of sub-categories have been identified to assess the views relating to the consultation.

Theme A: Carers

Analysis identified 132 comments and 7 questions.

This theme has been split into two sub-categories on the perceived impact that the proposals in the draft Day Opportunities Strategy would have on the lives of carers whose family members attend day opportunity services. As with other categories the anticipated impact of the proposals in the draft Strategy centred on the perception that there would be closure of some or all building based day opportunity services.

- **Carers' Concerns**

Exactly half of the comments related to the level of support that either carers provide to and/or receive from the current day opportunities system. It was clear from respondents that many carers feel that the support they receive from day centres alleviates the pressure that they feel that they are under. Many stated that if day centres were to close this would increase stress levels both for carers and their family members or the person they support. Carers also cited that were day centre provision to reduce or close completely this would also impact on their carer/work/life balance. Carers commented that day centres allow them to go out to work and should this provision no longer be available the resulting impact would either mean a loss of income or their family member having to move into residential care.

Another visible feature in this category was the issue of both ageing carers and ageing citizens who access day opportunities services. Older carers (some who are 80 years plus and caring for more than one family member) may have their own health and social care needs, which impact on their ability to care for their family member, access the community and organise and manage alternative provision of support in the day. Respondents felt that building based services were vital to supporting them to continue to care for their family member in circumstances that are becoming more difficult to manage due to their advancing age.

- **Respite**

The respite that building based services provided was mentioned in a number of comments in this category. Respondents again referenced the importance of respite for carers who are elderly or have their own health issues that they need to manage. There was also further mention that the respite current day services provide enables carers to have some degree of independence and to be able to live their own lives (e.g. attend appointments, shopping, housework, etc.). Several respondents referred to day centres as being their "life-line" and the only break that they get in a job that lasts "24/7".

Respondents also referred to the assurance that they receive, in the knowledge that family members are being supported in a safe environment, is a form of respite in-itself as it alleviates some of the stress that they are under.

There was also mention of the lack of dedicated respite service provision which could be an alternative option to help with the pressures of caring full-time.

The need for carer support also dominated the questions asked relating to this category.

Theme B: Closure of day centres

Analysis identified 172 comments and 12 questions.

There are no additional subcategories within this theme. All comments and questions related directly to closure of day centres.

Respondents were concerned that the proposals put forward in the draft Day Opportunities Strategy would result in the closure of building based day centres. Some respondents felt that the Strategy

would result in the closure of all building-based day services, while others focused their concerns on the closure of the day centre that they or their family member attend. The topic dominated a lot of discussions held at consultation events in both Birmingham City Council run services and those delivered by external providers.

Respondents referred to the importance of the routine of attending a day centre regularly as they are not able to cope with change. Carers also referred to the importance of maintaining a routine, not only for the welfare of their family member but also because it enables them to manage other areas of their lives.

Respondents also expressed concerns about the costs of accessing the community if they no longer had a day centre to regularly attend. Costs relating to transport, adequately trained staff to support them and costs of activities in the community were mentioned. Some carers also expressed concerns that if centres were to close this would impact on their ability to work and therefore their income. Respondents felt that accessing a day centre affords them the social contact, range of activities and safety that they would not be able to afford if they had to access the community independently.

There were many comments referring to the importance of friendships and concern that opportunities to make and maintain these friendships would be lost if day centres were to close as a result of implementing the proposed Strategy. Carers felt that attendance at a day centre enhanced their family member's independence as it enabled them to make friendships and participate in activities in a safe environment.

Both the comments and questions reflected the belief that what is being proposed in the draft Strategy is already being carried out in the day centres, therefore, there is no need for change.

Comments received expressed concerns that the closure of day centres would negatively impact on the health and well-being of those that currently access the services and their family/carers; and that the prospect of centres closing has led to an increase in stress levels. Carers, in particular, thought that attendance at a day centre kept their family member safe and that it was important that trained staff were on hand to support those with more complex needs.

Theme C: Community Activities

Analysis identified 1554 comments and 66 questions.

Due to the volume of comments and the range of areas encompassed by the views expressed seven subcategories have been identified.

- **Accessibility**

There were comments and questions on accessibility to both the local and wider community. There were four issues that emerged from comments and questions on this theme. These were; access to the community, transport, public awareness and attitudes and costs of accessing the community.

Respondents commented on difficulties with accessing the community, and that work needs to be done to facilitate access if people are to be encouraged into more community-based activities. Respondents cited a number of obstacles, and lack of facilities in the community currently. These

included a lack of suitably equipped toilets and changing facilities, wheelchair access to shops, restaurants, and cafes, and difficulties with operating wheelchairs on pavements. There were also comments regarding access to places of worship and people requiring support to practice their faith.

Transport was also referred to in comments and questions. Respondents referred to the cost of public transport, availability of affordable transport, availability of services such as Ring and Ride, and difficulties experienced by some respondents with public attitudes on public transport.

Public attitudes towards, and awareness of, conditions such as learning disability or physical disabilities featured in a number of comments and questions. Respondents stated that more needs to be done to make businesses aware of issues if places in the community are to become more accessible. Awareness would need to be raised around behaviours that people may have which members of the public would perceive to be challenging. Carers have stated that members of the public have misinterpreted the way that their family member behaves. Service users, carers and staff at day opportunity services have all reported verbal abuse and negative behaviour from members of the public. This has been led to perception that going into the community is not safe.

Respondents also commented on the costs of both transport and activities in the community. From comments received this is seen as another barrier to accessing the community.

- **Activities**

198 comments in this theme were from service users and carers stating the range of activities that they would like to do, or currently do, within their day service provision. These included a mix of centre-based activities and activities that can be carried out in the community.

- **Community integration and support**

Respondents stated that to integrate them into the community more a number of factors need to be considered such as; what options/activities are available for people to access, the affordability of these activities, options need to have appropriate facilities, transport needs to be accessible and affordable, businesses and members of the public need to understand disability and different behaviours.

Respondents stated that the nature of their conditions can limit what they do or are able to access, e.g. mobility, cognitive function and chronic pain. Furthermore, the activities on offer can limit people's integration into the community, for instance those with severe learning disabilities may be limited to what they can access.

A number of respondents expressed that they would like to access the community more, to meet new people and try more things. People stated that they would like to know more about what is in the community and that it may be that more investment is required to develop what is on offer to people in the community.

Respondents also suggested that a future model of day opportunities could include a combination of community activities and building based day centres as not everyone wants to go out into the community, or, at least not all of the time.

Some respondents stated that although they would like to access the community, they are nervous of doing so due to a sense of vulnerability. To access the community, they would require sufficient support which, for some, would be 1:1 support. Some respondents commented that they are unable to go anywhere on their own, for example one respondent stated that they have a tendency to wander, another person stated that the individual they care for has little awareness of risks, therefore requiring support to go out and about. Other comments made by respondents stated that they would not go out at all if they didn't have support or that they would be distressed if they were out in the community without someone to help them. Respondents stated that they would need support with using transport, managing, and using money and in some cases with their communication skills.

- **Day centres are important**

A number of respondents referenced the importance of day centres for those who use the services and their carers and families.

Respondents stated that attending building-based day centres gave them the opportunity to meet friends and have regular social contact. Many respondents simply stated that they want to stay at their day centre, that they enjoy their time there at it makes them happy.

In some cases, respondents reported that they had been attending the day centre for a long time, in some case 25 years plus, and that to change would be upsetting. It was reported in comments that not attending the day centre would have negative impact on health and wellbeing, e.g. resulting in anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Attending the day centres provides a structure and routine which is important to many people who responded.

Comments also stated that people do not necessarily want to go into the community and prefer the sense of safety and security that building based services provide, and that this type of provision is best suited to those with complex needs. For example, one commentator with complex needs stated, "If having complex needs means I still have the opportunity to access the day service then that's okay. Without my day service I would be without support, I'd be stuck at home more and more and would lack things I can access and do." People also reported that they do not feel safe in the community, find activities difficult to access and that there aren't enough suitable alternatives in the community that provide the facilities and staffing that they get at their day centre.

Other benefits of building based day centres was the support with personal care, communication, range of activities and skills that could be learnt.

Having a reliable service to attend also supports the families and carers of those who require a day service. As stated in other themes of this analysis day centres provide respite and support to families and carers.

Some respondents did voice support accessing activities in the community but would like to combine this with regularly attending a building-based day centre too.

- **Friendships**

Friendships made at day centres were referred to in 33 comments in relation to accessing the community. As referenced in other themes respondents stated that they value the day centre as a place to meet and make friends. If they were to no longer attend the day centre there would be concerned that they would be lonely, isolated and bored at home.

Respondents also stated that they valued the opportunity to meet with people of a similar age group and to take part in shared activities with other people. Respondents stated that being at a day centre provides not only social contact but also a sense of security. Questions on this theme queried how this could be replicated out in the wider community.

- **Information**

There were comments and questions relating to information about what activities are available in the community for people to access, that may be an alternative to, or in addition to, building based day services. To aid access to community activities will require up to date and accurate information on as broad a range of services as possible to be available.   Respondents stated that this not only needs to be comprehensive but also easy to access and in a simple format.

Questions submitted relating to this topic asked for information on what service are currently available and how they could be accessed. Day opportunity provider services also enquired as to how they could better promote their services to social work teams and potential users of their services.

- **Referrals**

13 comments within this theme referenced referrals into day opportunities services. The perception among respondents was that referrals to day centres was slowing down, and for people seeking a referral found the process difficult to access. Providers of day opportunity services commented that social work teams did not have a clear overview of services that were available n which to refer people.

Theme D: Consultation – process and governance

Analysis identified 358 comments and 55 questions.

Due to the volume of comments and the range of areas encompassed by the views expressed five subcategories have been identified.

- **Capacity to understand**

The ability to understand either the presentation or the questions asked in the questionnaires. Some felt that more explanation of the proposals was required, and that the information relayed in the consultation was too complex for some people to understand.

- **Documentation**

A number of comments reflected on the consultation documentation, including the questionnaires and the draft Day Opportunities Strategy. The majority of these comments referenced the questionnaire with many stating that they felt that the questions were biased towards encouraging certain responses. Others felt that they did not have sufficient information with which to make an informed decision.

- **Events and presentations**

Views ranged from the presentation being clear, understandable, and informative; an appreciation of group discussions; and the opportunity to express views; and some being enabled to have their say; through to a lack of trust in the intentions of the consultation, that the information was not clear enough and the content of the presentation was too vague. There were also comments on the large numbers of people and noise levels at events held at internal Birmingham City Council day services. However, additional small group discussions were arranged to mitigate against this and enable more meaningful participation of citizens who use these services.

- **Governance – Decision making**

Comments referring to the Governance and decision-making process. mostly expressed a perceived lack of transparency around the governance process and a lack of trust in Birmingham City Council.

- **Process**

Comments on the consultation process ranged from those that were dissatisfied with promotion of the consultation events, the length of time taken to respond to questions, and that the process was going through the motions through to positive comments about the person centred approach.

Most of the questions related to the analysis of data, the process of approving the analysis report and how people will be notified of the outcomes of the consultation.

Theme E: Direct payments and personal budgets

Analysis identified 157 comments and 30 questions.

Concern was expressed around the process of managing direct payments, which was viewed by many to be challenging. Two subcategories have been identified for this theme.

- **Direct Payments**

Concern was expressed around the process of managing direct payments, which was viewed by many to be challenging. Some said that they didn't have the capacity or support to take on the responsibility and others said that they did not want to take on this responsibility and that day centres are more convenient. Some felt that it placed more responsibility on the carer and that they

were too complex to manage, e.g. responsibility for Income Tax and National Insurance. One respondent likened the administration involved in having a direct payment to a job.

In addition to the level of support required to manage finances, employ PAs, etc. objections were raised around potential for mismanagement of funds. It was felt by some respondents that having a Direct Payment was not suitable for those with complex needs. Furthermore, the level of funds available through Direct Payments does not always afford adequate support. It was pointed out that Direct Payments are not in line with the cost of living and higher rates are often charged for support at weekends.

Some respondents felt that Direct Payments were forced upon them and that by encouraging this would result in less need for day centres.

Respondents in support of Direct Payments were in favour because they enable access to more activities. They can also provide increased opportunities for independence and enable services that suit people's needs more. Overall, respondents who favoured Direct Payments thought that they allow for greater control and therefore are better for all.

It was suggested in several comments that it would be good to have more information, e.g. a resource directory of services to purchase with a Direct Payment.

- **Personal Assistants**

Most of the comments expressed difficulties in employing and managing PAs, including sourcing training, paying adequate wages, and supervising PAs. There were also concerns expressed about safeguarding with respondents saying that they would feel safer at a day centre where they know that staff are well trained and supported.   Although some respondents recounted bad experiences with PAs there were some positive examples too but this often depends on having adequate support and funding to get the right personal assistant.

Theme F: Draft Strategy

Analysis identified 1125 comments and 71 questions.

Analysis identified comments and questions relating specifically to the Six Draft Aspirations and Draft Service Model. Due to the volume of comments and the range of areas encompassed by the views expressed nine sub-categories have been identified.

- **Draft Model**

Respondents expressed concerns about the graphical representation of the model as a triangle and what each tier represents. Responses focused on whether or not the structure of the triangle should be inverted so that the Specialist Intensive Support tier was moved from the bottom to the top so that it represented the largest section. There was concern expressed that, as the model currently stands, it suggests that priority would be given to the Enablement tier at the expense of the Specialist Intensive Support tier resulting in more able people receiving a greater level of support than those with specialist and complex needs. In addition, some respondents felt that the model was too restrictive in its categorisation of people and their needs, and hope was expressed that in practice there would be a more fluid approach.

There were also comments querying how assessments would be made and how people's level of need would be determined. There was scepticism that the process would be fair and transparent and that it would result in service users not receiving an adequate level of support. Furthermore, concern was expressed about the time limit applied to the Enablement tier of the model, with some respondents saying that this would not suit some client groups, e.g. mental health, dementia, etc. where capabilities can change in a short space of time. It was suggested that the time limit of 12 weeks be made flexible and be dependent on an individuals' needs. Respondents also queried whether there would be ongoing support for those who have completed the Enablement stage, as skills learned can be lost if they are not supported to be maintained.

Again, people expressed the desire to stay within their current day centre provision and a number of comments stated that the model is already being implemented in the service that they attend and that this meets their needs.

Those who expressed support for the model commented that they felt it was logical and made sense. Respondents welcomed the structured approach and the focus on enablement. Some respondents also welcomed the focus on the individual and their capabilities. Commentators felt that the proposed Model was a positive step towards helping people to improve and better themselves.

There was support for the concept of improving people's level of independence and the positive impact that this can have on confidence and self-esteem.

The remaining comments under this theme were undecided or could not be determined as either being in support or not in support of the Model. Respondents who were undecided stated that they would need further information and detail, particularly in relation to how assessments and reviews would be conducted, before they could comment on the model. Others commented on the structure of the model such as the need to clarify how flexible movement would be across the tiers in the triangle as boundaries are not always clear when applied to an individual's circumstances.

The questions received also asked for clarity on the stages of the model, what they meant, how assessments would be made, who and how decisions would be made and what implementation would mean for current service provision.

• **Draft Strategy**

Those not in support of the strategy voiced concerns that implementation of the strategy would result in the closure of day centres, and that this in turn would leave to insufficient support for service users, families and carers. Comments revealed a degree of uncertainty as to what the impact of the Strategy would be and what would replace day centres if any were to close. Some respondents felt that implementation of the Strategy would result in them having to organise daily activities for their family member, should they no longer be attending a day centre, and that this would increase the work and pressure put on families and carers.

As with comments made in the "Funding" theme there was a perception that the proposals in the draft Strategy were related to budget cuts within Birmingham City Council, and that the Council wanted to force people into private day care provision.

As in previous themes people also referenced that they do not want or like change and are happy with the way that things are currently. Some respondents said that the thought of change caused

them stress and anxiety. There were also concerns that changes would result in social isolation, safeguarding issues and would not be suitable for those with more complex needs.

There were also comments that the proposals in the Strategy have been made in the past and nothing changed, this has resulted in people having no confidence that things will change this time either.

Those in favour of the draft Strategy welcomed the person centred approach and a focus on a person's needs and abilities. Respondents felt that the Strategy would increase the confidence and independence of those who use day opportunities services should changes be implemented.

There was recognition that things need to change and that this was long overdue. Respondents expressed that people should have the right to do what they would like to do with the right support, and that they are entitled to the same rights as others in the community.

There was a sense that the changes would have a positive impact on lives, with a greater choice of activities, the opportunity to learn new skills and access to different environments.   Some commented that it was good to be focused on the future and positive to focus on empowering people and enabling them to be more included in the wider community.

Others commented that the Strategy proposes what is on offer elsewhere in the country, including neighbouring boroughs.

The remaining comments in this sub-category were either neutral or undecided about the proposals presented in the draft Strategy. Comments were undecided about the impact of strategy and that it would depend on how it was to be implemented. Others stated that it may work for some people more than others. In particular, it was felt that the proposals may be more suited for the younger generation rather than older adults or those who are older and have complex needs.

Other respondents stated that it was difficult to decide whether or not the Strategy was good or not unless they had examples of how the changes would work in practice.

- **Equality and diversity**

The comments and questions relating to equality and diversity in terms of the proposed draft Strategy covered very similar issues.

Firstly, generational issues with comments and questions stating that the proposals favour the younger generation more than the older generation of service users. Some respondents felt that there was not enough focus on the older population in the draft Strategy, and that those with dementia need particular consideration and services that are centre based and structured, due to the nature of the condition.

Ethnic and cultural issues were also mentioned in both the comments and questions. Respondents felt that more engagement and consideration should be given to ensure that cultural, religious, and ethnic groups are accommodated and engaged with the in the future model of day opportunities. Some respondents expressed that there needs to be awareness of how cultural practices and religious beliefs may impact on implementation of the proposals in the draft Strategy.

Views were also expressed that the draft Strategy was perhaps too broad in scope and that the needs of certain groups should have been included and considered. These include people with; brain/head injury, autism, sensory loss or impairment and people who have multiple disabilities.

Questions were asked about what can be done to improve public attitudes towards those with a disability to enable people to have more confidence in accessing the community.

- **Person centred planning**

There was a positive response to person centred planning with support for giving service users the choice to do things that they enjoy doing throughout the day. Of the 17 comments on this topic, it was felt that a focus on the citizen is a positive move as people have different needs which need to be accommodated. To get this right it is important to ensure that the right people are involved in developing person centred plans with clarity whose contribution is required including the service user, carer, social worker, and service provider.

There were also questions in relation to person centred planning and what the implications of implementing the draft Strategy would be for existing packages of care. There was some anxiety that this would mean an end to current provision and the subsequent impacts that this would have on the wellbeing of those affected. There were also questions around choice and how meaningful this would be and whether changes would mean that people would no longer be able to attend their day centre.

- **Quality**

The comments relating to quality issues and how these will be monitored and assured. Respondents expressed the need for a guarantee that care and support provided is adequate and of a high standard. There was reference to external providers services for day care, who are not regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and how this needs to be done by Birmingham City Council. Respondents requested a system of preferred providers, based on assessment of quality service, so that both service users, carers and service providers have more confidence in the day opportunities market.

The questions reflected the issues raised in the comments, many questions centred on the process of ensuring quality in service providers and the role of the CQC. Questions covered both external and internal (BCC) day centres and how and why approaches to assuring quality were different.

- **Resistance to change**

In many of the themes already examined, a recurring feature is a reluctance from respondents to change the day opportunities system as it currently stands. Comments indicate that this is a concern of those who use day opportunity services and their carers and family members. A total of 88 comments have been identified as specifically expressing a resistance to change. The resistance to change being expressed in the comments comes from respondent's perception of what implementation of the proposed draft Day Opportunities Strategy and draft Service Model means to them, e.g. changes to package of care, reduced hours at the day centre, closure of day centre, etc.

Previous themes and sub-categories have referred to comments where respondents have stated that what is being proposed as part of the consultation is already being delivered by the day centre that they or their family member attend. Consequently, they feel that there is no need to change the status quo.

Comments have also expressed concern about the impact that a change of routine would have for service users and their families and the importance of stability for those who need a more

structured environment. Some comments of this nature appear to have been made in the context of the closure of day centres and service users being forced to find alternative provision in the community as one commentator expressed concern about what accessing the community would have on those who require more routine and structure.

Respondents also expressed their unhappiness at the prospect of change and how this causes them anxiety and distress. Some felt that change would lead to loneliness and isolation and loss of friendships made at the day centre that they currently attend.

- ## Safeguarding

There were comments and questions relating to safeguarding issues and implementation of the proposed Six Aspirations and Day Service Model. Comments were largely in terms of the vulnerable nature of those accessing day opportunities services and how safeguards need to be put into place to avoid exploitation where people are accessing the community or employing staff directly, e.g. financial exploitation. Other respondents expressed that they want to be looked after in a safe environment by staff who are trained to support their needs and have also been DBS checked. In addition to this there was support for better regulation of day care provision and assurance that safeguarding training was available to, and taken up, by all staff.

The questions also reflected the issues raised in the comments with concerns about what will be done to protect vulnerable people who may be exercising greater independence out in the wider community and how to identify and report abuse.

- ## Six Aspirations

Those in support welcomed the focus on person centred planning, in particular identifying people's strengths and abilities. One commentator felt that this was particularly important when supporting those with dementia.

Respondents felt that the Strategy displays a positive attitude towards those who use day opportunities services and that the proposals would make things better. There was support for people having more choice, control, and independence and that this is turn would help to increase people's self-esteem and confidence.

Respondents also felt that it was good to have a focus on outcomes and what people have the potential to achieve. It was felt that people should have choice and control in their lives. Some commented that they supported the concept of more choice but that this ought to be meaningful.

The issue of choice was a key feature among those who did not support the Six Aspirations. Respondents felt that this would be dependent on whether or not a service user has the capacity to make a choice or not. Somme commentators felt that this aspiration did not apply to those with complex learning disabilities or older people with dementia.

As with previous themes the prospect of closing day centres arose again, along with a reluctance to change current arrangements. A number of commentators said that the Six Aspirations proposed were already implemented by their Day Centre, so there is no need to make any changes.

There were concerns expressed about access to the community, in terms of transport and issues of safety and that to implement the proposals there would need to be a commitment to increased numbers of staff and funding.

Those who were neutral, or undecided showed some support for the proposals but were sceptical or unsure of how they would be implemented. One commentator expressed that success of implementation would depend on changing mind-sets, of both services and service users, and this would be difficult in some cases. Others felt that the Aspirations would work for some but not for others and that this would depend on the abilities and needs of the service user, i.e. not suitable for those with more complex needs.

Some respondents felt that the proposals would work as long as sufficient support structures were in place e.g. staffing levels, funding, transport, facilities, etc.

- **Skills and employment**

Public attitudes towards those with a disability was an issue raised in the comments and questions relating to skills and employment.

There were comments which raised issues such a potential prejudice from employers against employing people with a disability. Some respondents expressed concerns that employment could present opportunities for exploitation and bullying and that safeguards need to be in place to prevent such things from happening.

Respondents felt that sufficient support needs to be in place to help people with the application process and during the period in which they are employed or undergoing training. In addition to support, respondents also expressed the need to manage expectations of service users as to the type of employment and training they would be able to access and that social workers need to have a better understanding of an individual's suitability for employment and types of employment available to them.

There were comments from people who use day centres expressing what kind of employment and training that they would like to do. This ranged from computer courses, working in a shop, office work and working on reception.

There were a number of questions that reflected the issues raised in the comments and centred mostly on the process of people gaining employment, finding training courses, etc. Some respondents queried whether employment would be meaningful and whether or not businesses are on board with offering employment to people who access day centre services.

Theme G: Funding/Savings

Analysis identified 65 comments and 17 questions.

Concern was expressed that the draft strategy is produced as a means of achieving savings by Birmingham City Council.

Many comments from respondents suggested that they thought the Strategy was an agenda to save money. There were many references in both the questions and comments to savings and budget cuts faced by Birmingham City Council. Respondents felt that the proposals in the Strategy would cost money to implement and respondents queried whether or not Birmingham City Council has the money to do this in conjunction with budget cuts.

There was support for the proposals put forward in the draft Strategy, but respondents stated that sufficient funds need to be available if implementation of the strategy is to work.

In relation to this, respondents also referred to the value of direct payments which currently, it was claimed, makes it difficult for people to be able to afford to employ staff, pay for transport and activities. In particular, the cost of assisting people to access the community was referred to in both comments and questions related to this topic.

Other respondents wanted to see more investment in in the day centres that they currently attend with a commitment to making them better.

Theme H: Social work

Analysis identified 56 comments and 21 questions.

Comments were prominently negative around this theme.

Comments reflected existing concerns with social work practices and how these might be improved and how they will be impacted on by the proposed Strategy. Based on previous experiences some carers expressed a lack of trust in social work practice, with particular reference being made to the assessment of needs. This was also reflected in comments made by day care providers, who like carers, felt that their knowledge of service users should form an important part of social work assessments and reviews. A number of respondents also referred to difficulties in contacting social workers, a number would prefer to have a named social worker, in obtaining a social work assessment and any follow up required as a result of an assessment. Support was expressed for the Three Conversations Model, however, some commented that implementation of this was not always consistent.

The questions asked were primarily concerned about social work processes and practices. These ranged from how to find a social worker, how social workers are allocated, how will the strategy impact on assessments and client reviews to queries relating to the safeguarding process. Respondents also wanted to know if implementation of the draft Strategy would result in increased numbers of social workers. As with comments in the 'Funding' theme the perception among respondents was that the draft Strategy would require increase in resources in order to be implemented safely and effectively.

There were also several questions related to how service users or their carers can exercise choice if what they wanted contrasted with a social worker's recommendation.

Theme I: Transition

Analysis identified 24 comments and 4 questions.

The majority of the comments were concerned with the transition process.

There were comments relating to the transition of young people from school/education to adult services, and what services need to be provided to accommodate the needs of this group which may be different to what existing services currently provide. Comments in this category made particular reference to young people having different needs, and expectations, to older adults. Therefore, services ought to take this into consideration. Young people will not necessarily want to spend their days with older adults, and the choice of activities available to them ought to reflect their age and skills (e.g. computer skills). It was suggested that services aimed at 18-30 age group be designed to accommodate these interests.

Respondents made reference to the referral process from education into adult services which they said ought to be reviewed as it is too complex and takes too long for young people to access day opportunity services.

Theme J: Miscellaneous

There were a selection of comments and questions that could not be easily categorised into a theme. For details of these comments please refer to Appendix 6 where they are listed in full.