

Adults and Health Committee

Date of Meeting:	16 November 2021
Report Title:	Cheshire East Day Opportunities Strategy
Report of:	Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director for Adults, Health and Integration
Report Reference No:	AH/19/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** At the Cabinet Meeting on 2 February 2021, Cheshire East Council approved the development of a co-produced Day Opportunities Strategy and a redesign of the current day opportunities services offer across the borough.
- 1.2.** As part of the development of the strategy a comprehensive consultation and engagement process has been undertaken. Through this process we have received feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including people who attend day opportunities services and their carers, providers and staff.
- 1.3.** The Cheshire East Day Opportunities Strategy (the Strategy) seeks to promote and support safe, purposeful, and personalised activities that enable citizens to play a valued role in their community and to live as independently as they choose. It also aims to ensure that vulnerable adults can access activities appropriate to their needs, choice, and control.
- 1.4.** The Strategy recommends further engagement with the provider market, individuals, and families/carers to explore commissioning options including the potential to develop a Day Opportunities Framework Agreement to greatly improve Cheshire East Councils' options in relation to the commissioning of day opportunities. This will also ensure we can meet the requirements of the Care Act (2014) and the needs of local people via appropriate services and support the priorities within the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 (see sections 3 and 7).

- 1.5. The Strategy also builds on the learning from the impact of COVID-19 on day opportunities services. During the lockdowns many services and buildings have been closed and this has meant that providers have adopted new ways of supporting the most vulnerable people within the community, including the uses of technology to provide virtual support.
- 1.6. This report outlines the consultation, engagement, review, and development of the Strategy and seeks approval from Adults and Health Committee on the co-produced strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Adults and Health Committee approve the co-produced Cheshire East Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-2027.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. These recommendations are made based on alignment with the following priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
 - **Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services** – The strategy seeks to widen the offer and develop day opportunities provision across the borough which makes best use of existing community assets.
 - **A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities** – We seek to ensure that day opportunities services are safe, person-centred and outcome focused.
 - **Increase the life opportunities for young adults and adults with additional needs** – We will look for future day opportunities to promote employment, volunteering, and skills development opportunities as an alternative to traditional day opportunities services.
- 3.2. The Care Act (2014) places a duty on Local Authorities to help make sure there are a range of different types of services and support available. The future strategic direction of day opportunities provision advocates widening the offer and ensuring that the level of support provided meets the requirements of those with different levels of support needs.
- 3.3. The Strategy is a co-produced strategy that recognises that the needs of people who access day opportunities, carers and providers. Central to making the strategy a success will be continued engagement and development of the market, effective planning, measurement, and monitoring on how we will deliver the priorities detailed within this document, which will be achieved through the outlined Delivery Plan within each strategic priority.
- 3.4. There are no official frameworks or service specifications for Day Opportunities services. Therefore, this is an area of the market which is

largely underdeveloped. This has on many occasions required the Council to pay higher costs to the local care market, some people being inappropriately placed, or in some cases has resulted in the need to place people out of area at even greater expense to meet their needs.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1.** The demand for day opportunities services alongside other care services will be significant over the next few years and we need to sustain and stabilise the markets alongside managing the budget. Therefore doing nothing is not an option.
- 4.2.** Without a strategy in place, or a dedicated route for the commissioning of day opportunities placements, there will be limited scope for market shaping, or development around the market. Services will be still be commissioned in a way which inhibits choice and flexibility. Services will be purchased for individuals outside of any formal commissioning process, under spot purchasing arrangements and potentially lead to placements needing to be made outside of Cheshire East.

5. Background

- 5.1.** The Strategy has been co-produced through the collective working of Cheshire East Council and the direct involvement of people who experience day opportunities, their families, and carers. The strategy has also had input incorporating feedback from other key stakeholders including Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group and in-house (Care4CE) and commissioned day opportunities providers.
- 5.2.** The Strategy aims to provide a clear set of design principles and actions to support further development of day opportunities in Cheshire East. Key aspirations within the strategy seek to ensure that future Day Opportunities services:
 - Focus on the individual, their strengths, choices, assets, and goals through person centred planning
 - Focus on the outcomes that people who access day opportunities and carers wish to achieve
 - Provide support that enables the person to access a range of opportunities in the wider, and their own, community as an active and equal citizen
 - Focus on skills development, improving independence in daily living i.e., travel training and employment where possible
 - To enable access to support or activities of the citizen's choice.
- 5.3.** This strategy promotes the development of an outcomes-based approach to day opportunities, where services are provided that will achieve a set of results for that individual. Services will deliver outcomes through:

- Identifying the outcomes that are expected to be achieved prior to making referrals to services.
- Contracting for services based on outcomes and then monitoring based on those outcomes.
- Requiring services to offer an outreach approach where service user outcomes such as reducing social isolation or accessing physical activity can be met through a variety of means outside a building-based setting.
- Service providers being enabled to exercise flexibility to adapt services to meet individual needs in agreement with the service user and their carers/relatives.

5.4. Through the combining of consultation responses and the developed work of the coproduced strategy, seven key delivery actions have been identified.

5.5. The key delivery actions listed within the strategy are as follows:

1. Develop a high quality and diverse range of day opportunities provision in the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the market and commissioning strategy (Day Opportunities Provider Framework) • Explore Assistive Technology as support for day opportunities • Support Providers including the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) through the transformation of day opportunities
2. Ensure that day opportunities services are safe, person-centred and outcome focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a dedicated service specification (As part of any Day Opportunities Provider Framework) • Regular contract monitoring of commissioned day opportunities provision
3. Encourage and increase the numbers of people using Direct Payments to access day opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide improved signposting and information about using direct payments • Promote alternative options in terms of day opportunities to increase choice and control via Live Well (Carefinder)

4. Ensure co-production in the future development of day opportunities services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with providers, people who attend day opportunities services and their carers to ensure their voice is heard in the development of new services
5. Respond to the impact of COVID-19 and ensure day opportunities services remain resilient and flexible in case of future disruptions to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the learning and feedback from the lockdowns • Encourage the use and access to technology across provision
6. Ensure that day opportunities are available at a local level in all communities across the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the local needs and feedback from individuals • Encourage greater use of community assets • Explore new initiatives, for example Shared Lives
7. Promote employment, volunteering, and skills development opportunities as an alternative to traditional day opportunities services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop stronger links between day opportunities providers and local employers, educational settings and community groups

5.6. The Strategy also builds upon the learning from the impact of COVID-19 which resulted in the closure of many building-based services. Evidence from surveys showed people who use day opportunities missed the chance for social interaction that these services offer, the enriching activities that they can undertake and the availability of provision that supports them to access their local communities. Day opportunities were reported to increase social skills, confidence and independence for the individual accessing them while providing a break and free time for family members. At the same time the impact of COVID-19 provided the opportunity for providers to deliver a range of innovative approaches, including outreach support and the use of technology to deliver virtual sessions.

5.7. Many respondents that have been engaged and provided their experiences of day opportunities were also keen to engage further with Cheshire East Council. In terms of wider engagement and moving forward, it is important this process is seen as the start of a conversation

around day opportunities in Cheshire East rather than the end of a conversation.

- 5.8.** A costed implementation plan will be developed once the strategy is formally approved, as part of a partnership approach to ensuring the successful implementation of the strategy.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1.** During the development of the draft Day Opportunities Strategy, extensive consultation and engagement has been undertaken with stakeholder groups including people who use services, families, carers, and service providers. A significant number of people and organisations have responded at each stage of the process.
- 6.2.** Between April-June 2021, a survey (including an easy read version) was made available on the Cheshire East Council website. The survey was conducted to help plan and develop services for the future and to understand how services users feel about current day opportunities, A total of 268 responses were received.
- 6.3.** Virtual engagement sessions were also held to gather further feedback from people who access day opportunities, families and their carers (including young carers).
- 6.4.** An engagement survey and virtual feedback session was also undertaken with staff from Care4CE Day Centres which highlighted the potential to offer additional support in this area highlighting that the 'one size fits all' approach may not be appropriate when considering the needs of those accessing the services and their desired outcomes (Trade Unions were also consulted throughout the consultation – see Human Resources).
- 6.5.** A wider engagement survey was undertaken via The Chest portal by over 30 external Day Opportunities providers, which included current commissioned providers and providers who may be looking to deliver services in the future. Feedback highlighted innovative approaches for delivering services differently in the future and there was widespread support to be part of any future formalised commissioning process (Day Opportunities Framework) in Cheshire East.
- 6.6.** Further consultation on the draft Strategy was undertaken via the Cheshire East Council website during August and September 2021.
- 6.7.** In total 47 responses were received on the draft document from a wide range of stakeholders including people who use access day opportunities, parents/carers, providers and Cheshire East council staff. Responses were also received on behalf of the following organisations:
- Age UK Cheshire East
 - Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
 - The Rossendale Trust

- Wishing Well

6.8. In terms of the Draft Strategy large proportions of the respondents agree with the following:

- Section 1 - Key Aspirations (80%)
- Section 2 - Introduction and Vision (76%)
- Section 8 - Proposed New Offer (73%)

6.9. It must be noted that a smaller proportion (66%) of the respondents agreed with the Key Delivery Actions (Section 9). This section has been enhanced to make the terminology more user friendly and make sure that people who use services and carers are involved in the development of future day opportunities to ensure they are fully co-produced.

7. Implications

7.1 Legal

7.1.1 The Care Act (2014) places people and their carers in greater control of their care and support needs. The Act is particularly pertinent to how day opportunities provision is commissioned and how support is arranged and aims to give greater control and influence on those in need of support.

7.1.2 As part of its duties under the Care Act (2014) the Council must meet assessed eligible assessed needs for those people who are eligible for care and support. The Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015 specify that local authorities should consider how service users access employment, training, education or volunteering as outcomes of their care and support plan.

7.1.3 Commissioners should engage with Legal Services and the Council's Corporate Procurement Team in the development of the route to market for the future commissioning of day opportunities at an early stage. This will ensure that advice can be provided on the appropriate commissioning strategy to meet service implementation requirements, as evidenced via the further consultation exercise that will be undertaken to develop the commissioning model. Any consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at the formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient information to enable them properly to understand the proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The information must be clear, concise, accurate and must not be misleading. The consultees must be given adequate time to consider the proposals and to respond. The Council must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees before making the final decision on the proposals.

- 7.1.4 Any procurement which results in a change to the way in which services are currently provided would require engagement with stakeholders including people who access day opportunities to co-produce the service specification. As part of its decision-making process, the Council must have 'due regard' to its equalities duties. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its adult care and support functions, must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not in order to tackle prejudice and understanding. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.1.5 Under the Equality Act (2010), the Council is required to identify the impacts of any decisions, policies etc. on certain protected groups to ensure equality is promoted, and inequality minimised. For example, there must be an assessment made of the impacts on groups or individuals who are disabled, including mental health problems, who belong to ethnic or racial groups, on the grounds of age or sex discrimination etc. An Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 1) can both assist in evidencing that these equality duties are being met and inform decision making.
- 7.1.6 The Council is required to give serious, substantive, and advance consideration of what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. This exercise must be carried out with rigour and an open mind and should not be a form of box ticking. These are mandatory considerations.

7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1 There are no financial implications or changes needed to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) because of the recommendations in this report.
- 7.2.2 All services delivered under the new strategy and framework will be bound by the budget limits within the MTFS.
- 7.2.3 As of 1 April 2021, Cheshire East Council currently spends £4.71m on commissioned day opportunities which support 577 individual placements (this excludes transport and food which are also separate costings for Care4CE provision).
- 7.2.4 The spend is broken down as follows:

- £3.37m of spend is on Care4CE day opportunities, which support 358 individuals.
- £1.34m of spend is on external commissioned day opportunities, supporting 219 individuals.
- There are 44 individuals who are getting support from both Care4CE and external commissioned providers.

7.2.5 This service transformation will be met through existing resources from the various departments across the Council. However, we anticipate that a significant culture change will be required in the approach to day opportunities provision across providers, people who access day opportunities, families and social work teams and to achieve this effective communications and engagement will be required.

7.2.6 Cheshire East Council met on 17 February 2021 and agreed the MTFS Report for 2021/22 to 2024/25. A report provides detailed information on the issues facing the Council in the medium term and shows how these are being addressed to present a balanced financial position for the 2021/22 financial year.

7.2.7 Over the next three years the following savings for day opportunities identified in the MTFS is as follows (Savings for Year 1 (2021/22) have already been achieved).

Total Projected Annual Savings by Year (this is on a cash basis, not incremental)	
Year 1 2021/22	£30,000
Year 2 2022/23	£70,000
Year 3 2023/24	£150,000

7.3 Policy

7.3.1 The Care Act (2014) places people and their carers in greater control of their care and support needs. The Act is particularly pertinent to how day opportunities provision is commissioned and how support is arranged and aims to give greater control and influence on those in need of support. This includes encouraging people to think about what outcomes they want to achieve in their lives, with a greater emphasis on prevention.

7.3.2 The future strategic vision for day opportunities in Cheshire East firmly aligns to the following priorities within the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2020-2025:

- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services
- A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities
- Increase the life opportunities for young adults and adults with additional needs.

7.4 Equality

7.4.1 Under the Care Act (2014), the Council has a legal duty to ensure that information is accessible to people who access day opportunities belonging to protected characteristic groups, and these individuals are also supported over care options. We will ensure that we engage and consult on any proposed service changes using a variety of different channels (such as face to face meetings, virtual meetings, surveys) and that any material produced is made available in a variety of formats (including easy read).

7.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and subsequently updated following the production of the Strategy (see Appendix 1).

7.4.3 Procuring services with an official commissioning strategy (Day Opportunities Framework) rather than existing practices, will increase choice and control. Also, by further enabling the use of a personal budget to purchase day opportunities support, this will help ensure services are designed around individual needs and preferences. This will include needs and preferences which are related to protected characteristics.

7.5 Human Resources

7.5.1 The impact of the way that day opportunities are delivered in Cheshire East could have human resources implications for the staff currently working within Care4CE day centres. Potential changes to the way that day opportunities services are currently delivered by Care4CE could include some staff moving from building based services to roles within the community and some staff who are based within day services may have a change to their base/role. If this is to happen formal consultation would need to be carried out.

7.5.2 Staff have been invited to specially scheduled consultation events, which included the opportunity for staff to ask questions and input into the future design of day opportunities.

7.5.3 Trade Union engagement will continue to be an integral part of the process. Regular updates will be provided at Trade Union meetings regarding the project and representatives will be invited to attend staff briefings.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 A large-scale service transformation of day opportunities identified in the Draft Day Opportunities Strategy will present challenges and risks.

7.6.2 See below for the identified risks with mitigation.

Changes and disruption to services may have a negative impact to those using services and their carers and in turn the reputation of the council

- Take measures to ensure that any disruption is kept to a minimum.
- Continued communications and regular updates to all stakeholders at different stages.
- Take additional measures to support the needs of people with a disability (provision of easy read material).

Resistance to change from carers and people who access day opportunities

- Support carers and people who access day opportunities and keep them informed about any changes and proposals to existing services and building closures.
- Ensure co-production of any new services with involvement of people who access day opportunities and carers.

Negative impact on existing friendships and support networks from changes

- Aim to maintain and support existing friendship groups wherever possible.

Impact on staff who may be affected by the impact of service changes

- Support all affected staff and help them decide the best options available
- Regular consultation and engagement with staff to develop the new model.

Demand for adult social care packages of support continues to rise outstripping the impact of a more cost-effective model of delivery

- We also need to ensure that any new model is able to absorb any potential growth in the number of individuals coming through transition and a potential increase in demand from those with dementia accessing day opportunities.

Potential of a further resurgence of COVID-19

- Day Opportunities services are being supported by colleagues in Public Health and the NHS, who have provided infection control audits and training to Day Opportunities services to help minimise the risks to people who access day opportunities and staff.
- If building based services were unable to operate, we would mitigate this via the already well established implementation of virtual support sessions and outreach support where necessary. Systems are in place to ensure services would be supported for appropriate PPE.

7.7 Rural Communities

- 7.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8 Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1 Whilst there are no direct implications for children and young people, it is proposed that the move to a more personalised offer will create a wider range of enabled services which will be more attractive to young people preparing for adulthood than at present. Providers would then be able to enter work around transitions to ensure a seamless journey for these individuals.

7.9 Public Health

- 7.9.1 Through continued joint working with the Public Health Team and Primary Care, day opportunities providers will continue to promote healthy lifestyles with its people who access day opportunities. The development of a community hub style approach to service delivery in the future will enhance this further.

7.10 Climate Change

- 7.10.1 The impact of ensuring a more personalised range of services for day opportunities may have a positive direct impact on carbon reduction measures, by reducing the number of journeys to building based services by both staff and people who access day opportunities. It will also reduce the electricity and gas usage required to support building-

based provision if more support is being delivered in community settings over time.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Mark Hughes, Senior Commissioning Manager mark.hughes@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01625 374495
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment – Day Opportunities Strategy Appendix 2 – Cheshire East Day Opportunities Strategy (Draft)
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025