

People and Health Overview Committee

2 February 2026

Towards a New Model of Day Opportunities For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Robinson, Adult Social Care

Local Councillor(s):

All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report author and job title: Sarah Perrett - Commissioning Manager

Email: sarah.perrett@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Care Act 2014

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Executive summary

- 1.1 In July 2024 People and Health Overview Committee approved proposals for officers to commence a formal consultation on a new model of day opportunities in Dorset. This followed previous engagement events where officers started to build a portfolio of feedback and views of people using services as well as other stakeholders.
- 1.2 Feedback and best practice research led to the proposals set out in our formal consultation carried out between March and June 2025. The proposals put forward an extended day offer that includes development of community activities as well as a building-based offer for people with complex needs. Reflecting the Council's commitment to whole-population services, and a focus on preventative, community-led support. The report sets the Council's desire that day service transformation optimises resources, aligns with strategic objectives, and leverages existing community assets.
2. **Recommendation:**
 - 2.1 The People and Health Overview Committee help shape the draft Cabinet report, and the future intentions of day opportunities.
3. **Reason for Recommendation:**

- 3.1 The intention is that the proposed changes support a much more ambitious, connected community offer for people. That the new model engenders a culture that supports pathways to independence, reducing longer term care needs and supports communities to help define and develop local solutions.

4. **The report**

- 4.1 In 2021 engagement activity was conducted to determine the views of people attending day opportunities on whether services could be improved and if so, what would enhance the services available.

- 4.2 In September 2024 Cabinet agreed the recommendation from People and Health Overview Committee for officers to commence formal consultation.

The Consultation – March – June 2025

- 4.3 The consultation was extensive, and people had various opportunities to feedback including:

- Public meeting at every Care Dorset centre (13) circa 500 people attended.
- Online sessions (6).
- Focus groups of people who use other services.
- Birth 2 Settled Adulthood Service Managers, inviting circulation to young people.
- Visits to professional settings (Schools)
- Written communication to every individual who uses a day service.
- Surveys in public buildings and online (335 responses)

Summary of Consultation Findings on Day Opportunities

- 4.4 The consultation provided valuable insights into what people want from day opportunities, confirming a strong sense of community attachment and a clear desire for flexible, vibrant, and locally accessible services, particularly among younger people.

- 4.5 The [full published Consultation report can be found here.](#)

Further Engagement and Co-production

- 4.6 Officers continue to engage with individuals, carers and other stakeholders as the new offer is developed. This will include further face to face meetings in all centres, workshops and published information.
- 4.7 Members have been fully supportive of the work undertaken so far, initial feedback was provided in July 2025, via a webinar. The key themes from the consultation were acknowledged with agreed further engagement.
- 4.8 The Health & Wellbeing Board are also being engaged on the future proposals at its next meeting on 11 February 2026.

Next Steps

- 4.9 The report is scheduled to go to Cabinet March 2026 to seek approval to initiate the next phase of the “Towards a new model of day opportunities”. The People and Health Overview Committee is asked to review the report and future model.

5. Legal considerations

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Care Act to meet assessed needs and adopt a strength- based approach to delivering outcomes for eligible individuals. Moreover, the Care Act supports increased choice and control for people through individual budgets. The proposed changes to our day service operating model will enhance available options for individuals and strengthen the mechanism in which services can be purchased.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Identification of any savings will be clearer when the implementation of the model is more fully scoped and should be reflected in the budget plans for 2026/27 onwards.

7. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 7.1 Reduction in travel is intended to be an outcome of a more localised and flexible model of day services delivery. This, together with more efficient use of buildings (which often have a significant amount of unused space at present), will support reduction in carbon emissions.

8. Well-being and health implications

- 8.1 Day services are a valued part of the social care support offer, maintaining daily activity and social connection for people with care and support needs. By improving the connectedness of these services with local community offers and widening the engagement of organisations and groups with the needs of people with disabilities, mental health challenges, and frailty, we are supporting them to stay active and well and improving health and wellbeing.

9. Other implications

- 9.1 Changes in building use and enhanced community activities will require a review of transport options including the use of the VCSE, Council Transport and increased use of Direct Payments that will support people have more flexibility on how they access a day opportunity.
- 9.2 As the Council's Property and Asset strategy develops, officers will work to ensure there is a comprehensive understanding of existing community provision and opportunities to design services that address existing gaps and reduce service provision.

10. Risk implications

- 10.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: LOW
Residual Risk: LOW

11. Equalities

- 11.1 We will ensure fair and accessible services for everyone in Dorset through the delivery of services and improvements as set out in our transformation and council plan. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for each of the 13 Care Dorset Day centres to ensure due regard of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Draft report for cabinet - Towards a new model of day opportunities
- 12.2 Appendix 2: Towards a new Model of Day Opportunities – Building proposals

13. Background Papers

13.1 [Commissioning for A Better Life for Adults in Dorset 2023 to 2028](#)

14. Report sign-off

14.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)