



**To the Chair and Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**‘Ensuring Access to Day Support and Short Breaks during the COVID-19 Pandemic’**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
Councillor Rachael Blake - Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board	All	None

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report outlines the councils overall approach and actions taken to facilitate access to personalised Day Service support, Short Breaks and Carer Respite throughout the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals with a Learning Disability and or Autism.
- 1.2** The report is divided into two key sections:
- 1.3** The first section of the report focuses on SMILE Day Services, including the decision to close the buildings at the onset of COVID and describes what initiatives took place to support those individuals who normally attend these services. It also includes a detailed overview of the recovery and re-start plans to support the safe re-opening of building base services.
- 1.4** The second section of the report focuses on access to In-House Short Breaks and Carer Respite provision throughout the pandemic. This part of the report describes in detail the measures that have been put in place to ensure that Carer Respite has continued to be available throughout the pandemic (to those in need) and the actions taken to ensure that individuals accessing the service are as safe as possible in addition to the staff working in the service.

## **2. EXEMPT REPORT**

2.1 The report is not exempt.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 There are no recommendations within the report. The request is that panel members consider the information provided within the report.

## **4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

4.1 Personalised Day Service support (in various different guises) has been available to those individuals who normally attend the council's day services (SMILE). This support has contributed to promoting peoples emotional well-being and provided continuity and familiarity for people by maintaining relationships and contact with staff who they know well. The re-start planning for SMILE day services has ensured a carefully considered approach to the re-opening of services. Such planning means that buildings are re-opening safely with measures in place to reduce the risk to individuals attending services.

4.2 The decision to keep open the Council's In-House Respite Service has meant that throughout the pandemic access to vital Carer Respite has been available to those in urgent and priority need. For those Carers who have been struggling with the demands of the caring role or those in crisis we have been able to facilitate brief periods of respite to enable carers to re-charge and continue with the demands of their caring role.

## **5. BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 Caring for someone with a Learning Disability and or Autism can be challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately brought additional challenges and anxieties for some individual's carers and their families. The lockdown and associated Government restrictions meant abrupt changes had to be introduced quickly, in order to protect and keep individuals and our staff safe.

5.2 We recognise that Day Services and Short Break Respite provides vital support and structure to people's lives, and any changes to the degree that COVID had brought about does not come without significant impact, or challenge for both individuals their families and carers. Right from the onset Service Managers and staff from across the Community Adult Learning Disability Team, and In-House Provider Services very quickly devised a joint operational strategy and close working protocol. This has ensured that each individual registered in either service has continued to receive some level of oversight and support where needed, whilst also ensuring that any changes to individual circumstances are quickly identified and any emerging risks, or challenges are proactively picked up and responded to.

5.3 Having a communication and engagement plan, which includes regular conversations with individuals their families carers and circulation of the SMILE

newsletter has helped to keep people updated on the changes. Sharing individual stories and images of the things that people have been taking part in during these difficult times has helped to maintain morale. The range of stories shared include – new hobbies, learning new skills, keeping fit and active, and taking part in fundraising events.

- 5.4** As the tight lockdown restrictions eased in July 2020 we devised a plan to reopen services safely, and from the onset it was evident that things would need to operate very differently for a considerable amount of time. With that in mind, we have reflected on the learning and innovation that's taken place over the past 6 months, which has given us greater opportunity and scope in terms of how we support people during this continuous oscillating period, where there is still a real threat of the COVID virus especially during the proceeding winter months.

The chronology and details of how each service have been managed and progressed is detailed below.

## **6. Day Support - SMILE**

### **The Initial COVID Response March 2020 – Closure of Building Base Day Services & Support Provided**

- 6.1** After careful consideration a decision was taken to close all building based services on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and a letter was sent out to notify all individuals, parents and carers. This decision was heavily influenced by the risk assessment that identified all service users who attend SMILE Services, and were in the vulnerable category groups whether that be the shielded cohort, aged over 70 years old, or have an underlying health condition or a learning disability. This decision was also in line with Public Health and Government guidance.
- 6.2** As part of the COVID business continuity planning exercise prior to lockdown, Service Managers from SMILE worked closely with the Community Adult Learning Disability Team (CALDT) and Adult Social Care Locality Teams, to undertake a RAG (Risk Rating Assessment) of all the 386 individuals who attend SMILE. From which 337 had a Learning Disability and the remaining 49 were Older People. This exercise then led to the development of individual activity and support plans for each person.
- 6.3** Various innovations and initiatives introduced maintained some level of day support and meaningful activity for those who generally attended the SMILE service. This included SMILE staff delivering some virtual activities, which included general wellbeing staying in touch calls at a frequency as required, fund raising events, which led to the purchase and distribution of activity bags, virtual gardening, group Zoom exercise classes, and Tai Chi sessions. In addition, WhatsApp games were hosted amongst friendship groups; this included playing Darts, competitions and sponsored family walks. Some supported living providers also facilitated day opportunities to their residents in small bubble groups. These innovations have given people the opportunity to stay connected, but to also learn new skills including the use of technology and to get involved in lots of different things.

## **Approach to Restarting SMILE Day Services**

- 6.4** Over the last six months, many people have told us that they have enjoyed doing new things and want to continue in the future. It is therefore important that we build on the positive innovation that has occurred during the pandemic, and our recovery is not simply just about automatically bringing everyone back into a building based service. Instead, the key principle as we move forward with our recovery is to work in partnership with the Community Adult Learning Disability Team, to ensure that we have a strengths based conversation with every individual and his or her carers and from that we start to build up an individual day activity plan, which stretches beyond building based provision.
- 6.5** Our approach to re-opening the building based Day Services has been done so with caution, ensuring that careful consideration and planning is applied to all aspects (given the risks of bringing several people together in one building). Underpinning the approach and re-start plans for day services has been Public Health England and Government Guidance. In tandem, we are actively working with Health & Safety Teams and corporate Landlord colleagues to ensure that all the buildings including those that we directly own as well as those leased are safe to operate, and the measures required are in place. In addition, we have actively engaged with Trade Union representatives and staff throughout, and the feedback received to date confirms people are assured by the approach.

## **Operating Model**

- 6.6** In order to retain physical distancing we have created small 'bubble groups' which means that numbers attending building base services will be significantly reduced on any given day. Reducing individual contact with staff is crucial as it creates less risk, whilst equally ensuring access to the appropriate personal protective equipment and hygiene facilities and robust Infection, prevention and control is a fundamental aspect of our service re-start plans.
- 6.7** It is also necessary to provide activities and support in very different ways, whilst also supporting people to come to terms with the new norm. As we prepare and continue to open up services a key priority will be to ensure that people clearly understand all the changes in advance. To help with this, in addition to our conversations we have prepared information for service users and carers in easy read format so that everyone is clear about what the changes mean, and what is expected of everyone.
- 6.8** Staff training and induction is built into the restart plans, this will be completed as part of the return to work protocol prior to the opening of each site. Equally, service users will go through an induction at the start of their first building based session so they are familiar with the one-way system and the layout of the building. All the Personal evacuation plans have been updated to reflect the changes from both an environment and infection, prevention, control prospective in line with COVID guidance.
- 6.9** A COVID outbreak plan for SMILE Services including, Short Break Respite has

been developed and will be activated should the need arise in the future.

### Criteria and Eligibility

- 6.10** As part of the restart process an eligibility criteria for building base services was designed, to assist in identifying those who need to be given priority (To note: this will be considered in line with the person’s risk assessment).
- 6.11** In addition, we know that, some individuals will not understand or be able to comply with social distancing restrictions, so it would be unsafe to bring those individuals back into a shared enclosed environment. Similarly, we know from speaking to people that some are still not ready to come back into a building, as they are anxious about the risks of contracting COVID.
- 6.12** The eligibility criteria developed is detailed below:-
- **Red – Family vulnerabilities, such as elderly carers, working carers, where the person is not receiving any other support, increase in behaviours of concern.**
  - **Amber – Some family vulnerabilities, limited external support, social isolation and loneliness.**
  - **Green – The person is content at home and engaging well in other activities**
- 6.13** Priority for building base services have been allocated to individuals who fall into the red and amber categories, as these individuals were assessed in the higher-risk categories.
- 6.14** As an assurance alongside the building base service, individuals assessed in the green category we will continue to receive virtual day activities as we have done since the outset of the pandemic. In addition, we have also introduced 1-1 day activities in the persons own home, for those people in the red category who have been identified by learning disability team as high risk but unable to come back into a building base. Supported living providers will continue to deliver day opportunities to their residents.

### Update on Day Services Re-opening

- 6.15** The table below provides details of the SMILE Day Service buildings, and identifies those that have opened so far, including opening times and numbers of individuals attending each service, as well as those that remain closed.

Service	Opening Status	Days of opening	How many people attending
ASKARNE	opened 08/09/20	Tuesday and Thursday	10
ADWICK – HIGH DEPENDENCY HUB	opened 20/08/20	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	4

BENTLEY	closed	x	x
BHATIA	closed	x	x
REDMOND CENTRE	closed	x	x
CANTLEY	opened 30/07/20	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday	11
HOLMESCARR HIGH DEPENDENCY HUB	opened 27/08/20	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday	4
MEXCAMPUS	closed	x	x
ROSSINGTON MEMORIAL	opened 02/09/20	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday	11
STAINFORTH	opened 16/07/20	Tuesday and Thursday	6
STIRLING	Opened 14/07/20	Monday Wednesday Friday	20
ACE HORTICULTURE SERVICE	closed	x	x
THORNE ROAD	Opened 09/09/20	Monday Wednesday and Friday	4
Total			70

**6.16** At present four of the centres remain closed, three of which are leased and require further building modifications before they can be safely opened. Remedial work is underway at all four sites, which includes the Redmond Centre, and we expect modifications to be complete in the next few weeks. In the meantime, individuals are continuing to receive alternative forms of support.

**6.17** More recently, there has been some relaxation in the guidance in terms of staff working with multiple bubbles over the course of the week, so we will be looking at increasing the numbers of people attending over the coming weeks.

**6.18** Over the past week's it has been really reassuring to hear that the individuals who have returned to the building base Day Service feel safe and are thoroughly enjoying being back with their friends albeit at a distance.

## **7. Access to Short Breaks / Carer Respite throughout the Pandemic**

**7.1** It is vital that we recognise the huge contribution that carers make to society and our communities. More than ever carers are facing greater challenges to keeping themselves and their loved ones safe and well. We appreciate that measures to stop the spread of coronavirus has for some people created additional challenges for those with caring responsibilities.

**7.2** Access to respite (also sometimes referred to as 'short breaks') for some carers is a vital means of providing carers with a break from the demands of the caring role, to enable them to continue with their caring responsibilities.

- 7.3** Doncaster council has two in-house services (Eden Lodge & Wickett Hern Road) that provide short-term respite care for adults with a learning disability.
- 7.4** The following information intends to provide an overview of the councils approach and actions taken to continue to provide respite care / short breaks to carers of individuals with a learning disability and or autism in the borough.

### **Approach to facilitating Carer Respite / Short Breaks**

- 7.5** On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic), Eden Lodge and Wickett Hern's (In-house Respite Facilities) Business Continuity Plan was activated. This essentially involved consolidating the In-house respite service into one building at Eden Lodge. The importance of continuing to support carers by being able to facilitate respite in urgent / priority situations was acknowledged as important. Unlike many other local authorities who closed their respite facilities a commitment was made that where possible we would endeavour to keep this service operational. The impact of the pandemic on staffing levels and service delivery however was still very much unknown at the point of business continuity activation. In line with emergency planning, resources were combined into one service at Eden Lodge, which provided a 9 bedded facility for the provision of carer respite / short breaks.
- 7.6** Following activation of business continuity planning, all planned bookings to the two services were cancelled, with the focus being placed on facilitating emergency respite only for those individuals / carers in urgent need of respite. As part of this planning, every single individual who normally accessed either of the services were personally contacted by members of staff from the service, to advice of the plan and how to contact someone should they need to arrange a period of respite. Individuals were provided with a contact number in the event that they needed to discuss accessing respite. Arrangements were also made for the phone line at Wickett Hern to be re-directed to Eden Lodge, in the event that people had difficulties with the new method of planning respite, to ensure they had contact with people they were familiar with to talk through the new process.
- 7.7** A weekly meeting was established attended by the by the Registered Manager of Eden Lodge and Wickett Hern, Team Leader of the Community Adult Learning Disability team and Head of Service for Adult Social Care & Support to discuss any individual requests for respite. Within this meeting individual's needs were discussed, their personal circumstances and specific requirements (e.g. specific dates of periods of respite). It is important to recognise the outstanding achievement that during this period all individual needs and requests were able to be accommodated by the service.
- 7.8** In recognition of the increasing demands on carers and the importance of planned respite to facilitate much needed breaks for carers to continue in their caring role, as part of recovery planning and stepping up services on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 the service moved to a position of taking bookings for planned non-urgent priority respite. This coincided with the re-opening of Wickett Hern Road as a respite facility. A letter informing all individuals who normally access either Eden Lodge

or Wickett Hern was sent out, to communicate this change and how respite can be accessed. The weekly meeting between the registered manager of the service and the community adult learning disability team continues to discuss all requests for respite, cater for individual need and make arrangements for the safe admission to services.

### **Number of Individuals Requiring Respite**

- 7.9** Between the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020 42 individuals accessed respite.

### **Changes to Practice – Safe Access to Respite Care**

- 7.10** Due to the nature of Eden and Wickett Hern and essentially these being building based care settings, in line with government guidance issued by the Department of Health & Social Care multiple measures have been introduced to ensure the safety and well-being of both individuals accessing respite and the staff working in these services.
- 7.11** In line with the requirements set out in the 'Admission and Care of residents in a care home during COVID-19' (published initially in April 2020 and most recently updated in September 2020) a robust risk assessment was developed, which outlined the process of admission to the service and measures to safely support individuals whilst using the service.
- 7.12** Arrangements include facilitating testing for COVID-19 for all individuals prior to admission to the service. Where this has not been possible (in a very small number of cases, due to it not being in a person's best interest to undergo a test), as per government guidance strict measures have been put in to support these individuals to self-isolate upon admission, to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.
- 7.13** Staff working in the service are tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis. This weekly testing ensures staff are aware of their COVID-19 status and helps reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. The Registered Manager in the service has continued to remind staff and reinforce that they must not attend for work in the event that they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 but that they must (in line with government guidelines) self-isolate and arrange for a COVID test. In line with good practice, staff in the service do not work across both respite buildings.
- 7.14** All staff working within the service have undertaken Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training. This training has provided staff with knowledge of how to stop the spread of the virus by good hygiene practices such as hand washing. The training also equipped staff with information on how to use personal protective equipment, including the safe storage and disposal of this equipment.
- 7.15** Both respite services (Eden Lodge and Wickett Hern) have an outbreak management plan in place, which details the actions that would be taken in the event that either of the services experienced an outbreak of COVID-19. In addition, both services have the support from a wrap-around multi-disciplinary team (which

compromises of a range of professionals including a nurse, social worker, infection protection control practitioner and member of commissioning).

## 8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no specific options to consider within this report.

## 9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

9.1 There is no recommended option.

## 10. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
	<p><b>Doncaster Working:</b> Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to good fulfilling work</li> <li>• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish</li> <li>• Inward Investment</li> </ul>	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the Borough.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Living:</b> Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster</li> <li>• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home</li> <li>• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport</li> <li>• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean</li> <li>• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage</li> </ul>	<p>Services for vulnerable people are continuing to ensure that individuals their families / carers can actively continue to receive the support to enable them to lead active and independent lives in their community.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Learning:</b> Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school</li> </ul>	<p>Vulnerable adults will continue to access opportunities to experience, learn and develop new skills, which will assist in</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better</li> <li>• Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work</li> </ul>	<p>achieving individual outcomes and ambitions.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Caring:</b> Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust</li> <li>• Older people can live well and independently in their own homes</li> </ul>	<p>Services for Older people and adults with a Learning Disability will continue, providing access to support, and friendship networks, will assist to reduce social isolation and help people to live well at home.</p>
	<p><b>Connected Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, efficient and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Modern, accessible customer interactions</li> <li>• Operating within our resources and delivering value for money</li> <li>• A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents</li> <li>• Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths</li> <li>• Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</li> </ul>	<p>Taking a blended approach to service delivery, using virtual technologies to connect people and deliver activities will deliver benefits to people but also value for money.</p>

## 11. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

There are no risk and assumptions associated with this report.

## **12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials PC DATE 16/09/20]**

- 12.1** Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012) introduced a duty on Councils in England to take appropriate steps to improve the health of the people who live in their area.

The Care Act 2014 obligates the Council to meet the eligible needs for care and support of its population in accommodation in a care home or by providing care and support to those individuals in their home or in the community.

- 12.2** The report author references adherence to Government Guidance when formulating an overall approach to the running of day care services during the pandemic.

- 12.3** This should include Guidance issued on the 24th April 2020 by the Department of Health and Social Care - Corona Virus (Covid19): Guidance for care staff supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults, which recommended that all care and support should continue to be given in the least restrictive way possible and continue to maximise independence wherever possible. This Guidance builds upon the Social Care Institute for Excellence: Covid 19: Supporting autistic people and people with learning disabilities, updated July 2020, which is a guide to help care staff and personal assistants supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults through the COVID-19 crisis.

## **13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials PW Date 16/09/20]**

- 13.1** There are two distinct elements to consider within the financial implications of this report.

- 13.2** Firstly there is the cost implication within day centres and respite units. Given that the numbers likely or indeed able to access this provision is reduced and is less than the budgeted activity levels it is unlikely that there will be a significant additional cost to this element. At the same time much of the cost around this provision is fixed (staffing, building costs etc) so it is also unlikely that we will see a significant underspend.

- 13.3** The second element is the cost implications of supporting individuals who are unable to attend this provision. This will include different levels of financial risk depending on the individual and the varying levels of support required as an alternative to day care/residential respite provision.

- 13.4** As the situation develops more work is being undertaken to better understand and identify such costs, and these will be reported as part of the monthly revenue monitoring process for AHWB.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCES [Officer initials AT Date 14/09/20]**

- 14.1** Plans should be in place to ensure staff can work safely through risk assessments

(and where appropriate individual personal risk assessments), to ensuring that Human Resource advice on working practices during the pandemic is being adhered to during the re-introduction of any services.

## **15. TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials PW Date 15/09/20]**

**15.1** There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. Services must continue to use MS Teams as the preferred option for hosting video meetings/virtual activities with customers, as this has been set up securely within the Council's technical infrastructure and is fully supported by ICT. Options are being explored around technology that could be used by customers with learning disabilities as part of the Digital Recovery & Renewal Strategy.

## **16. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials VJ Date 17/09/2020]**

**16.1** Access to services is recognised to impact on health outcome of the population. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has meant a lot of our most vulnerable population have been confined to their homes, the impact of isolation is even most felt, impacting on both physical and mental health. The proposed access to Day Support and Short Breaks will impact positively in improving health and wellbeing of this group of vulnerable group of population. The organisers/ managers will need to ensure compliance with the relevant government COVID guidance to ensure safe Day Support and Short Breaks.

## **17. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials DJL, ALB, 18/9/2020]**

**17.1** Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic. A rapid due regard assessment has been undertaken.

## **18. CONSULTATION**

**18.1** All individuals, carers and families that either attend the councils Day Services or respite facilities have been regularly kept updated with information. Accessible information has been made available to individuals to describe the changes to service provision.

## **19. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers.

## **20. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

Nil.

## **21. REPORT AUTHOR**

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