

## **A Vision for Southwark Day Opportunities and Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities**

### **The overall Council vision: A Fairer Future For All**

Southwark Council has an overall vision called “A Fairer Future For All”. The Council will create a fairer future for all in Southwark by,

- protecting the most vulnerable;
- looking after every penny as if it was our own;
- working with local people, communities and businesses to innovate, improve and transform public services

As part of this vision the council has set 10 key promises, of which one is to

**“Support vulnerable people to live independent, safe and healthy lives by giving them more choice and control over their care”.**

The Vision for Adult Social Care seeks to deliver this promise, and part of this vision includes the transformation of day services.

We are currently reviewing the day services for adults with learning disabilities in Southwark, as part of our work to transform adult social care and introduce personal budgets and self directed support.

We know that for some people, the existing day and community services meet their needs. However, for a growing number of current and future service users, the style and pattern of provision does not meet their needs. In brief, people have told us that:

- What works is having something to do, respite for families, good and caring staff, seeing old friends, and access to health supports.
- What doesn't work is the lack of real individual choice and control, not enough support for employment and real education, not enough flexibility about when activities happen, and having to travel outside of the local community.

The drive behind our vision is to support and enable people with learning disabilities to choose how they are supported to spend their days, and to focus support on enabling people to be more independent. It is impossible to provide a detailed description of what each person's day support will look like in two or five year's time. Instead, the vision aims to provide a framework for the development of a broader range of community services and supports to allow for individual

choice. We are guided in this by national and local policies and our knowledge of people currently using services.

### **The purpose of day opportunities and community support services**

Our aim is that all day opportunities will be equally open to people with complex and profound disabilities and with behaviours labelled as challenging, and this will be achieved by giving people personal budgets and facilitating person centred support planning. We recognise that each person will contribute to and use community resources and opportunities differently and that everyone's support plan will be unique and a reflection of their own abilities, circumstances, and aspirations.

The purpose of all day support funded by adult social care will be to enable independent<sup>1</sup> living. This means that in the future, day opportunities will focus on supporting people in four primary areas of their life:-

- employment,
- education,
- community engagement (friendships) and
- sport and leisure.

### **Employment**

Nationally, we know that surveys taken of people with learning disabilities identify real **employment** as the greatest area of unmet need in the community. Employment offers people the opportunity to contribute to their community and be valued for that contribution, to make new relationships with co-workers and other community members and to enjoy the financial rewards. We will ensure that day and community services can provide practical support to enable people who choose to, to gain and maintain real jobs with community employers or to become self employed. The council has provided several apprenticeships for adults with learning disabilities over the past year, working in partnership with a local provider to give people the extra support they needed. We intend to continue the apprenticeships and will be working closely with education, colleges, employers and local support providers to expand the range of initiatives and

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<sup>1</sup> *Independent living means the right to have control of their own life and to make use of the range of community services and opportunities available to all people. Independent living recognises that some people need supports (services).*

schemes to make more local jobs accessible and support people with learning disabilities and autism to find and keep paid employment.

## **Education**

Education provides opportunities for people to learn new skills, build on their existing abilities, and engage with the wider community. For many people with learning disabilities, further and adult education has become unfocused and repetitive. We aim to support people to access further and adult education that is in line with their plans and aspirations for employment, learning, independent living, and a social life. Where possible, this will be by people with learning disabilities accessing formal and informal education opportunities open to the whole community, not just with other adults with learning disabilities.

## **Community and Friendships**

We aim to support people with learning disabilities to engage in a range of ordinary activities where they can meet and connect with other **community** members. With high quality support, we aim that these connections are given every chance of becoming valued and safe **friendships**. These activities may be based around common interests, faith and cultural activities, volunteering, and local to where people live. Support will help people to maintain existing relationships and build new ones.

## **Sport and leisure**

Supporting people to engage in **sport and leisure** activities will promote better health, wellbeing, and community engagement. This includes social activities, hobbies, and exercise. Where possible these will be activities alongside and at the same time as other community members. We recognise that, to support existing relationships and make the best use of financial resources, some of these activities may take place within groups.

Our vision is that in each of these areas, day opportunities and community services will be flexible in their approach and the type of support they give, and offer support at times to suit individual needs, including more weekend and evening support. Services will help people to access the widest range of activities in the community.

We will be working with leisure, employment, social and community facilities within the borough to identify how they can increase access and improve the experience for people with learning disabilities and including people with complex

support needs. For example, we would like to see the provision of more changing places and quiet spaces in local leisure services.

Currently, a significant number of people who receive a day service attend a day centre, although a significant number of people use other services as well or instead and have a personal budget. Our vision means that in future, there will be a greater range of day opportunities and community supports for people with learning disabilities in Southwark. As everyone moves to using a personal budget, and exercises greater choice, we expect to see more people using their personal budget to purchase other types of community support, and fewer people choosing to use spend their personal budget on attending a day centre. However, people who require a building based day service to meet their need or to provide respite for their families, will still be able to attend a day centre.

### **Personal Budgets and Person Centred Support Plans**

Our vision will build on the work we've already done to introduce personal budgets and person centred support planning for adults with learning disabilities.

A Personal Budget is the money the Council allocates to an individual to meet their eligible support needs. As part of implementing our vision for day services, over the next two years we will carry out an Outcome Based Assessment with everyone who currently receives a day service. This assessment establishes whether people are eligible for support from the Council, and allows us to calculate an approximate amount of money that we would need to spend to assist them— this is known as an *Indicative Budget*.

During the Support Planning Phase the service user and their family carers will work out how they wish to spend this budget to achieve their agreed outcomes. The Support Plan gives us the *Final Personal Budget*. Individuals do not need to use all of their Indicative Budget; they just need to make sure they are using the money:

- to support eligible needs
- in ways that maximise health, wellbeing, safety and independence
- in a legal, reasonable and efficient manner

If people are eligible for a Personal Budget they may be required to contribute to the cost of their support. Most people will already have had a financial assessment in order to receive their current service.

It is important that day opportunities link to the rest of people's lives, so for most people this will be part of a wider discussion about where they live, with whom, how they use their personal budget, and how they receive health care support.

Respite will be an essential part of this conversation where people live at home with family carers. Approximately 200 people with learning disabilities using day services live with their families. For many of these families, day services offer a critical source of respite. Understanding and meeting the needs of the family, remains a priority for adult social care and so respite will be an important consideration when support planning.

Using person centred support planning, we aim to understand and balance the needs of individuals and their families in, for example, the timings of activities.

### **Managing a personal budget: money management options**

We understand that people are very different and while some people will want to take full control of managing their personal budget, others will ask the council to manage their personal budget for them. Some people will choose to arrange for a third party, such as a local community organisation, to manage their personal budget for them. Sometimes people will want to use a combination of these ways of managing their personal budget. We will help people consider which of these options will work best for them.

We will continue to commission services on behalf of people who want the council to manage their budget and arrange their services, but we will also facilitate the development of community organisations that can assist people to exercise greater choice and control and manage personal budgets.

We will support people to think about how to make best use of the money in their personal budget through, for example, jointly purchasing support with other adults with learning disabilities where they have the same interests and needs. We will also help people to think about how they can develop their local support networks (sometimes called natural supports or circles of support).

### **Changes to the Amount of Council Funding for Day Opportunities Services**

The proposed changes to our day services are part of the wider move towards a more person centred and community based approach and aim to achieve better outcomes for people with learning disabilities. It is also true that the changes need to take place because the Council is having to reduce budgets. The government is giving less money to the council and so every department has to reduce their budgets.

We will make savings by reducing investment in a small number of service providers with whom we currently have contracts. Every person who has a service will have a review, and will be given a personal budget to purchase their own services and supports. This means people will have greater choice and will be able to be more creative and imaginative about their support arrangements.

It is important to note that we would have been making these changes to day services and community services anyway, because we need to give people more choice and control and personalise how day services and community services support people to be independent, safe, and well in their communities.

### **What services will look like**

To expand the range of high quality services on offer to people with personal budgets, we decided to create an Innovation Fund to bring new providers into Southwark to start additional, community services for people with learning disabilities, and to assist our existing providers to develop their services. This will give more choice for people deciding how to spend their personal budget, through smaller community services and larger London wide or national providers that can help people to employ personal assistants, use their budgets jointly with others to purchase group activities and supports, arrange flexible respite, and support people into education, employment, leisure and other mainstream services.

We are also working with existing providers so that their services focus on enabling people to achieve better outcomes and ensure that support reflects the individual's needs and preferences.

We expect that some providers will focus on particular support areas such as employment or volunteering while others will offer more general personal support. We expect that all providers will be welcoming of and skilled in supporting people with complex needs and behaviours that are labelled as challenging.

We expect that all providers will meet the highest standards for staff training and development, and more providers will work flexible hours across the week and weekends. We will work with current service providers to understand the changes in direction and need to respond to these.

While some innovation and transition monies will be available, the majority of this change will be driven by the availability and use of personal budgets.

In order to achieve these changes we will work in partnership with, amongst others, children's and young peoples services, education, transport and travel services, transitions services, health services, leisure and community facilities, mental health services and national work programmes.