Solihull Adult Social Care

Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-2027 (2025 Refresh)



Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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Foreword

When we talk of “day opportunities” we are talking about a range of services that people can access to support them to develop their skills, connect with others, access their communities, and, where appropriate, prepare for or return to employment and sometimes also to be supported while their carers have a break, helping to sustain caring relationships.

Day opportunities are accessed by many people, including older people, those experiencing mental ill health, people with learning disabilities and people with physical disabilities. Some people require very intensive support due to the complexity of their needs, and services need to be available which meet the spectrum of needs that people have.

Supporting access to day opportunities for those with social care needs is vital for many people’s wellbeing. We know that social isolation can have a big impact on wellbeing and day opportunities can be key to building social and support networks and reducing that isolation, both during any activities themselves, and outside of those sessions, as friendships thrive.

The link between activities and employment is also a key theme. Helping people develop the skills to enter, or return to, the world of employment can have a big impact on wellbeing, be that through volunteering, skills sessions or supported employment.

This refresh of the strategy, now covering 2025–2027, builds on the progress made since the original 2022–2027 strategy was launched three years ago. It reflects the voices of people currently accessing day opportunities in Solihull, providers of day opportunities and people who do not currently access services but might want to, gathered through extensive engagement. Their feedback has shaped our understanding of what works well and where improvements are needed.

We have seen strong progress in establishing a high-quality choice of providers, improved awareness of available services, and progressed more flexible options with plans for further progress. In particular, some people have fed back they would like more choice in how and when they access support, including evenings and weekends. Other feedback includes continued interest in services that reflect cultural needs, that are connected to local communities, and that support people’s aspirations, whether that is building friendships, learning new skills, or finding employment. This feedback is taken into account in the next steps of our plans.

This refreshed strategy sets out our vision for a diverse and inclusive day opportunities offer in Solihull. It includes a clear action plan to improve quality, increase flexibility, and raise awareness of what is available. It also outlines how we will measure success, ensuring that services continue to evolve in response to people’s needs.

We are committed to working in partnership with individuals, carers, providers, and communities to deliver this vision. Together, we can ensure that day opportunities in Solihull are empowering, accessible, and truly person-centred.



Councillor Dicicco

Portfolio Holder Health & Adult Social Care and Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board



Councillor Karen Grinsell

Leader of the Council



Jenny Wood

Director of Adult Social Care

Executive Summary

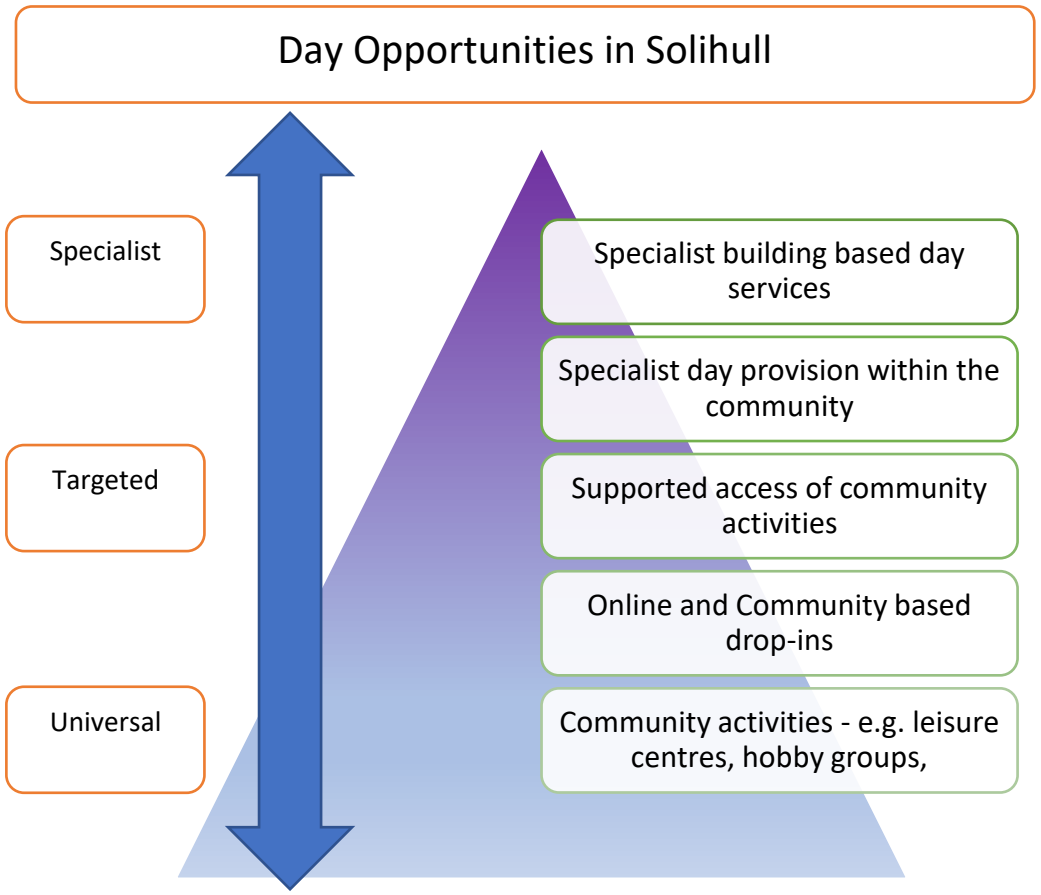
Our vision

In Solihull we want to people to have good-quality day opportunities which:

- Build on individual strengths to enable people to do what they enjoy.
- Provide opportunities to develop skills and to access employment opportunities.
- Are on offer at different times of the day, including evening activities.
- Support people to be a part of their local community and access activities which are open to all.
- Reduce social isolation.
- Provide good quality care which enables carers and family members to feel reassured and to have a break.

The conclusions of our analysis

- There is a good range of day opportunities currently available in Solihull
- There is a need for increased flexibility with those day opportunities – for example more evening and weekend options, and sessions rather than full days
- There is a need to better promote and build awareness of the range of options available
- There is a need to ensure that the support is good quality.



Progress in Delivery of the Strategy 2022-25

The table below sets out sets out the key deliverables from the first years of the strategy, progress against those and outcomes for individuals.

Deliverable	Progress	Outcomes
Priority 1: Ensuring quality of the offer		
Create a day opportunities framework to ensure all providers are meeting the Council's high-quality expectations, including categories for employment support, more options of support duration, and transport.	Completed	There are now a set of providers with clear expectations about support standards from which the people can find support to meet their outcomes, which have a person centred expectation at the centre of the of contract, which should improve inclusivity of services.
Establish a Provider Forum for providers to share best practice, provide training	Completed	The first Provider Forum took place in January and will continue to meet in order to share good practice and allow ongoing discussion between providers and support improvements in quality for local people.

opportunities, discuss national guidance, etc.		
Build links between day opportunities and Supported Employment Service to support those who want to, to transition from day opportunities to employment.	In Progress	The supported employment service is now within the Council's employment and skills team, with strong links with the employment lead in the disability team. There close working relationships will continue to develop to support people to transition from day opportunities to employment where they identify that goal. The new support offer includes supporting employment readiness as well as finding work.
All commissioned and Council-run day opportunity providers to establish user & carer groups to hear the voices of people who use services and their carers.	Completed	In house & framework providers have mechanisms in place to capture the views of the local people using the services, and this forms part of contract management to check improvements in satisfaction are being seen.
Subsequent to initial improvements achieved by implementing this strategy further quality and cost reviews may be required to identify any further improvement	Completed	The new action plan has been developed and is set out below, to build on resident feedback and to continue to develop the offer.
Priority 2: Improving awareness and understanding of the choices available		
Improve awareness across the Adult Social Care Directorate of the day opportunities available and what they can offer.	Completed	A thorough communications campaign took place when the Framework was established, website information has been refreshed and the information is kept under review to ensure that is current. Feedback from the national customer survey is positive about the ease of finding information and advice.
Spotlight on day opportunities and the diversity of services at the Adult Social Care staff conference to improve awareness right across the Council.	Completed	Sessions were held as part of the conference as well as focused sessions post conference, supporting workers to be confident in setting out the options when discussing with residents.
Public campaign to promote day opportunities; both council	Ongoing	We have improved our webpages, and advice, and improved the leaflets for the Council-run options, to enable local people to understand the offer.

run and independent sector services.		Feedback from the national customer survey is positive about the ease of finding information and advice.
Priority 3: Improve the flexibility of accessing services		
Review of transportation options for people needing support to travel to any day opportunities to increase flexibility of attendance times	Ongoing	Work has started and discussions are on-going with the business improvement team to look at transport solutions that can increase the flexibility for local people.
Investigate use of bus passes for day opportunity staff to promote them supporting people to access community facilities.	Complete	Bus pass offer in place and provider staff are able to access discounts, supporting people to be able to access more community facilities and activities.
Consultation on a new charging model for council run services which allows people to attend for different lengths of session. *(Independent sector charging will be remodelled through the day opportunities framework)*	Completed	Public consultation took place in late 2024 and was open to both people currently accessing Council-run Day Opportunities as well as for the general public. Responses were analysed and new charges were approved by CPH for implementation in April 2025. Charges for independent sector Day Opportunities were set through the implementation of the framework. This has enabled charging for local people by need, and has enabled people to be able to select half-days rather than whole days where a half-day better meets their outcomes.

Action Plan 2025-27

Following a mid-strategy review, the action plan below aims to deliver these priorities, to build on the good-quality services already in place, make improvements where needed and support local people to achieve their aspirations.

Deliverable	Timescale	Intended Impact
Priority 1: Ensuring quality of the offer		
Further develop the employment offer to help people build from day opportunities to employment opportunities where that is their goal – increasing the number of businesses	2025/27	There are more placements available for those seeking work, increasing the number

taking placements for work experience and employment		of people accessing employment.
Promote the leisure offer now available for adults with a range of disabilities and health conditions to ensure people are aware of the options available through the adult social care webpages and leaflets, and make more prominent in the Solihull Active pages	2025/26	Increased awareness of and access to the facilities by adults with disabilities.
Developing the offer for carers within our Council run day services, working in partnership with Carers Partnership Board to have a clear carer offer within the service.	2025/26	Carers have increased opportunities for support from day opportunities provision.
Gathering and acting on evidence from providers to support them to demonstrate and further develop how services are meeting different cultural needs	2025/27	Evidence can be used to inform customers and support them to understand where providers can meet cultural needs.
Building on the virtual reality usage within internal day opportunities to develop a digital offer to support people to access the right activities for them at home where that meets their outcomes	2026/27	Digital offer supports people to understand and access services which can enhance their socialisation.
Priority 2: Improving awareness and understanding of the choices available		
Develop a clear offer for social care practitioners and the public of what inclusive community options are available	2025/26	Workers are supported to be able to give community options to be people.
New Council-wide directory of services to be launched to make things easier for people to find.	2025/26	People can identify support that aligns with their interests and aspirations
Developing tailored menus of community options initially for carers, and then for other groups to help them navigate community options	2025/26	People can identify support that aligns with their interests and aspirations
Priority 3: Improve the flexibility of accessing services		
Review of transportation options for people needing support to travel to any day opportunities to increase flexibility of attendance times, including exploring use of community transport	2025/26	It is easier for individuals to get to opportunities in the community.
Develop a community pilot in the north of the borough to understand how to improve/increase the community activities,	2025/27	It is easier for individuals to identify and access local opportunities in the

opportunities, help and support available to older people living north Solihull. With potential to use learning to develop other areas of the borough.		community which are less dependent on transport.
Promotion of more sessional use of day opportunities – e.g. half days or activity based, to give more flexibility of usage for people who do not want a full day	2025/27	People can access opportunities which met their needs better
Work with the Learning Disability Partnership Board and providers to develop more evening activities for people with a learning disability - working to identify options and pilot activities with local people and providers.	2025/26	Opportunities reflect the aspirations of local people as far as possible.
Maximise people's opportunities to travel independently through travel training.	2025/26	It is easier for individuals to get to opportunities in the community.

Scope

This strategy sets out our vision for all day opportunities (formerly called day services) in Solihull for the next five years for all adults with care and support needs resulting from disability or illness, including older people and adults with a learning disability, autism, a physical disability, needs related to their mental health, or dementia.

Day opportunities form part of the Council's preventative services, reducing or delaying the need for other care and support services by helping people develop life skills, offering opportunities to socialise, and providing respite for carers. Connectivity with others forms a vital part of sustaining wellbeing.

They also form part of the long-term care support for people with complex needs, providing a safe space and stimulating activities as a core part of their care and support arrangements.

What are Day Opportunities?

Day opportunities cover a broad range of services. These include:

- Supporting adults with disabilities to develop independent living skills, such as preparing meals.
- Offering a place where people can meet and build relationships thereby reducing loneliness and social isolation.
- Providing activities and support for people who struggle to access community activities independently.
- Providing specialist sensory environments and support as part of a therapeutic approach.
- Supporting people with personal care where needed (if CQC registered).
- Supporting carers by providing a safe place where the person they care for can receive support while they work / engage in activities for themselves / have a break.

Day opportunities are needed to support people who might experience distress due to their needs, and who need specialist support and experienced staff to positively manage that distress. This may include some people with neuro-diverse conditions which make them very sensitive to sound or light.

In addition, day opportunities are wider than specialist services. We all engage and participate in different activities, from going to the football, to book clubs and walking groups. Supporting people to access these groups, and to be integrated with the rest of the community is incredibly important.

Day opportunities can support people to access work, whether that's paid employment or voluntary work. The Council's Supported Employment service helps people to write job applications, prepare for interviews, etc, but day opportunities can play a role at an earlier stage, so that they are 'work ready'. Day opportunities can also provide a role in supporting people later in life, to continue their links with the community as they retire.

The range of services for targeted and specialist services that are currently available can be found here:

- Day opportunities for people with a physical disability
- Day opportunities for older people
- Day opportunities for people with learning disabilities

National Approach to Day Opportunities

Regional Work

The 14 councils in the West Midlands have formed a Network Forum looking at day opportunities and reporting to the regional ADASS group. The group has found that there are many different models of daytime support operating across the region and this made it difficult to make comparisons. The group considered the impact on families of living with limited support during the pandemic and, through a risk assessment process, have worked to share good practice to develop mitigations through the limited operation of day opportunities and alternative support including domiciliary care, virtual support and visiting options.

Best Practice

The National Development Team for Inclusion has carried out work with people who commission, provide, fund and access day opportunities[1] and concluded that services face common and growing core pressures. These pressures include changing expectations of people who use services; a real desire to give people more choice and control over the services and support they receive; a policy focus on working more closely with communities, providing support to people who have and pool individual budgets; and funding pressures.

The National Development Team for Inclusion recommends that day opportunities:

- Use coproduction in the planning and delivery of services, working with individuals who use the services, to ensure they can meet demands and are ready for the future.
- Become an integral part of the local community's resources as well as use all the other opportunities available in a community, so that day opportunities are facilitators of opportunity for all local people rather than simply providers of a set of services to particular groups.
- Use reduced budgets to offer the same or more services, by being more flexible and creative about working with individuals to achieve their aspirations.

The West Midlands ADASS group identified several examples of best practice which worked to these principles. One is commissioned by Derbyshire County Council, which offers services 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week, on a sessional basis to meet the needs of customers and carers, including outreach into local communities and has a menu of innovative personalised and group activities available. Those services delivered by private or voluntary sector providers are contracted through a framework[2], an accredited list of day opportunities providers from whom they buy services. This allows the Council to ensure that quality standards are met, for example, all staff must

[1] https://www.ndti.org.uk/change-and-development/reimagining-day-time-supports
[2] Derbyshire day services framework directory - Derbyshire County Council

be trained in dementia care and disability awareness and providers must hold the Council's Dignity in Care Award.

The ADASS group also looked at a service[3] in London that delivers activities through peer facilitators, bringing people together through shared interests. The service uses community facilities and volunteers to put together a weekly timetable of affordable activities.

[3] Connect & Do | Certitude London

Day Opportunities in Solihull

Progress since the last strategy

The last Day Opportunities Commissioning Strategy called “Having a Good Day in Solihull” and written in 2018, identified some limitations with the current offer:

- Training and support to help people move into employment.
- Opportunities to help people to integrate better into their local communities.

These areas continue to be a challenge:

- 75% of people responding to our customer survey said that needs for social contact were mostly or entirely met (2020/21 Adult Social Care Survey), which was a decrease from 78% in the previous survey.
- 3.2% of people with a learning disability living in Solihull are in employment (2021/22 performance), compared to 5.1% on average in 2020/21 (2021/22 comparator not yet available).

Some services have been very successful at integrating into the community and building links between people using day opportunities and community organisations. For example, the Council’s South Day Opportunity service has a well-established hub, The Courtyard, where people with a learning disability enjoy a range of activities: they have links to a local drama group, run a furniture upcycling session alongside local volunteers and are part of the community to support the local church. People from The Courtyard also play a key role in The Real Junk Food Project, distributing food bags to people who need them.

A pilot collaboration between the Council’s council run services and Solihull Moors Football Club started in early 2020, to support young adults with a physical disability to be more active and involved in community activities; unfortunately, this ended prematurely in March 2020 due to lockdown, but the intention is to restart this when it is possible to do so.

An overview of the current services in Solihull

Solihull Council provides some daytime opportunities itself and contracts with local organisations to provide these services. The services provided by the Council are based in the north and south of the borough and are for people with a learning disability, physical disability and for older people.

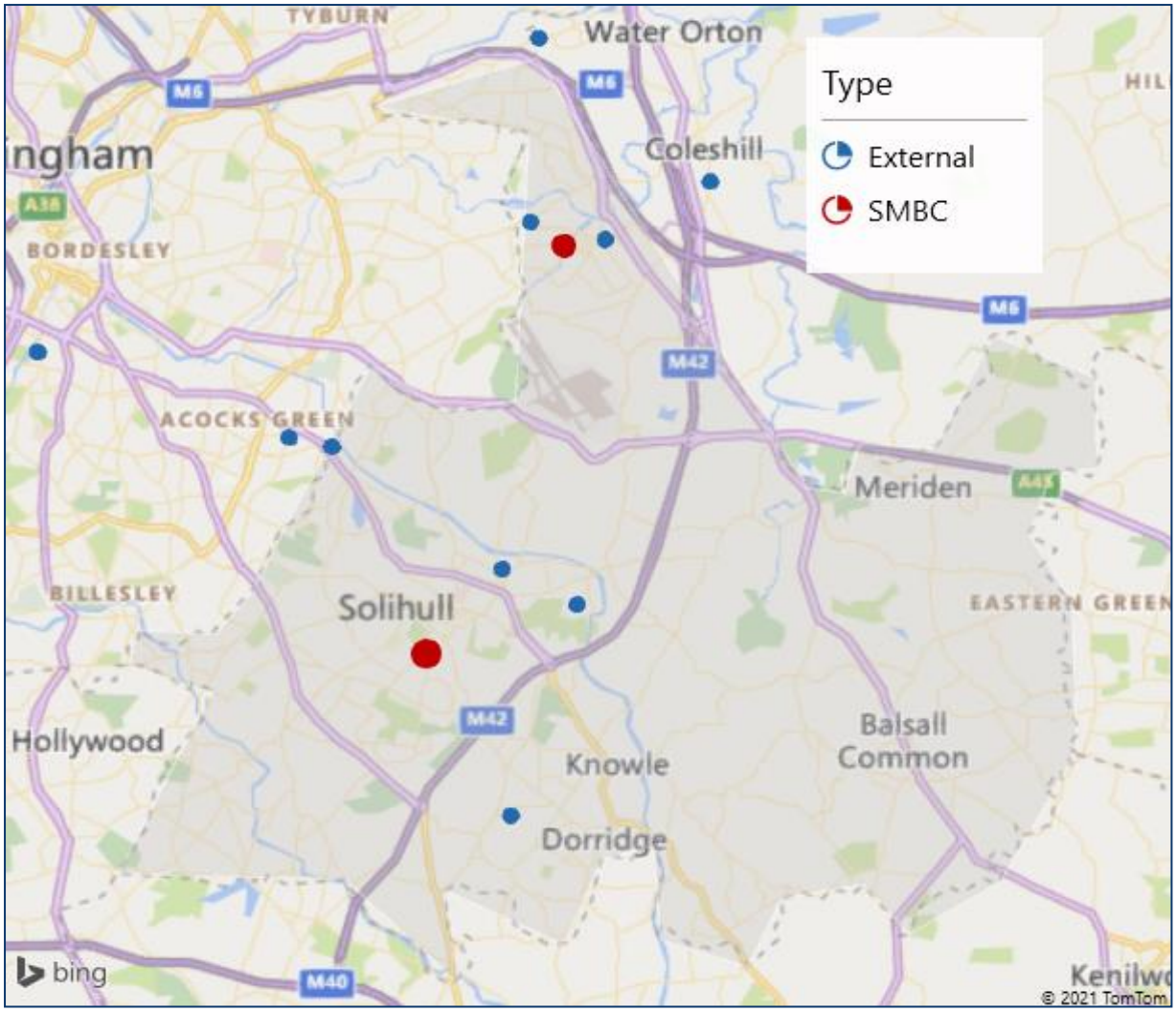
The number of people supported by Council-run day opportunities as of May 2022:

	Council-funded people accessing services as of May 2022
North Hub	
People with a learning disability	19
Older people	21
South Hub	
People with a physical disability (Greenacres)	11
People with a learning disability (The Hive & The Courtyard)	65
Older people (The Maples)	10
Total	**126**

The number of older people attending council run day services is noticeably lower than for other groups, however there are more individuals who accessing external services.

In addition, there are 15 services run by private organisations and local charities, which people funded by Solihull Council attend. Providers of these partner services include Family Care Trust, Forward, Headway, Shepherdson Court and SOLO. These are accessed by a further 149 people in addition to those accessing the Council-run services.

Locations of current services are shown below:



How much is spent on delivering Day Opportunities?

During 2021/22, there were 220 people using day opportunities who are funded by Solihull Council at an annual cost of £3.2m: £1.1m on private or voluntary sector organisations and £2.1m spend on Council-run provision.

People on average spend 2.9 days a week in day opportunities. There is an additional spend of £0.5m on transport for people attending day opportunities.

Type of service	**Number of people accessing the services**	**Total annual spend**	**Number of centres / providers currently delivering those services**
Provided by independent providers for			
People with acquired brain injury	10	£44K	1
People with learning disability	86	£888K	9
People with mental health needs*	3	£11K	1
Older people	50	£158K	4
Subtotal	***149***	***£1,101K***	***15***

Services delivered by Solihull Council Day Centres for			
People with learning disability	84		2
Older people	31		2
People with a physical disability	11		1
Subtotal	***126***	***£2,086K***	***5***
Total**	**275**	**£3,187K**	**20**

**Commissioned day opportunities for people with mental health needs are delivered through drop-in services to which people can self-refer. This means that only those with needs that can not be met through those, or the wider community offer receive individually commissioned day opportunities. As people self-refer to the drop-in services those numbers are not included here and therefore the number of people with mental health needs accessing day opportunities is far higher than stated.*

***Note some people attend council provided services and those provider by the independent sector and would be counted twice.*

Alongside these specifically commissioned activities, there are further services that people access to meet their needs – including the Drop-In service provided for people with mental health needs, and other activities provided by the third sector (e.g., dementia cafes) where people can refer themselves and access without social care involvement.

Direct payments

There are currently 82 people who choose to take a Direct Payment (see glossary) and use that to fund day services/activities to meet their needs (which isn't included in the total given here). The majority are purchasing building-based day centre services, mostly from the same providers who the Council contracts with directly. There are 20 clients who have chosen alternative support/services, such as horse-riding, gym membership or attending autism-friendly cinema screenings. Most people who choose to take a Direct Payment use it to employ a Personal Assistant, and then access the community or a particular activity with support from that assistant.

Supported living

For adults with learning disabilities who are supported in supported living developments, their needs for day opportunities will be met by the care team who are on site, running activities within the scheme and supporting access to community activities. Many older people who live in housing with care will also chose to participate in activities on offer within their apartment complex.

People who Fund Their Own Care

Some individuals who have needs that are eligible under the Care Act 2014, but do not meet the financial threshold for support will also chose to access these services on a self-funding basis. Therefore, the overall spend on day opportunities within

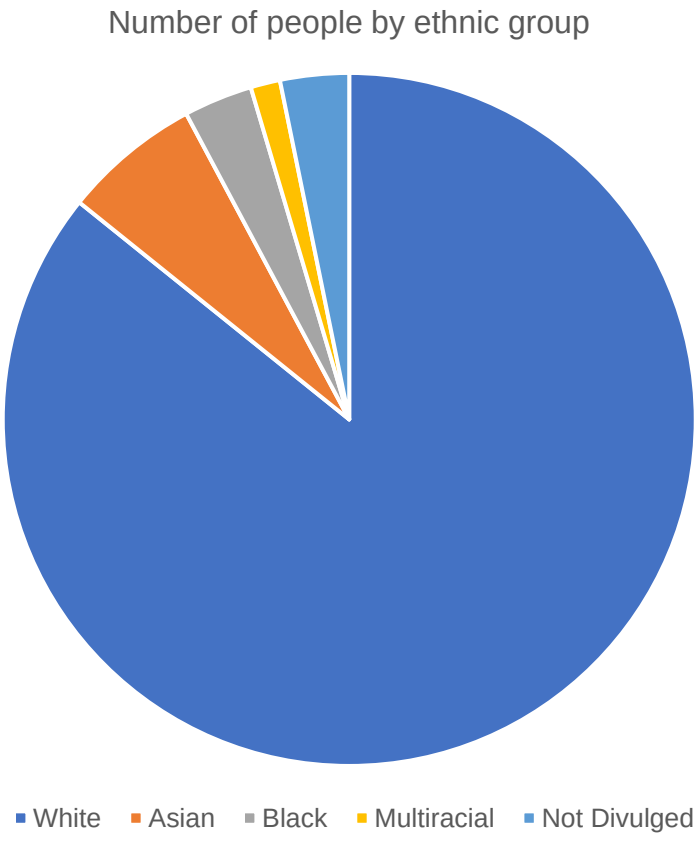
Solihull will be larger than the activity know to the Council however there is not a reliable national data set on this.this area is much larger than the direct placements listed here.

People attending services

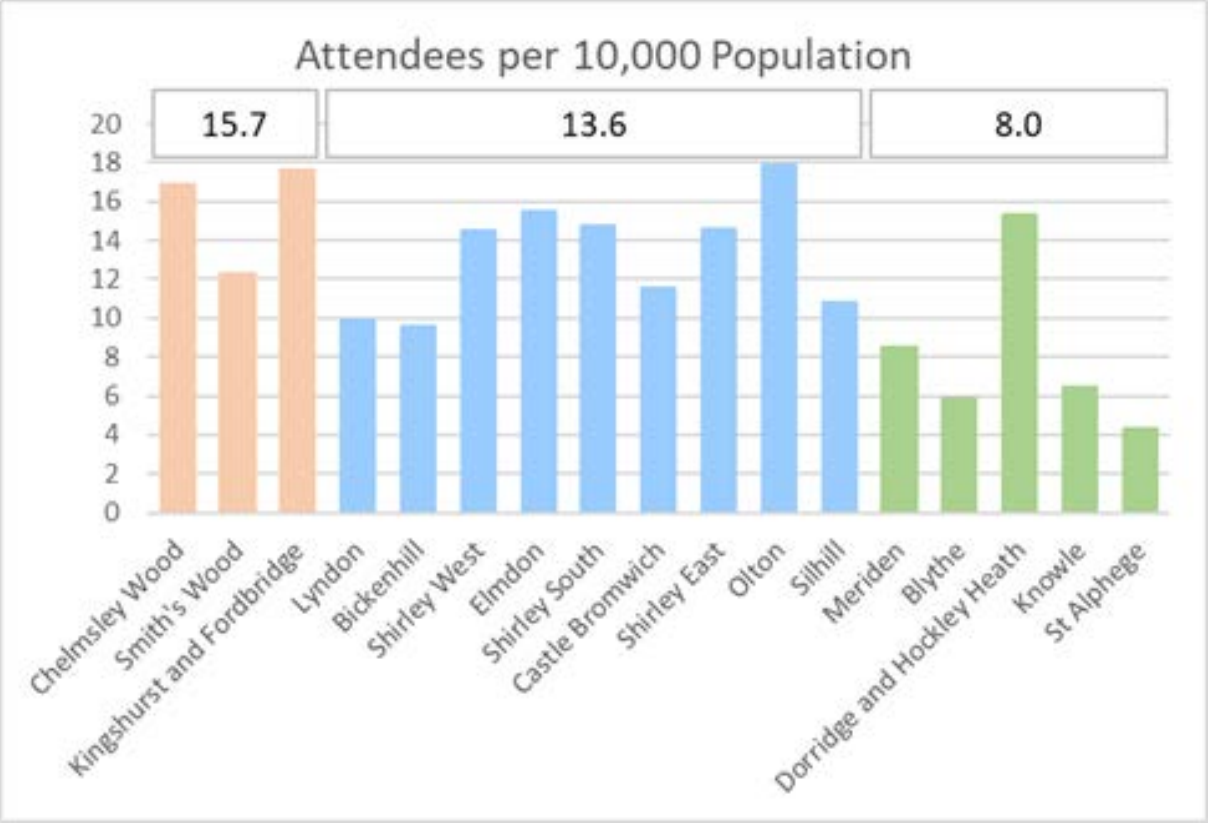
It is important to understand whether access to services is in line with what would be expected given Solihull's population.

53% of people attending day opportunities are male and 78% are under 65. The Solihull borough is 48.5% male and 78.9% under 65 (from 2021 Census). This suggests a lower level of women attending services than would be expected given the population of the borough. This may be due to health differences in the population but suggests there may be some unmet need.

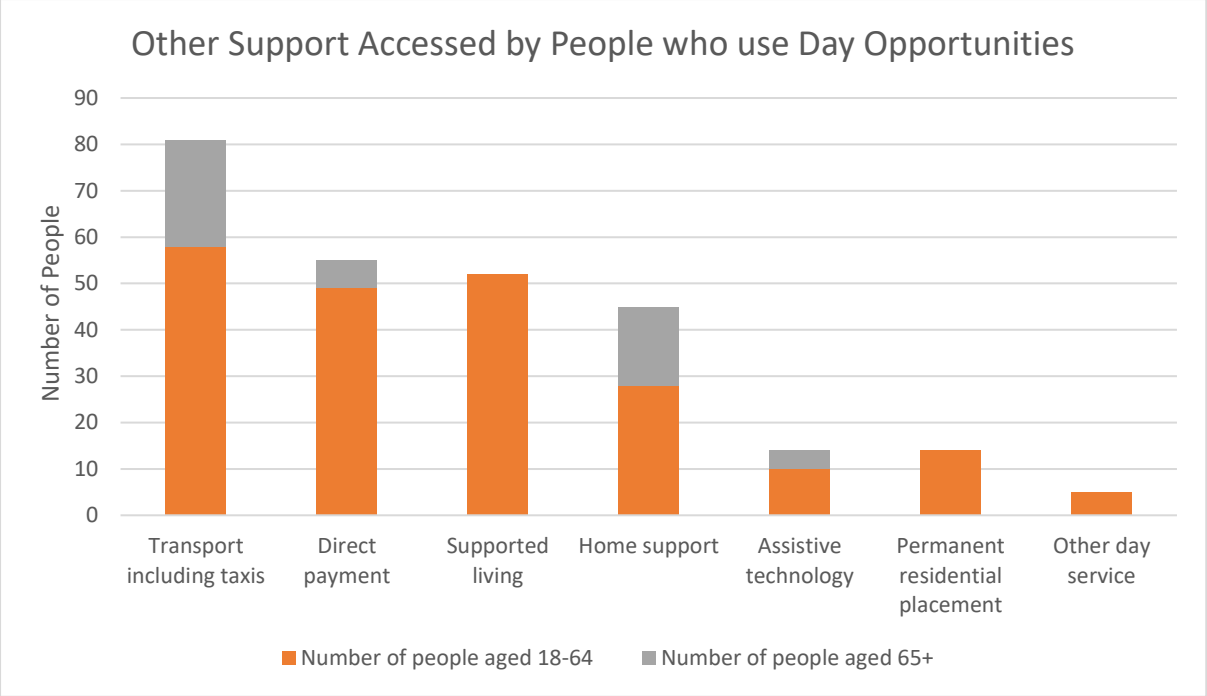
86% of people attending services are white, compared to the borough which is 89% white (according to 2011 census data – at time of writing 2021 breakdown not yet released). Given the age of the census data, it is likely that the balance of ethnicity attending services is a much better representation of the current ethnic mix of Solihull. The 2021 census results will help to confirm this. However, given 3% did not disclose there could be further work to do to ensure that services are accessible and meeting the needs of all groups.



People accessing council commissioned day opportunities live across the borough, spread evenly across the borough's 17 wards. Compared to ward populations, it suggests that there is under-representation from some wards such as Blythe, Knowle and St Alphege, and over-representation from other such as Kingshurst and Fordbridge, and Olton. It is difficult to compare different factors such as rates of disability in each area with attendance at a day centre as numbers of people from each ward are small. It does appear that people from the less affluent wards in the north and west of the borough are more likely to attend a centre, which may reflect higher levels of health and care needs of the people in these wards; or it may be that people in the more affluent wards are less likely to use Council services as they are able to access support independently. The chart below shows the number of people attending day centres, sorted by most deprived to most affluent (with averages for broader areas).



79% of people attending day opportunities also access other services as part of their care and support plans. The most common other support is listed below. Note that this adds up to more than the total number of people receiving services because some people access several different services.

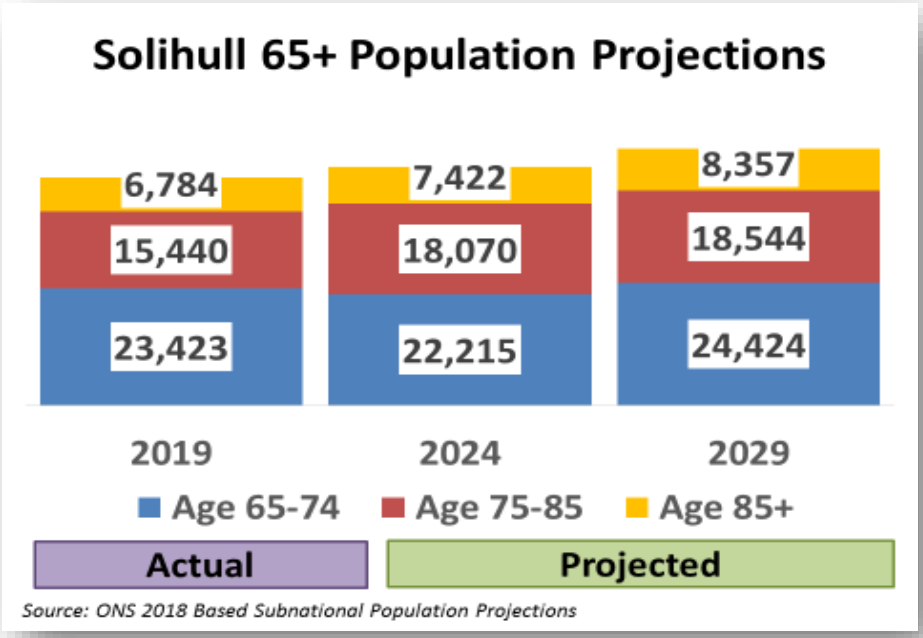


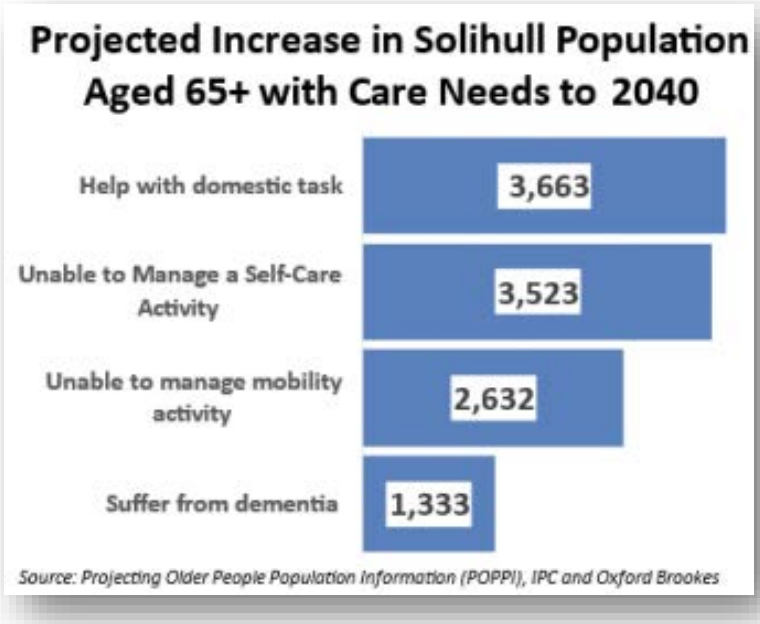
A number of people in supported living or residential care access day opportunities (or were doing so prior to the pandemic) which suggests that not all their needs are met by the support associated with their housing.

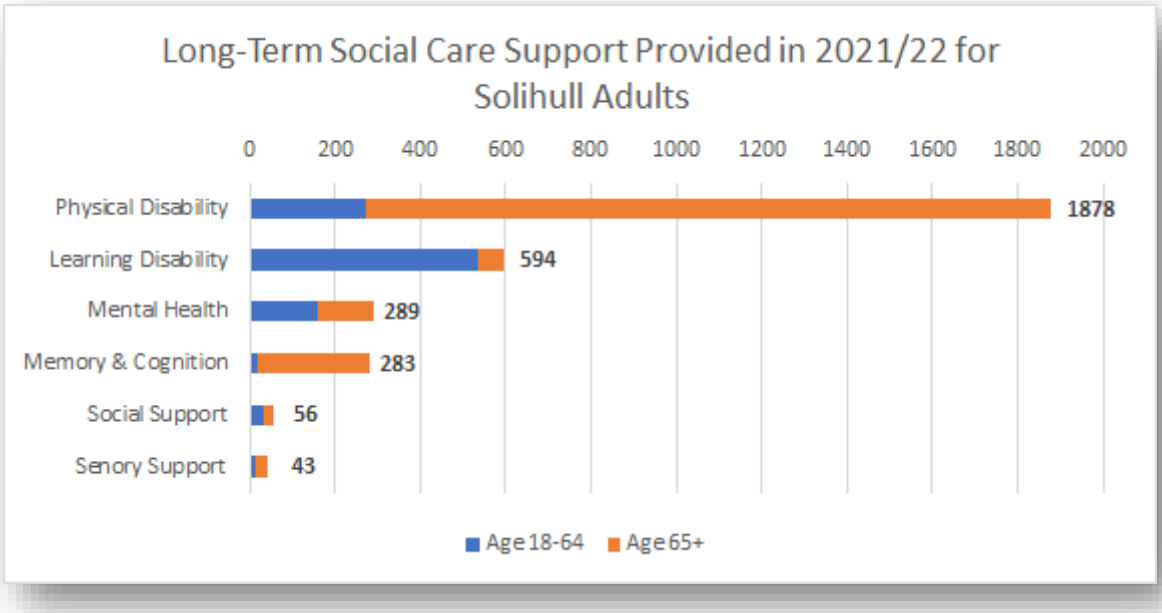
Estimates of future need

The Story of Solihull 2020 highlights key trends in the Solihull population and looks at the characteristics of people in Solihull and Solihull communities as a place to live. Some of those trends which need to be considered when planning day opportunities in the future are:

- An older and ageing population, with rising health and social care needs: proportionally a larger proportion of the Solihull population is aged 65 and over than England. This age group is the fastest growing population cohort and is projected to be so over the next 10 years. Solihull's older population is rapidly increasing and by 2030 it is projected that the number of people in Solihull aged 75+ with dementia will rise by 31% and those unable to manage a self-care activity by 29%. This means that demand for older people's day opportunities may increase, especially for specialist dementia support.

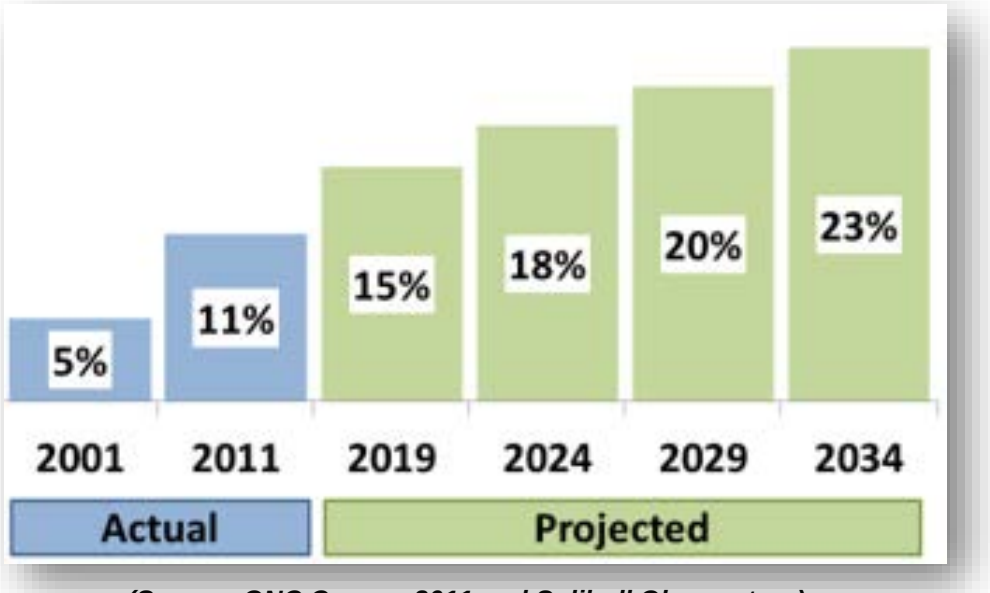






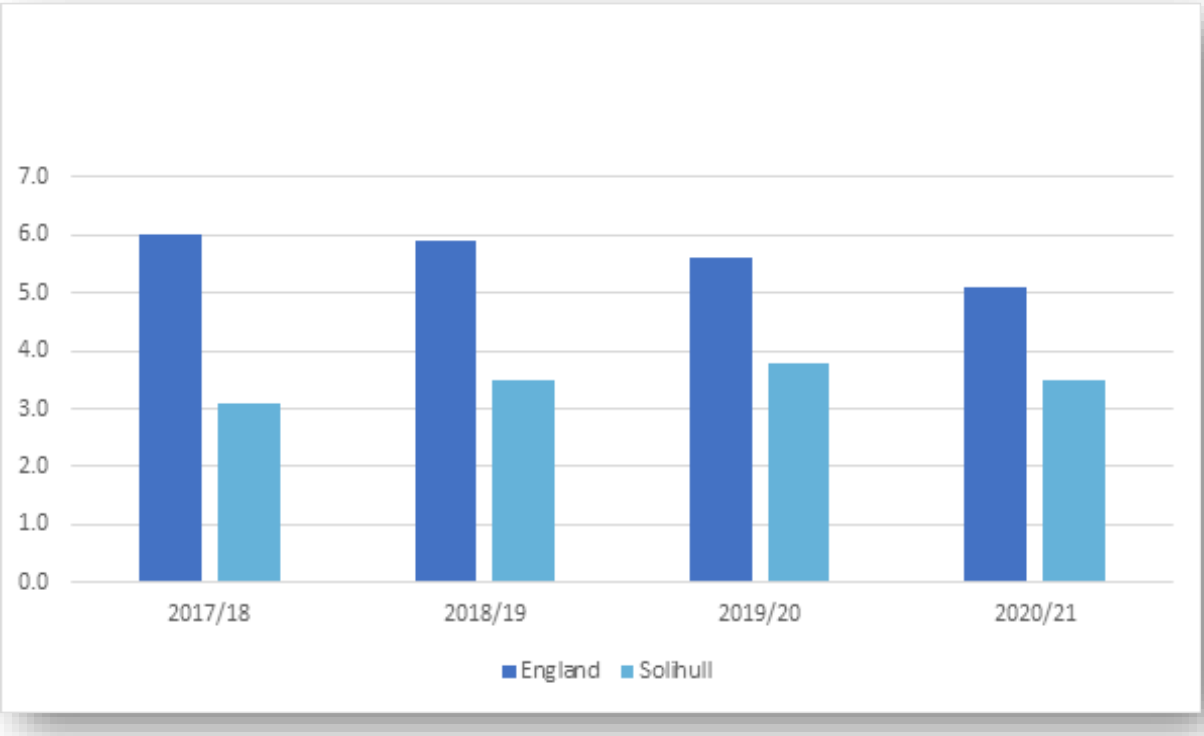
- Increasingly diverse communities: Solihull's population is becoming more ethnically diverse, with a wider range of cultures and languages than before. When commissioning day opportunities in the future, we need to ensure that our services reflect the needs of people from different communities. This will mean working with more services offered in and by communities themselves and ensuring that we talk to people attending Council services to find out what people want from these services, and that they are meeting their cultural and other needs.

Proportion of people in Solihull from ethnic minorities



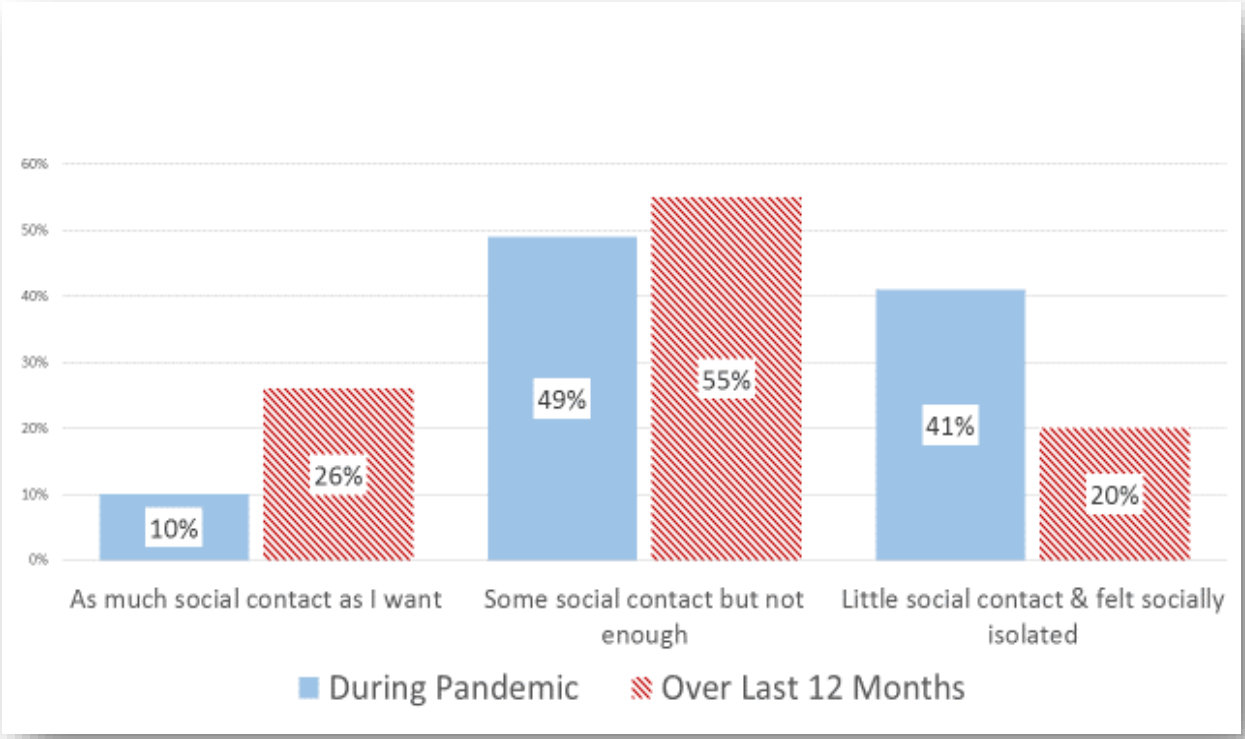
(Source: ONC Census 2011 and Solihull Observatory)

- Solihull has one of the most productive and fastest growing economies in the UK but the number of people with a learning disability in employment is below the national average. Current services support with some life skills training, such as travel training, but there is a role for day opportunities to support people to become 'work ready' before they access more specialist services such as the Supported Employment Service.



(Source: NHS Digital Adult Social Care Outcome Framework)

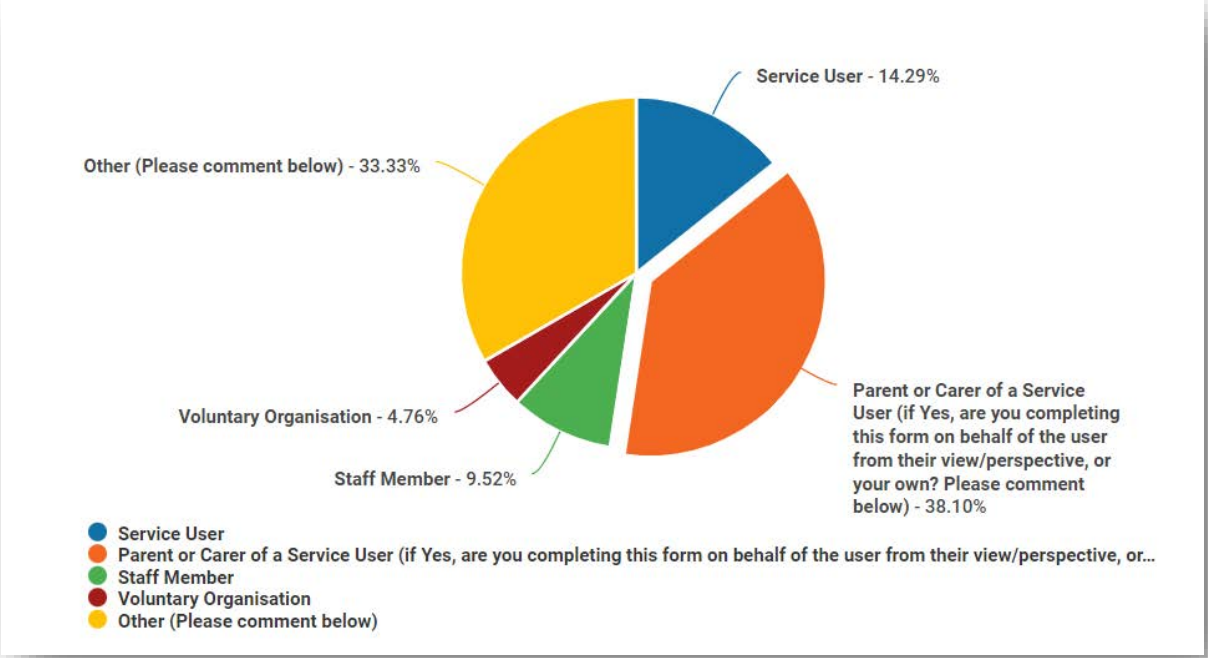
- Carers play a vital role in supporting the care needs of the Solihull population. In the 2011 census, 12% of the Solihull population classified themselves as a carer (24,000 people), with one in five of these providing care for 50 hours or more a week. The latter group tends to be over 65 and are more likely to have health needs of their own. Day opportunities provide respite for carers but may need to be more flexible and available weekends and evening. The extract from the carers survey below shows the isolation that carers feel, and the need to have breaks so they can main their social connections.



- Overall, these changes in population are likely to mean an increase in people requiring support from day opportunities, whether delivered from a set physical location or provided within the community. The largest area of increase will be for the over 75s, where the need to prevent loneliness and isolation amongst those with care and support needs is likely to drive demand. This will be addressed through the development of greater community options and stimulation of community groups, as well as through commissioned services. There will be a key role of supporting people to connect to the groups and the opportunities that are around them and raising awareness of what is available.

Engagement to develop the strategy

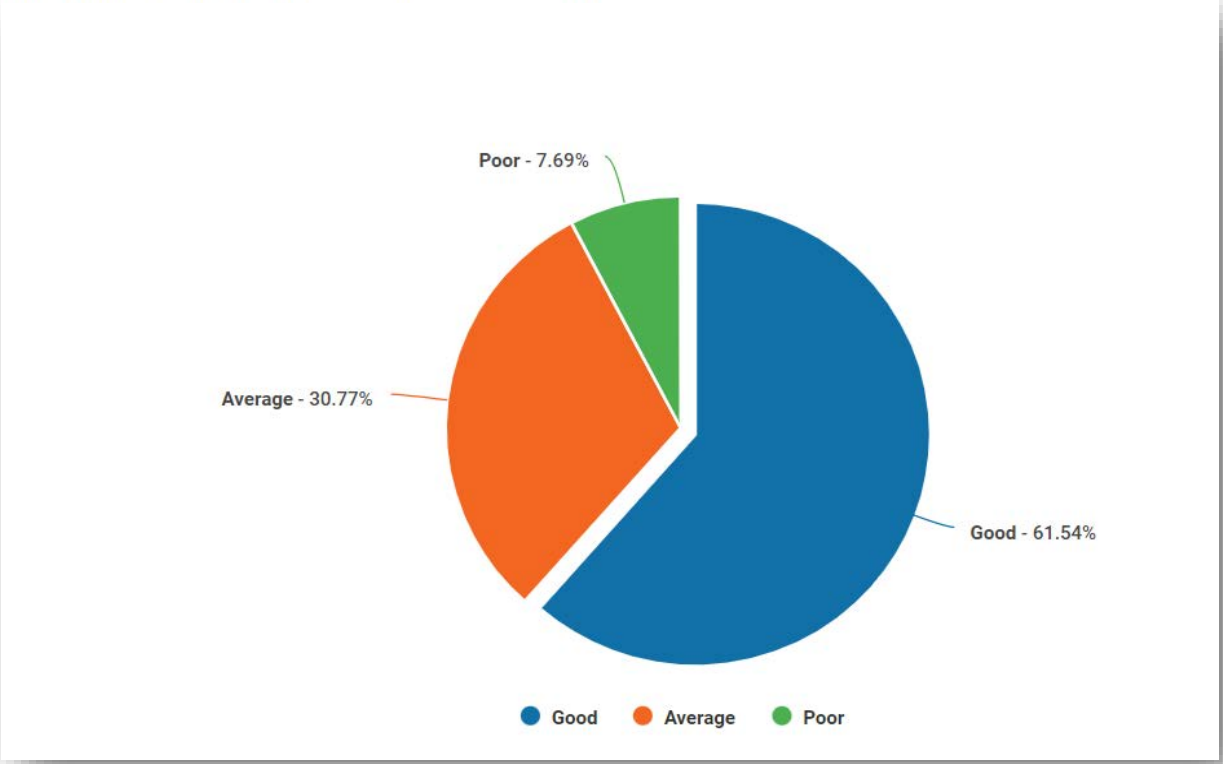
Two surveys were developed to engage with people; one with those who have accessed day opportunities or may in the future and their carers, and another with people who work in day opportunities.



In the chart above, “other” includes interested professionals and individuals who do not currently access day opportunities but do access other support (formal and informal care). Where parent or carers responded, 8 responded as themselves and 3 were supporting the person they care for to respond.

52 people answered the user and carer survey and 13 people completed the provider survey. Of these 17 people, users, carers and staff working in services, indicated that they would be willing to answer more detailed questions, and or take part in a discussion group. These individuals were invited to be part a Reference Group. After the findings of the two surveys were collated, themes were drawn from what people said. These themes and the implementation plan for taking day opportunities forward was discussed with the Refence Group.

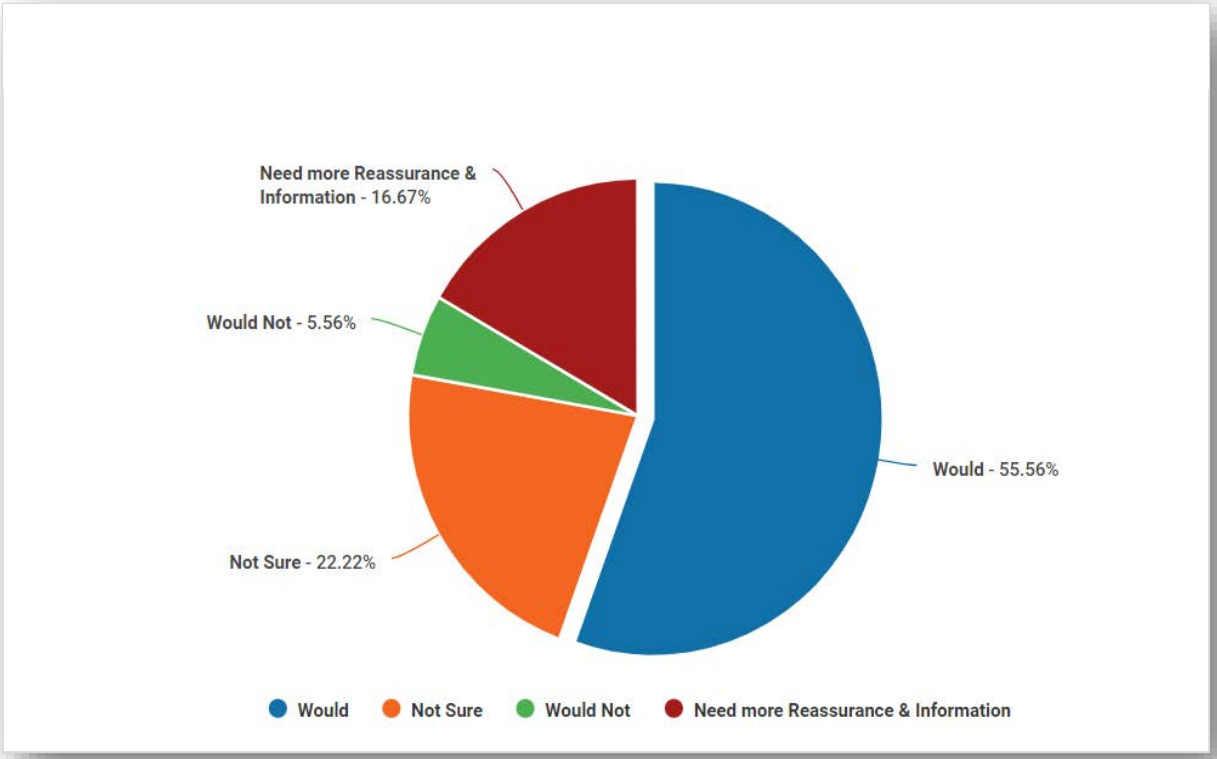
Most people use day opportunities for socialising, activities or carer respite, and the vast majority (92%) use services weekly. 85% of people found that the times were largely suitable to them, and 82% liked the services provided. Many people commented on how they liked the staff, the ‘community’ feel of the groups and that the services are good for their mental health. They also like the structure of the sessions, the opportunity to socialise and make friendships, plus the variety of activities.



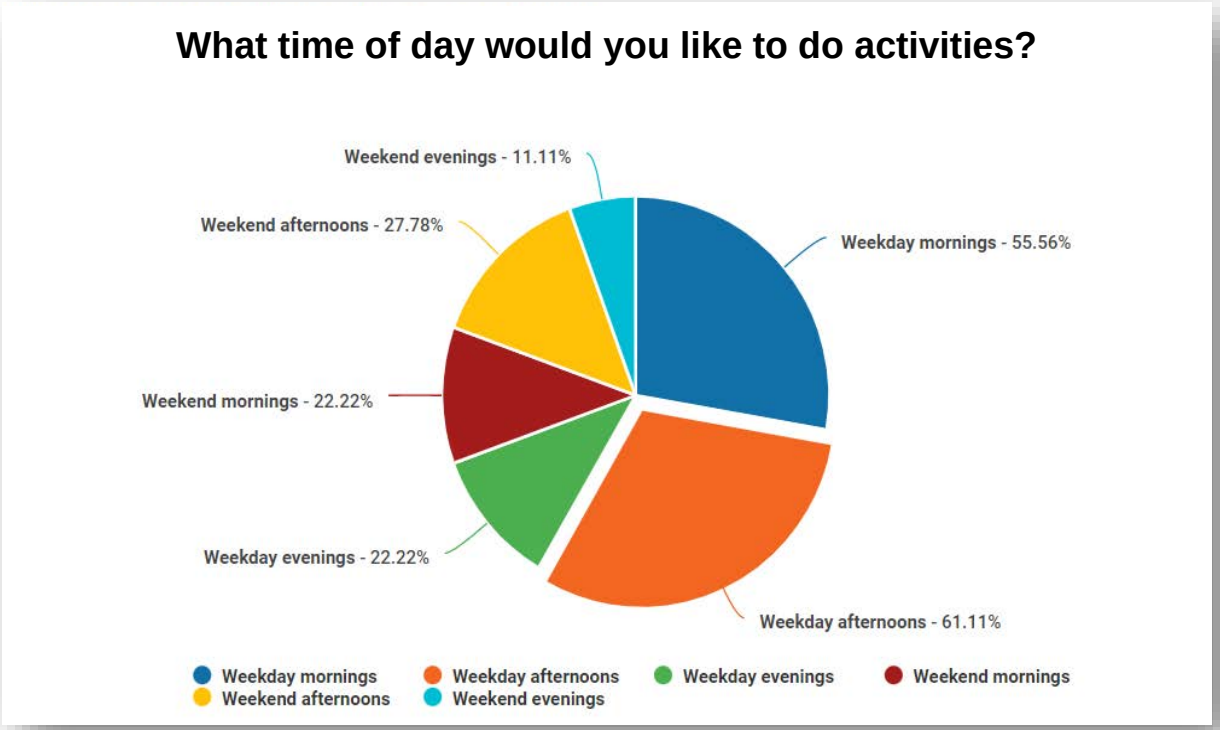
Some people had problems with the times sessions were held – some specifically asked for more weekend and evening whilst one found it 'ageist.' There were issues for some around transport and parking. Some people commented that when sessions are cancelled or changed, they do not like these disruptions as structure and routine are important to them.

Most people answering the survey live in supported housing or in an adapted home, and six people had a personal assistant. Most socialised or had hobbies outside of day services, some going to social clubs rather than using a formal service. 74% need extra support to access day services. This is mostly provided by carers (incl. spouses, parents as well as professionals).

Participants were asked how they felt about day opportunities and whether they were confident accessing them after the pandemic. The chart below shows that as many did not have access to their communities or activities during the pandemic and had to stay at home, 76% of those who accessed day opportunities before would do so again. The same number wanted safety measures to continue.



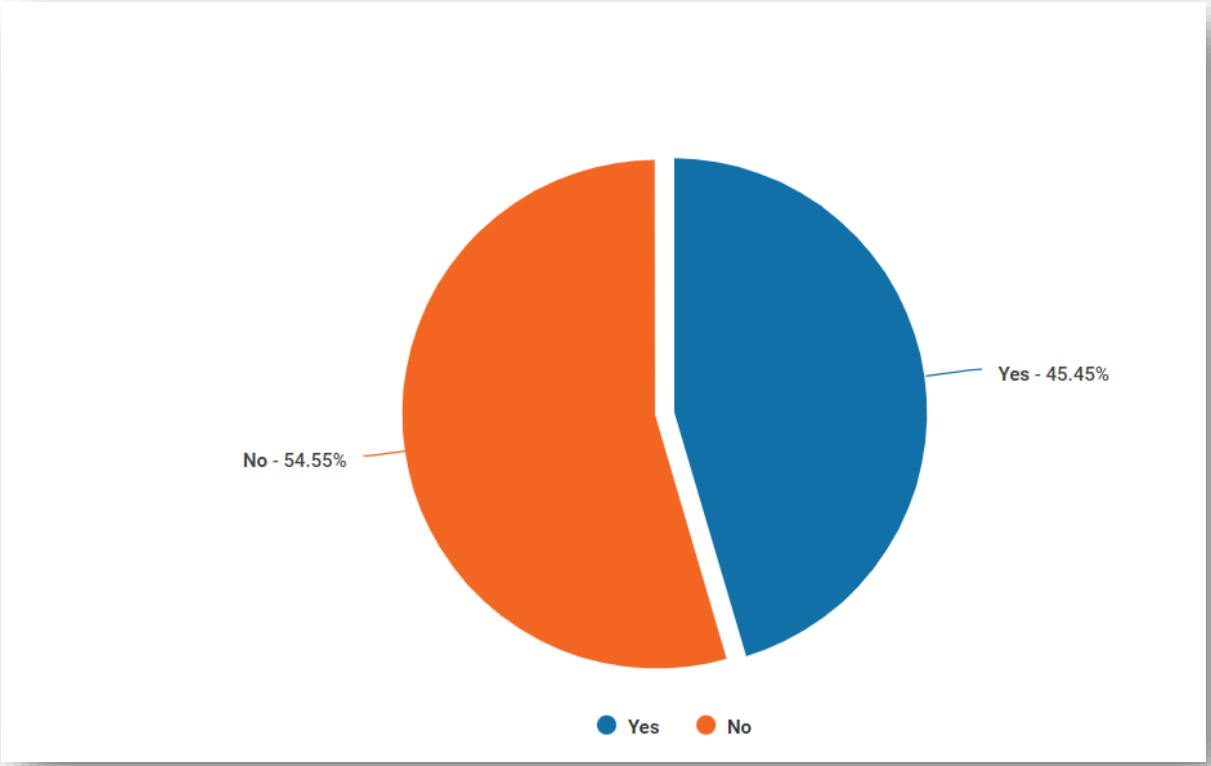
82% want to use in-person day opportunities and, if restrictions were re-imposed, 56% would not want services to go back online-only. 28% would consider such an option. However, many have the technology (tablet, laptop) to do online activities.



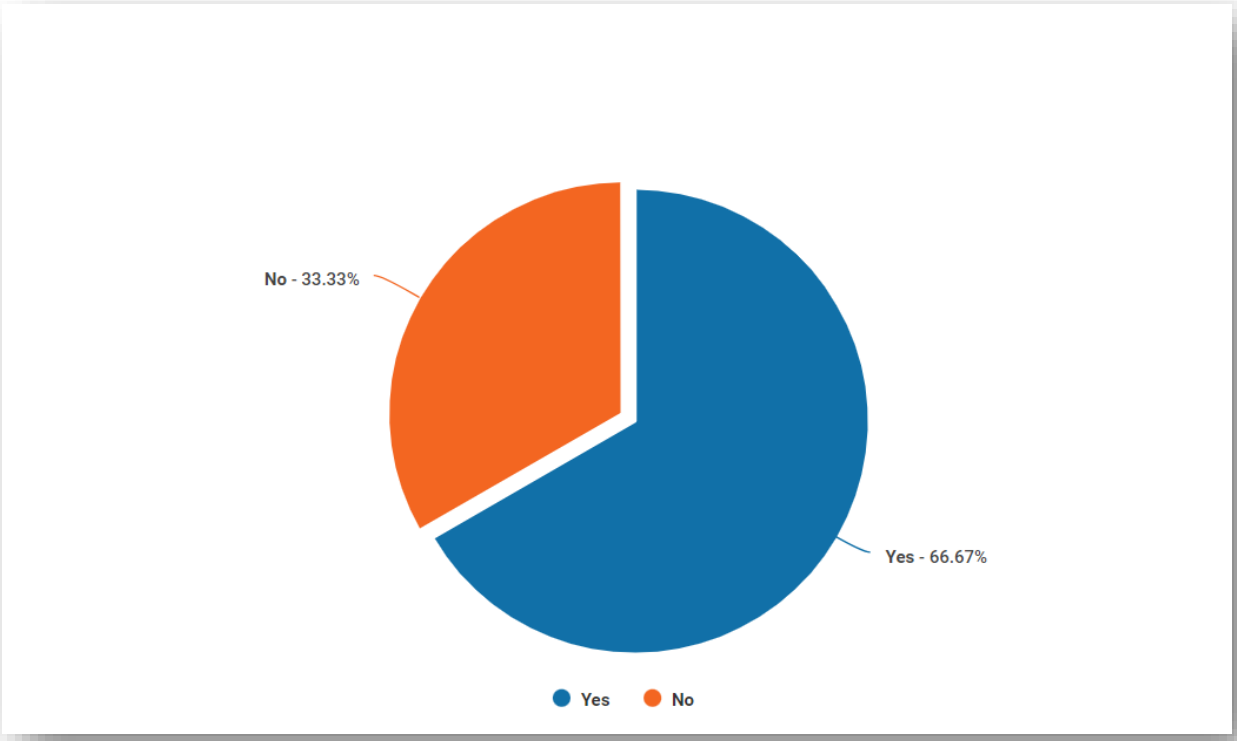
64% people said that they want to do activities on weekday mornings or afternoons, though there is support for weekend services (including evenings). There is a fairly even split between those that have/don't have their own transport, but 80% do not have any access to public transport. Most people (52%) said that they want to pay less than £50 to access services and only five people would pay more. 69% want to pay £5-£10 for transport with few wanting to go higher.

Findings of provider survey

Most day opportunity providers who responded provide a wide range of activities, many of them sports or physical activities. Some offer life skills, for example, travel training, and one offers music services. 66% offer activities that take people outside the regular meeting location, and many (55%) offer activities outside of weekday daytimes. They report that some users require financial help, especially with transport costs.



Most providers reported that lots of people attend their services (up to 60 people), and that they feel very engaged with parents and carers in developing their programme. Preferred methods of communications are meetings, phone calls, paper, social media.



Events have mostly been organised on a 1-2-1 basis since restrictions eased. They have been socially distanced and mostly outdoors. Many providers now want to go back to normal services. 73% do not want even a temporary return to online services. However, a move to more flexible services would be welcomed as well as offering more activities for self-funders and families.

Findings of user and carer survey

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Themes from engagement

Overall, peoples' feedback was positive about the day opportunities available in Solihull. Services are generally good quality, offer a wide range of activities and support people to be part of the communities they live in. Many people were unaware of what was available or how day opportunities have changed from traditional day services. Some people would like more choice and more flexibility, for example, different days, times or half-day sessions. After centres were closed during lockdown, most people would like to go back to face-to-face activities with infection control measures in place until people feel it is safe to lift them.

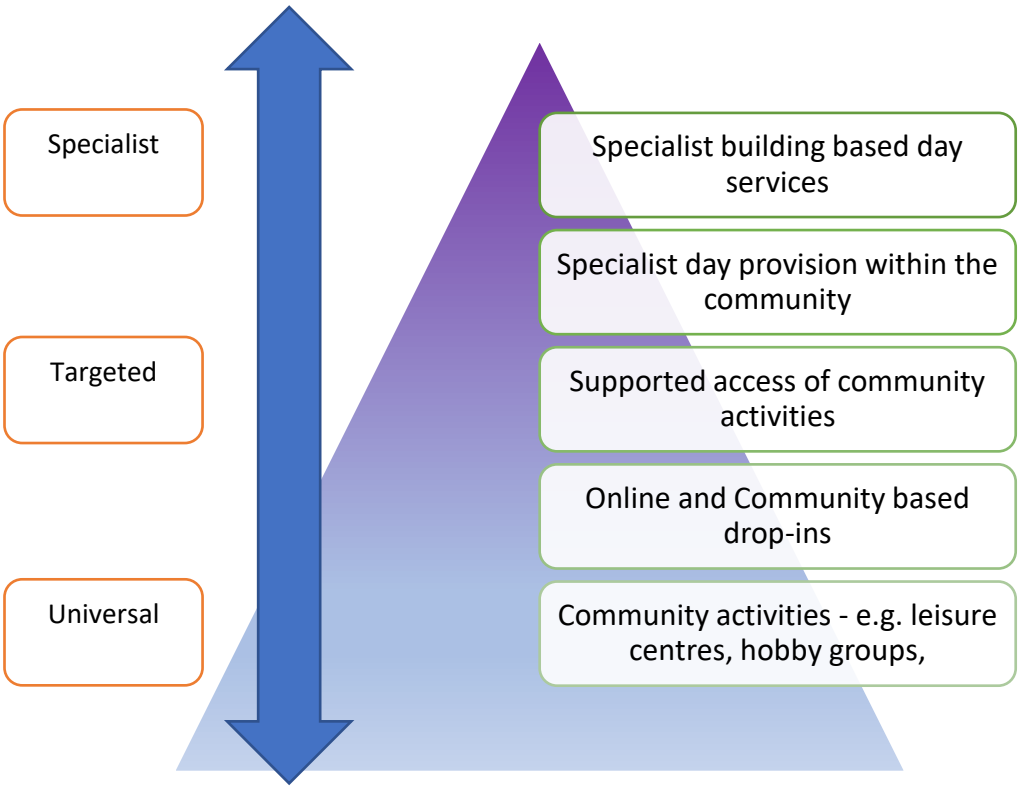
Drawn from the public engagement, the key themes for maintaining and improving day opportunities in Solihull are:

- Ensuring quality.

- Improving awareness and understanding of what services are available and what they do.
- Improving flexibility to meet people's needs.

How Day Opportunities in Solihull will Look

Our research and engagement show that there will need to be a mix of day opportunities which span a range of needs and desired outcomes. The diagram below sets out this pyramid of how these opportunities will meet different levels of need.



The other dimension is that people do not just want opportunities from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday – they want to participate in community activities which occur in the evenings and at weekends, and the services need to be more flexible to facilitate that, whilst retaining the weekday daytime choices for people who want that, and for whom day opportunities not only meet their needs, but the needs for their carers to have a break or to attend work.

Priorities

In order to deliver the vision, we have drawn on the themes from the public engagement to determine the following key priorities:

Ensuring good quality

Good-quality day opportunities are:

- an integral part of the communities in which they are based,
- person-centred with individuals able to choose which activities they participate in to meet their own outcomes,
- sufficient availability of services to meet the demand for them,
- flexible and creative to meet people's needs within a fixed budget.

The Council expects all day opportunities to be able to demonstrate how they achieve these standards for everyone who attends. The Council's own services already work to meet these standards and we expect the same level of quality from private or voluntary sector providers. We will be changing how we contract for day opportunities with private or voluntary sector organisations so that the Council can ensure that all our providers meet our expectations. The Council's Market Position Statement already indicates what providers will need to offer to work with us as part of our day opportunities in future. The Council will work with and support all organisations delivering day opportunities so that we can achieve high quality services together.

Improving awareness and understanding

Day opportunities can offer a wide range of support, but our engagement has suggested that many people aren't aware of all that they can offer. We will improve awareness by:

- working with Adult Social Care teams in the Council to ensure that when we are working on an individual's support plan, the role day opportunities can play in supporting them and their carers is considered,
- ensuring that there is wider understanding of day opportunities across Council teams so that all staff in public-facing roles can signpost people who may benefit from day opportunities,
- helping people to understand and navigate the community activities that are available which may be accessed independently or with a personal assistant's support, as alternatives to day centres which can help people build their interests and community networks,
- raising the profile of day opportunities to the public.

Improving flexibility of services

While a lot of people like the structure of the current services, the feedback told us that some people would value the opportunity to do more at weekends or in the evenings, and some people have trouble doing things at the times they would like due to difficulties with transport. Transport issues were raised by staff as well as people attending services. Services need to be more flexible and available when people need them, and there needs to be appropriate transport available to allow people to access those services.

There are opportunities to work within local communities to build options and awareness to reduce the dependence on travelling long distances for suitable activity options, and to provide that more flexible provision.

How are we measuring success?

If these actions are successful, we will expect to see:

- More people using day opportunities.
- More people telling us in the annual customer survey that their day opportunities are good or outstanding.
- More people with a learning disability in employment.
- An increase in referrals from day opportunities to the Supported Employment Service.
- More people responding to our customer survey saying that they have as much social contact as they would like.
- Providers engaged with our contract monitoring process and able to demonstrate person-centred, community-based services.

How this is going:

Area of Performance	**2021/22 Position**	**2024/25 Position**	**Commentary**
More people using day opportunities	220	314	This is a much faster rate of growth than the increase in people supported by social care as services have recovered from the pandemic impact
More people with a learning disability in employment	3.2%	7.5%	Providers engaged with our contract monitoring process and able to demonstrate person-centered, community-based services
More people responding to national social care survey saying that they have as much social contact as they would like	37.7%	45.9%	Note the latest information available at the time of writing is the 2023/24 score

Providers engaged with our contract monitoring process and able to demonstrate person-centred, community-based services	Spot purchasing of day care without clear person-centred requirements	Set of contracted providers who are demonstrating commitment to the values in this strategy	Work continues with providers to make sure that delivery is meeting the individual outcomes all the people who attend

Measures to be developed in 2025:

- More people telling us in the annual customer survey that providers undertake that their day opportunities are good or outstanding – this survey requirement has been introduced but requires 2 years for comparison.
- An increase in referrals from day opportunities to the Supported Employment Service – now the new services are in place referrals are being systematically captured so that performance can be reported.

Glossary

Adult Social Care / Adult Social Care / Adult Social Services

These terms are used according to context but mean the same thing for practical purposes. They refer to the delivery of the Care Act responsibilities for older people and younger adults with disabilities, and their carers.

Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) is a charity representing directors of adult social services in England and is a leading body on social care issues.

Day Opportunities / Day Services / Day Centres

These terms all refer to community building-based services that provide care services and/or activities for older people, disabled people or people who need extra support.

Direct Payments

A direct payment is the amount of money that the local council pays directly to somebody for them to arrange and pay for their own care and support services.

Domiciliary Care (also known as Care at Home / Homecare)

These terms refer to the care and support provided by a professional paid carer in an individual's own home.

Housing with care (also known as extra care housing)

Housing with care combines purpose-built, self-contained accommodation (one or two bedrooms) with onsite care and support services.

National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI)

A social change organisation working to enable people at risk of exclusion, due to age or disability, to live the life they choose.

Personal Assistant

Personal Assistants are employed directly by a person who needs care and support and who manages and pays for this themselves or through a Direct Payment and supports them with various aspects of their daily life.

Supported Living

Supported living is a service designed to help people with a wide range of support needs retain their independence by being supported in their own home.