

# The Future of Devon County Council Adult Day Services

## Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

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### 1. Recommendation

That the Cabinet be asked to:

- a) Consider the information in this report relating to the rationale for change and the consultation process, and agree the recommendation to close the Learning Disability and Older Persons Services listed below, which currently have one or no people attending. The usage rates are not the only reason prompting this recommendation.

#### **Learning Disability Services**

Lyric, Okehampton  
Newholme, Honiton  
Rosalind House, Tiverton  
Silverhill, Barnstaple  
Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge

#### **Older Persons Services**

Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge

### 2. Background

2.1 The recommendation to close these services stems from the following changes first introduced in 2014 and followed by various consultations, engagement strategies and service changes with the most recent being in 2023. Integrated Adult Social Care remains committed to promoting an individual's independence and their access to community opportunities to meet their varying needs in different ways.

2.2 In 2014, Devon's Community Life Choices Strategy recommended the modernisation of the day opportunity offer based upon:

- a) The changing needs and demands of vulnerable people for a more flexible range of community-based day opportunities and increased choice (evidenced by an increased use of community services funded by personal budgets);

b) Falling demand for traditional service models which are seen as not fitting the needs and circumstances of vulnerable people and their carers. Overall attendances at day centres had been falling. The increasing numbers of personal budgets have accelerated this trend.

2.3 At this time, a full review of Devon County Council's (DCC) adult day services was completed. A total of 30 consultation meetings were held across Devon to enable service users, carers, councillors, staff and stakeholders to comment on the proposals for each day centre. Feedback was received from face-to-face meetings with 775 service users, carers and stakeholders, 264 completed questionnaires and 627 written responses. Several themes emerged from this feedback including the value of the current provision, socialisation and familiarity, the impact on vulnerable adults and risk of isolation, the lack of alternative provision and the impact on carers respite.

2.4 This feedback helped to inform the identification of a series of updated recommendations that were agreed at a full council meeting in May 2014 and endorsed by Cabinet in June 2014. The final recommendations of the report clearly stated that 'DCC will cease to be a provider of day services for older people and adults with a learning disability, except in areas of insufficient alternative supply and where there are no providers expressing an interest in expanding local provision'. Additionally, it recommended that, 'DCC should use its resources in the most cost-effective way and continue to support vulnerable individuals who are eligible for day services'. It was recommended and agreed that most services are commissioned from the independent sector.

2.5 In 2017, a series of engagement events ran across the county with the service users, parents / carers and staff of the councils learning disability day opportunity and respite centres. Service users, carers, staff and stakeholders were asked *What is important; what do you enjoy doing; what else would you like to do; and if you have any bright ideas?* The feedback received focused on the importance of stimulation and included the types of activities people wanted to experience. Additionally, having a safe, familiar, and respectful environment offering flexible opening hours and high-quality support. It was clear that carers found the day centres invaluable as they could have a break from their caring role and focus on other household priorities.

2.6 A series of follow up events took place during June and July of 2018 where DCC Officers shared their thinking and tested out whether the ideas reflected what people attending the services, families and staff said at the events.

2.7 Attendees at these events confirmed:

- Positive feedback relating to defining outcomes in an improved way with a focus on more specific and realistic goals.
- Promoting independence for all, including people with the most complex needs is important to carers, family members and staff.
- The importance of providing support for people with complex needs.
- The importance of carers being kept well informed.

2.8 In recent years, the support to disabled people has expanded with the Council's Reaching for Independence (RFI) service which began operating in April 2019. The RFI service promotes and enables more community inclusion through access to everyday community resources and employment opportunities.

- 2.9 In March 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic halted all provision of day services, including the DCC directly provided services. Family members generally looked after their loved ones at home, until government guidance evolved to a point at which services could restart.
- 2.10 When government guidance altered to the point where it was possible to recommence day services in July 2021, the numbers attending were very much lower than had been attending pre pandemic. This was for a number of reasons such as:
- The individual had moved into supported living.
  - The individual had found preferred alternative things to do.
  - The individual had found employment,
  - The individual was using a Personal Assistant (PA) to support them in more community-based activity.
  - Unfortunately, one individual died.
  - There was increased capacity available in the independent market and few new referrals into the current services.
- 2.11 Others may well have different views as to the reasons for this, for example that reduced awareness of these services may have impacted on the take up at that time. The numbers returning are detailed in the next section but represented a 78% reduction from pre-pandemic numbers.
- 2.12 In July 2022, a family representative from each of the active day services was invited to a co-production event, to explore future options for day services. Information about the take up of services, as business returned to normal, following the pandemic was shared. At that time, 7 attendees had returned to Rushbrook, 5 attendees to Abbey Rise, 5 attendees to Nichols, and 2 attendees to Rosalind House. Participants were asked to consider the low numbers of attendees at services offered and additionally to consider options which would maintain the quality of the provision whilst achieving the best use of the public purse.
- 2.13 Following this event, a public consultation paper was written, describing a proposal to reduced days of opening, with higher numbers of people attending services each day and to close other day services. This public consultation was launched in February 2023, on the future of DCC Adult Day services. However, this process was halted midway to enable the Council to carefully review the comments raised from stakeholders. This led to a revised approach, with a new consultation on the future of DCC Adult Day services being launched on the 14 November 2023.
- 2.14 In November 2023, DCC launched a consultation on the future of the following specific in-house day services.

**Learning Disability Services**

- Lyric, Okehampton
- Newholme, Honiton
- Rosalind House, Tiverton
- Silverhill, Barnstaple
- Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge

## **Older Persons Services**

- Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge

2.15 Section 5 of this report describes the process and the feedback received, and how this has helped to inform the recommendations within this paper.

## **3. Proposal**

3.1 The proposal is that DCC withdraw from the direct provision of the in-house day services listed in section 12 of this paper. The full recommendations formed are presented in section 12 for due consideration and, if appropriate, approval.

### **In-house provision**

3.2 Currently, DCC operates 10 in-house day care services over eight sites. The services proposed for closure currently have no people in attendance, except for Rosalind House, which has one person, albeit the individual is currently accessing another service.

3.3 The number of eligible people accessing the Councils in-house learning disability day services has reduced in the last eight years. From 116 in 2015, to 85 in 2020. Current attendance is now at twelve people, these twelve people are accessing four services (Abbey Rise, Nichols, Rosalind House, and Rushbrook), albeit the individual accessing Rosalind House is currently accessing another service. It may be thought that these services would gain users in the future if they were promoted. However, the research suggests this will not be the case because the numbers coming through are likely to remain at relatively consistent levels and people's expectations of how outcomes can be met have changed.

3.4 The detail of the building provision is contained in Appendix C.

### **Current and future need and supply**

3.5 The Council has recently undertaken a needs assessment and gained a better understanding of day service supply across Devon.

3.6 The findings indicate that the number of people with autism, emotional and mental health needs, and needs associated with their speech and language will increase. The needs assessment suggests that current and projected future demand for people eligible for these services should be able to be adequately met by the independent and voluntary sector. The assessment includes a series of maps outlining the alternative day services supply estimated to be within a 30-minute drive of each of the in-house centres in scope.

3.7 The future requirement for day services for people (18 - 64 years) with a learning disability has been calculated using activity data from the recent past. It shows that approximately 204 to 246 individuals with a learning disability are likely to require day opportunities support in the next few years.

3.8 When reviewing young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), those people with the area of need of severe or profound learning disability is predicted to remain consistent over future years. There is greater growth in the moderate learning disability area of need. This area encompasses a broad spectrum of needs.

- 3.9 When tracking young people with an EHCP for moderate learning disability (MLD) into adult day services, we found few individuals' needed day services. Specifically, in 2016, of 47 people with a MLD, 2 people went on to receive a day service. In 2023, of the 152 with a MLD, 8 people went on to receive a day service from adult social care. Therefore, historically, most young people within this EHCP area of need have not required a day service on transitioning from children's into adult's services. This data suggests that the numbers of people with a learning disability who require a day service are not likely to increase significantly. There may be people who would disagree with this analysis, but the evidence is believed to be one reason why there are low numbers coming through the service at this point in time.
- 3.10 The PANSI (Predicting Adult Needs and Service Information system) methodology for predicting population growth, suggests that numbers of all individuals with a moderate to severe learning disability in Devon will increase from a baseline of 2499 in 2020, to 2567 in 2025, and up to 2674 in 2040 (age range 18 to 64 years).
- 3.11 The Council currently commissions 81 independent sector providers, to deliver day services in Devon, and 53 of these services support individuals with a learning disability.
- 3.12 There are currently approximately 481 people receiving a day service in Devon (In-house and commissioned services). Of those receiving a day service approximately 253 people have a learning disability, 169 people are aged 65+ and 69 people have other types of needs e.g.: they require mental health support or have a physical disability.
- 3.13 Prior to the pandemic DCC saw an overall reduction in the number of people using the inhouse learning disability day services. This is in line with the strategies described in section 2. Since the pandemic the numbers of individuals using a day opportunity with an eligible need has increased. The independent market has been able to accommodate this demand (See Appendix B).

### **National research**

- 3.14 A brief scoping review to examine the extent, range, and nature of research activity on adult social care day service provision in the UK was conducted. The reason for the review was to identify key factors within the provision from 2011 to present day. Data was collected from national and local engagement groups, academic research, and reports from the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association Directors of Adult Social Service (ADASS). Academic research on the topic was found to be sparse. However, key factors found from within the data explored, demonstrate a changing pattern of day service provision. More specifically, a reduction in traditional day service provision is leading to new models of day care emerging.
- 3.15 In January 2023, the LGA published a report on bespoke support for people with learning difficulties and autistic people. The report explores 'new, current, and emerging models of support for autistic people and people with a learning disability to assess efficiency and effectiveness in meeting individuals' aspirations; that draw on care and support which upholds human rights, enables citizenship, and empowers people to have choice and control over their lives and the impact this has on outcomes'. This report is narrative based and draws on lived experiences from people with learning disabilities and autism, their families and relevant support organisations to offer both best practice and potential long-term solutions.
- 3.16 Additionally, the provider market appears willing to work in this bespoke way but needs support from commissioning to do things differently, demonstrating change is occurring away from traditional ways of day care.

## Feedback: Public consultation on the future of Devon County Councils adult day services

- 3.17 DCC have received twenty-one written responses and seventeen attendees at the consultation meetings relating to the future of these services. DCC made significant efforts to publicise this consultation widely (see below) and thirty-eight responses were received. DCC expected to hear from people who may have or intended to use these services in the future. DCC reached out to the Learning Disability Partnership Board which is a representative body of people who may use the service and the consultation was communicated, with relevant accessible information, across a wide range of networks and organisations.
- 3.18 There was no strong consensus towards any of the options described below. Feedback from this consultation can be found in Section 6 of this report. The full feedback report from Living Options Devon is contained in appendix A.
- 3.19 Living Options Devon is an independent user-led organisation that supports disabled people and Deaf British Sign Language users. DCC commissioned the organisation to undertake the engagement sessions and construct an independent report on their findings.

## 4. Options / Alternatives

4.1 The options identified for the in-house day services that were considered as part of the considered were as follows:

Option	Description
1	To continue to operate all six in-house day services in five locations for five days per week.
2	To continue to operate all six in-house day services in five locations, and operate some, or all units, on a reduced number of days.
3	To continue to operate some of the six in-house day services in five locations for five days per week and cease providing services from the other units.
4	To continue to operate some of the six in-house day services in five locations and cease providing services from the others. Those that remain open, to operate some, or all units on a reduced number of days.
5	To cease providing day services from all six of the in-house day services in the five locations.

4.2 Further options were suggested by those who responded to the consultation:

- A sub-lease to the community would enable services to be expanded and prevent this valuable community space where one of the centres is currently hosted from being lost
- Request additional funding for this service from central government.
- Providing an individual one to one service provision to the current single user and close the centres.
- Make the day care provision properly funded and user centric - so that users can choose what the group does.
- Having the six services and five locations on a rolling rota so 1-2 a week offered somewhere at these locations.

4.3 Whilst the alternatives were carefully considered, option 5 was chosen as the preferred option for the reasons described within this report.

4.4 DCC will continue to comply with its obligation to meet a person's eligible needs, following a Care Act assessment and support plan.

## 5. Consultation

5.1 The public consultation commenced on 14th November 2023. A series of engagement events were hosted by Living Options on behalf of DCC. In total, 17 people attended the focus groups (5 in person and 2 on-line). Figure 1 below provides a breakdown of those who booked and those who attended.

Location and date	Number booked	Attendees
Tiverton 20/11/23	2	0
Honiton 21/11/23	0	0
Barnstaple 27/11/23	5	1 parent carer 3 providers
Kingsbridge 04/12/23	3	2 parent carers 1 DCC staff member 1 member of the public
Okehampton 05/12/23	1	1 provider
Online 05/11/23	4	1 parent carer 1 educator 1 Day Centre professional 1 Councillor
Online 15/01/24	9	2 providers 1 charity lead 1 Councillor
<b>Total attendees</b>		<b>17</b>

Figure 1: Attendance

5.2 Living Options found that several people had not read the document prior to the meetings. However, at the start of every focus group Living Options went through a short summary presentation of the consultation document to aid understanding.

5.3 Information about the consultation was sent by DCC to the family of the one registered user of these DCC day centres and to families of the people who attend other DCC in-house day centres.

5.4 The consultation was communicated, with relevant accessible information, across a wide range of networks and organisations. This included through specialist schools, the Provider Engagement Network, SEND website, the Parent Carer forum, the Have your say DCC webpages, social media and through other key organisations.

5.5 The consultation document and draft impact assessment were published on the DCC website. The website enabled any member of the public to complete the consultation questionnaire online and submit electronically. Paper copies were available on request and could be sent via post, or could be downloaded. A Frequently Asked Questions document was added to the webpage following the engagement sessions to ensure answers to any questions raised were available to all.

## 6. Feedback

6.1 In total DCC received 10 email responses and 11 on-line responses about the consultation. This was in addition to the 17 people who attended the focus groups.

6.2 The following table shows the themes that emerged from the focus groups, that were organised by Living Options, and the number of times that the respective themes were mentioned:

ID	Emerging Theme	Times mentioned in the consultation
1	Person centred care is still key and the need to consider respite needs; the impact of new routines; people's complex needs; and support for mental health	In all 5 Focus Groups 14 comments
2	Assessment of need- concerns raised about the perceived increasing thresholds to access funding for day activity provision and addressing unmet need	In 4 Focus Groups 12 comments
3	Minimal communication, (particularly by social care practitioners) about decisions; alternative provision; and signposting to other services	In all 5 Focus Groups 13 comments
4	Funding / provision being reduced because of increasing staffing and transport costs.	In 4 Focus Groups 12 comments
5	Impact of travel - having to travel longer distances to alternative provision is often a challenge to coordinate and a further demand on parent/carers time	In 3 Focus Groups 10 Comments
6	Awareness of alternatives - it was consistently reported that providers don't know the details of alternative provision.	In 3 Focus Groups 10 comments
7	Quality of provision - concerns about PA support and the lack of regulation in comparison to CQC regulated care home provision.	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments
8	Impact of transition between CYP and adult services - concerns that the transition between CYP and adult services is not thorough enough, particularly in respect of health needs	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments
9	Funding - complexities on managing direct payments, of how health needs are funded and the lack of funding to help tackle loneliness for example	In 4 Focus Groups 9 comments
10	Provider involvement - providers commented that they are not included in ASC annual reviews despite service users being at their service daily	In 2 Focus Groups 4 comments
11	Awareness of provision - Professionals are needing to search for diverse day services when young people leave school provision. It was reported to be a struggle to find where these services are and how young people will be supported.	In 4 Focus Groups 8 Comments
12	Provision for complex care needs - there were concerns that this proposal could discriminate against those who need personal care and / or are most severely disabled.	In 4 Focus Groups 9 comments
13	Importance of peer interaction - peer interaction is so important and 1 to 1 enablers are not always able to provide this.	In 3 Focus Groups 12 comments

ID	Emerging Theme	Times mentioned in the consultation
14	Service gap between children's and adult services. Discrepancies are not often explained to parents and who are not always aware of entitlement	In 3 Focus Group 8 comments
15	Geographical need - Devon is a rural county. With the alternative provision detailed on the maps clustered around the larger towns what is there for anyone who can't access these?	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments
16	Reasons for low attendance at the day centres - there was a consistent view that the reasons for low attendee numbers should be explored and there must not be an assumption made that needs are being met just because people are not turning up to these services.	In all 5 focus groups 14 comments
17	Staff and facilities - there was a consensus that staff should be appropriately redeployed if provision is being reduced and that the already accessible and adapted buildings should still be utilised, whether this is via the county council or in the VCSE sector.	In 4 focus groups 6 comments
18	Holistic approach - It was agreed that any changes to provision will impact the whole family, and so any assessment of need must be holistic.	In all 5 focus groups 15 comments
19	Prevention - regardless of provision, a consistent theme was that prevention is key. It is essential to "actually meet people's needs" before crises start. The transition between children and adult services is particularly key.	In 4 focus groups 13 comments
20	Transparency - it was widely requested that, whatever the next steps are in the consultation, that DCC are transparent about the decisions made.	In 3 focus groups 6 comments

6.3 The feedback through the Living Options paper is participants consistently found the final question of Day Centre closure options hard to answer. Example responses:

*"No options on that sheet are good. If these services are taken away the families will have to provide these things and they're under enough stress at the moment."*

*"If there are no plans to recruit actively for new service users then option 5 as there is no point. If actively recruiting, then definitely option 1. It is an all or nothing situation".*

6.4 Living Options added, 'many others were only interested in keeping their specific locality provision active'. The table below shows the themes from the comments received by DCC (Online and via email). The percentages are worked out based upon the total number of comments received.

ID	Emerging Theme	Times Mentioned
1	Respondents commented on the value of the current DCC provision and the Importance of Socialisation, friendship groups and familiarity. This theme also included concerns around the continuity of care.	12
2	Questions were raised about eligibility criteria and the fall in people using centres. This theme also included comments relating to the awareness of these services and Impact of Covid and how DCC managed the recovery of the services.	15
3	Feedback was received relating to vulnerable adults and the impact that the proposed changes might have on them. This theme includes the impact on mental and physical health and the impact that any change process will have on them.	8
4	Concerns were raised about the perceived lack of suitable alternative provision in Devon for vulnerable adults.	6
5	Feedback was received relating to the Impact the proposed changes might have on carers respite and their ability to cope.	7
6	Feedback was received relating to the low occupancy of these inhouse day services and the importance of spending on services that are well utilised	2
7	General concerns relating to the impact of financial situation on the future of all services for vulnerable adults including support for younger adults who have an ECHP plan	1
8	Concerns were raised about the potential loss of community facility/buildings.	2
9	Respondents commented on the importance of transport and were worried about potential increased costs and travelling time for clients.	1
10	Concerns were raised about the quality of care in independent sector & about markets ability to care for the most vulnerable clients.	2
11	Feedback was received about the use of Personal Budgets and Direct Payments and ensure alternative provision is suitable for the service users and carers. This theme identified a need for further information to be available to clients and carers.	1
12	Feedback relating to the Consultation process	4
13	Feedback from suppliers relating to opportunities in the independent sector.	1

6.5 In conclusion there was no strong consensus towards any of the options described in the consultation document.

## 7. Financial Considerations

7.1 This is a time of significant change and opportunity for English local government. Despite the government increasing funding for councils over recent years, a combination of high inflation and rising demand has left local authorities facing some of their toughest budgetary decisions to date.

7.2 Growing demand, increasing complexity of need and higher than anticipated inflationary pressures have created much uncertainty and risk within the public sector. This is resulting in an unprecedented and increasing number of Local authorities facing deep financial distress resulting in 'bankruptcy notices', referred to as a section 114 notice, being considered. Devon County Council like all councils needs to consider the public purse.

- 7.3 These unutilised services still have staff identified against them as their formal work base along with the costs associated with running the buildings, the savings associated with this should a decision be made to close these services is around £300k. There is the potential that on approval of the proposal the buildings could be used for other service areas of the Authority or made available for disposal.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

- 8.1 The lawful implications and or consequences of the recommended proposal have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report. Devon County Council will continue to fulfil its statutory duty to provide support where eligibility is determined through a Care Act assessment, some, or all of this support may be satisfied through a community-based offer which is appropriate for meeting the individuals need.

## **9. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)**

- 9.1 A summary of all environment and environmental related issues are described within the equality impact assessment prepared and published as supporting material for the consultation process.

- 9.2 There are no actual or potential impacts, positive or neutral in the following areas:
- Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost
  - Conserve and enhance wildlife
  - Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:
  - Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:
  - Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:
  - Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):
  - Contribute to reducing water consumption
  - Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):

## **10. Equality Considerations**

- 10.1 Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
  - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
  - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- 10.2 A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.
- 10.3 In progressing this proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published>
- 10.4 Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of informing the decision regarding the approval of the proposed closure of 5 learning disability and 1 older peoples day service.
- 10.5 A full draft impact assessment was published. DCC received no comments about this assessment as part of the consultation.

## **11. Risk Management Considerations**

- 11.1 This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken to safeguard the Council's position.
- Risks to current service users – low risk as only one service user and their family access these services and they currently attend another day service. This arrangement could continue moving forward.
  - Risks to potential future service users – low risk as the needs assessment and supply analysis suggests that although the demand is likely to increase, but not significantly, alternative services are available locally in the independent and voluntary sector.
  - Risk to day services staff – dependent on the decision to approve the proposal there may be a need to undertake a staff consultation affecting the individuals in the service.
  - Risk that buildings will be left unused – low risk as it has been determined there is potential interest from other services areas within, and external to the authority.
  - Reputational – low risk as the authority will continue to discharge its statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 and commission care and support from the independent sector where there is a requirement for such services. Potential reputational risk through continued inaction.

## 12. Summary

- 12.1 The consultation closed on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The issues and concerns raised within the received feedback from the twenty-one written responses and seventeen attendees at the consultation meetings has been carefully considered.
- 12.2 The received feedback has been weighed against:
1. The current usage.
  2. The projected numbers of likely new users who require this style of service.
  3. The County Council's ability to discharge its statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 without these inhouse services.
  4. The national evidence pointing toward a need for more diverse forms of day opportunity.
  5. The Council's requirement to consider the public purse.
- 12.3 Additionally, the Impact Assessment has been consulted upon and has been updated following the consultation process where appropriate to do so. The Impact Assessment is provided to the decision maker along with this report.
- 12.4 The resulting recommendations formed are now presented for due consideration and, if appropriate, approval. The recommendations regarding the future of directly provided day care are:
- 12.5 DCC should withdraw from direct provision at the following Devon County Council Day services:
- Learning Disability Services**
- Lyric, Okehampton
  - Newholme, Honiton
  - Rosalind House, Tiverton
  - Silverhill, Barnstaple
  - Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge
- Older Persons Services**
- Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge
- 12.6 Formal closure to take place from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Service users, carers and staff would be informed of any such changes.
- 12.7 DCC to continue to work with the independent and voluntary sector to encourage the continued development of suitable alternatives.
- 12.8 DCC's positions toward inhouse day service provision remains as in 2014, the organisation will continue to cease to be a provider of day services for older people and adults with a learning disability except in areas of insufficient alternative supply and where there are no providers expressing an interest in expanding local provision.
- 12.9 DCC to give due consideration to repurpose the properties to support vulnerable individuals before any decision is taken to dispose of the above properties.

**Tandra Forster**

Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

**Electoral Divisions:** All

**Councillor James McInnes**

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care

**Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Consultation paper: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultations/public-consultation-on-the-future-of-devon-county-councils-adults-day-services-where-there-are-currently-no-people-or-one-person-accessing-the-service/>

Impact assessment: Direct Link: [Impact Assessment](#)

DCC Impact Assessment website: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published>

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**Appendix A – Living Options Report**

**Public consultation on the future of Devon County Council's Adult Day  
Services Report**

**Living Options Devon**

**January 2024**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

As part of the Devon Engagement Service Living Options were asked by Devon County Council (DCC) to facilitate a series of focus groups to gain the views of stakeholders on the potential future of in house day centre. This provision is in Honiton, Tiverton, Okehampton, Kingsbridge and Barnstaple.

Devon County Council wanted to hear feedback from service users who have a learning disability and their carers, in the geographical areas affected (and older people in Kingsbridge) and from people who may require a day service in the future. This feedback will then form a key part of the decision-making process.

## **2.0 Methodology**

This consultation ran from November 2023 to January 2024. In consultation with commissioners at the County Council, it was agreed that Living Options would independently facilitate five locality-based focus groups and two online opportunities, one of which ran in the early evening. This third-party independence was to ensure that all participants felt able to share their views knowing there was an unbiased filter and without concern of impact. It was agreed that any questions about provision raised by participants would be collated and answered in a FAQ section on the Have Your Say consultation page on the council's website.

Once there had been final sign off on the 13<sup>th</sup> November this consultation opportunity was then communicated, with relevant accessible information, across a wide range of Devon County Council and other organisational networks including Special Educational schools, the Joint Engagement Forum and Carer forums. The invitations to attend the focus groups were set up via Eventbrite and the links were embedded in the specific consultation page on the Have your Say website.

The focus groups were designed to explore the same set of questions as asked in the questionnaire part of the online consultation. We were clear about the provision that was out of scope at this time; that all responses would be anonymised; and that provision specific questions would be added to an FAQ section on the consultation website. After a brief summary presentation, the focus groups explored each of the following questions:

- Is there an impact on individuals and their families if one or more of the day services concerned reduced their operating days or closed?
- How would this affect individuals or their families in Devon?
- Day centre closure options (participants were provided with a summary of possible scenarios)
- Facilitated group discussion depending on option chosen.

The face to face sessions lasted 2 hours and the online sessions were 1.5 hours. All venues were accessible. In total, 17 people attended the focus groups. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of attendees.

Location and date	Number booked	Attendees
Tiverton 20/11/23	2	0
Honiton 21/11/23	0	0
Barnstaple 27/11/23	5	1 parent carer 3 providers
Kingsbridge 04/12/23	3	2 parent carers 1 DCC staff member 1 member of the public
Okehampton 05/12/23	1	1 provider
Online 05/11/23	4	1 parent carer 1 educator 1 Day Centre professional 1 Councillor
Online 15/01/24	9	2 providers 1 charity lead 1 Councillor
<b>Total attendees</b>		<b>17</b>

Figure 1: Attendance

### 3.0 Findings

This section provides a summary of the key themes arising from discussions. Section 3.1 outlines some key points raised consistently across all the focus groups and by parents, providers and professionals. For simplicity, feedback is then reported thematically under each of the three attendee roles: parent carers (3.2); providers (3.3) and professionals (3.4), with location specific information included when relevant.

#### 3.1 Overarching themes

Across all the focus groups, the substantial majority of the discussion focused on the diverse impacts of possible closure or changes in provision. The majority of attendees had not read the consultation in advance.

#### Day centre closure options

Participants consistently found the final question of Day Centre closure options hard to answer. Example responses:

*“No options on that sheet are good. If these services are taken away the families will have to provide these things and they’re under enough stress at the moment.”*

*“If there are no plans to recruit actively for new service users then option 5 as there is no point. If actively recruiting, then definitely option 1. It is an all or nothing situation”.*

Some participants wanted to know the reasons why the attendee numbers at the day centres were so low before being able to decide. It was noted by a number that the consultation documents gave *“no evidence whatsoever as to which are the correct reasons”*. There was a consistent view that there must not be an assumption made that needs are being met just because people are not turning up to these services. Many others were only interested in keeping their specific locality provision active.

### **Staff and facilities**

There was a consensus that staff should be appropriately redeployed if provision is being reduced and that the already accessible and adapted buildings should still be utilised, whether this is via the county council or in the VCSE sector. The right staff and facilities are needed.

### **Peer interaction**

There was acknowledgement of the importance of peer interaction and that the current in-house provision might not be able to meet these needs with such low attendee numbers. Localised provision is vital to help strengthen diversity within communities.

### **Holistic approach**

It was agreed that any changes to provision will impact the whole family, and so any assessment of need must be holistic.

### **Possible discrimination**

There was also concern that these proposals could create discrimination against those who are most severely disabled, because private providers may *“cherry pick those who are easiest to provide for or who don’t need personal care”*. Alongside this it was highlighted that the Reaching for Independence programme was not that well known amongst participants.

### **Prevention**

Regardless of provision, a consistent theme was that prevention is key. It is essential to *“actually meet people’s needs”* before crises start. The transition between children and adult services is particularly key.

### **Transparency**

It was widely requested that whatever the next steps are in the consultation that DCC are transparent about the decisions made.

## **3.2 Parents**

This section summarises the points raised by parents across all the focus groups.

## Person centred care is still key

- Loved ones are now not getting the stimulation needed away from family environments.  
*“My son goes to Rushbrook, if that closes he’ll have nothing apart from Stretch and Move on Monday afternoon”. “Otherwise stuck at home with mum and dad.”*  
(Kingsbridge)  
*“My daughter used to love going out and doing activities: dancing, swimming etc. Very difficult now other children are adults for parents to do all this”.*  
(Barnstaple)
- Very little daily respite for parents/carers now.  
*“My son has a care coordinator - lucky if he sees her every 6 weeks. It’s not hands on. So, it’s on us to make sure he’s healthy”.*
- Many service users struggle with change and new routines.
- Many service users will have had long term friendships uprooted by these changes – increasing isolation.  
*“He has autism - takes a long time getting to know people. Takes me a long time to be sure that he’s safe and not worry he’ll be taken advantage of”.*
- The more complex needs of this client group are not always matched by Personal Assistants/enabling or the Reaching for Independence programme.  
*“Reaching for independence is not possible for the profoundly disabled”.*
- Parent Carers reported concerns about the quality of professional care vs community care / voluntary sector.
- More support needed for mental health is needed.

## Assessment of need

- There were concerns raised about the perceived increasing thresholds to access funding for day activity provision.
- There is also concern that these thresholds are then increasing a substantial unmet need for social care which is particularly impactful for unpaid carers.  
*“Why do they need to be assessed/ reviewed every year to when needs are complex and don’t change? The assessment and review process can be stressful”.*

## Communication

- A consistent theme across all focus groups was how the council had communicated provision changes, particularly after the Covid pandemic. There were concerns reported that communication had been minimal and therefore many parents had found it hard to know where to look for alternatives.  
*“Need to fight for services, don’t know what you don’t know as a parent”.*
- Alongside this was a lack of communication from ASC practitioners, who some described as under informed about alternative provision options.

- It was reported that it is hard for parent/carers to know who to contact if support was needed as there are no longer allocated social workers.

## Funding

- Concerns over provision being reduced because of increasing staffing and transport costs.
- It was felt that financial assessments made assumptions about what PIP was able to cover – particularly around the ability of use in relation to Motability vehicles.
- Direct payments, although offering choice, can be complex to manage. A parent carer stated that the process does not make it possible to find the care for complex need at 2:1 to engage safely within communities.
- There was an acknowledgement that in-house services are more expensive to run and queries about what the allocated staff are currently doing and whether this was 'good value'.
- Within the current cost of living crisis, any PIP entitlement is now even more needed just to cover general household disability expenses and likely to be able to contribute to day activities.
- Motability vehicles were discussed in terms of parents using that to support service users accessing provision but would not be able to potentially drive to and from Duchy college for example.

*“My son’s award does not cover weekends. We’re always on lookout for other activities. He has quite an active life but it’s facilitated by us, if we weren’t around then it would all collapse”.*

## Travel

- Having to travel longer distances to alternative provision is often a challenge to coordinate and a further demand on parent/carers time.

*“Totnes is long way from Kingsbridge. An adult with Learning Disability has a taxi provided - but a lot can happen in the half hour it would take us to drive there, we’re a long way away”.*

*“He used to have escort with taxi - then with 1:1 support. So we could have a rest and not need to use our rest time to take him somewhere”.*

### 3.3 Providers

This section summarises feedback given by providers across all the focus groups.

#### Awareness of alternatives

- It was consistently reported that providers don’t know the details about other alternatives. DCC needs to ensure that alternative provisions are advertised, highlighted and accessible, especially at educational establishments and for parent carers. A variety of communication is needed including letters, telephone numbers, emails addresses to enable them to connect with providers.
- Many providers reported waiting lists for their provision.

#### Example comments

*“Parents feeling lack of support and stuck. They just don't know where to go and they need to be able to have that support to know where to go and somewhere to go”.*

*“We have got people coming through our doors or phoning up quite regularly.”*

*“Are the council “actively looking for people to join these day services or are they just not telling anyone they're there so nobody knows they are there?”*

#### Quality of provision

- Concerns about PA support and the lack of regulation in comparison to CQC regulated care home provision.
- Some providers stated that although rated good by the CQC, they had been made to feel second-rate and feel challenged about the amount spent on food and redecorating home etc.
- Providers stated that they are obliged to meet requirements for choice and individuality.
- Concern that community groups would not have the skills required to support complex needs.

#### Example comments

*“Service provision and supporting people is not black and white - needs to be fluid and about whole person and flexible”.*

#### Impact of transition between CYP and adult services

- Concerns that the transition between CYP and adult services is not thorough enough, particularly in respect of health needs so that future provision does not match need.
- The move from a Paediatrician to GP services can create a range of unmet health needs and create more complexity for a parent carer to deal with.
- Educational Health and Care Plans stopping at end of school often means not having a plan for the future in place. *“So, it's a terrifying time for these families, and nobody seems to be picking it up”.*
- Speech and Language, Physio and OT input might be daily as a child. After moving into adult care people almost never get that. This lack of monitoring substantially reduces preventative health interventions.
- Not every child working with the 0-25 team has a social worker and now this *“leaves people having to figure it all out on their own”.*
- It was stated that the Annual Review process in schools is not considered particularly thorough at present.
- There were comments that DCC being overspent should not be brought up during placement assessments and reviews with parents. They just want to help their children.

#### Example comments

*“Specialist provision should be signposting these matters for parents as part of next steps.”*

*“No one seems to be able to find where these services are. If no one else can find provision, then placements breakdown and young people coming back home.”*

*“Young people are not supported through that process, so we get families coming to us and they have no idea how to access things like even things like OT or physio.”*

## **Funding**

- Direct payments - concerns that DCC feel that this process will solve all problems however direct payments do not make it possible to find the care for complex need 2:1 to engage within community safely.
- Some providers stated that a problem is that a few years ago they would get commissioned purely for companionship and loneliness. Within elderly care now somebody has to demonstrate a care need in order to get funding and for addressing loneliness. This is a significant unmet social care need.
- People are being assessed as having a need for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy but they are not being funded for it because it's health-related therapy or because the provision must be community based where it is often too expensive or with limited capacity.

## **Provider involvement**

- Providers commented that they are not included in ASC annual reviews despite service users being at their service daily; decisions are made not even discussing activities they have been taking part in.
- NEET young people can fall through nets if suitable provision is not available or ASC teams not aware of all provision.
- Another example was for older people:

*“If you go to clinic to have to have a dementia diagnosis, then historically somebody from the Alzheimer's Society would be part of that second appointment where you got your diagnosis. They would then signpost to say things you need to know about claiming attendance allowance etc. Devon County Council now pulled that contract out. So, without this signposting more people are going to fall through the cracks because they're not going to know what services are out there”.*

## **3.4 Professionals**

### **Awareness of provision**

- Professionals are needing to search for diverse day services when young people leave school provision. It was reported to be a struggle to find where these services are and how young people will be supported.
- There was feedback that past pupils in their 30's are losing their funding and not receiving any support.
- The importance of ensuring explanations of service changes are clearly communicated to families was noted.

- Participants recommended a centralised resource for all of the providers in the area that DCC fund places into.

### Provision for complex care needs

- There were concerns that this proposal could discriminate against those who need personal care.
- Professionals questioned the ability of alternative provisions to provide personal care as this is not always possible due to registration requirements.
- There were comments about over reliance on volunteers. This often makes alternative provision competitive, but consideration should be given as to whether this results in appropriate support for people with complex care needs.
- There are not enough services for people with complex needs who are unable to access the alternative community provisions.
- The importance for many to have a base was noted: *“a base to start out from for the days adventure. Many people find it harder start out their journeys straight from home”*.
- Current day centres don't have high turnovers of staff like alternative provisions /enablers. They often have staff who have worked there for 20-30 years.
- It was acknowledged that current in-house services might be “boring” because of the lack of interaction if attendee numbers are low.
- Transport can be challenging. Sharing journeys extend drive times resulting in cases where people are being collected at 6.30am for a 9am start. This can have further implications, for example if the travel time is too long some people will have toileting incidents. This then requires a shower after each journey.
- A lack of continuity of social workers was reported as problematic. Social workers close cases as they can't do anything further. Consequently, when people come back again they have to go through another assessment and have no background with new social worker.

Example comment

*“Social support model and inclusive cafes and clubs are great but they don't meet needs of those with significant medical care needs.”*

### Peer Interaction

- Peer interaction is so important and 1 to 1 enablers are not providing this.
- Isolation will be a huge issue if there are no opportunities for social peer-based aspects for day services.

Example comments

*“During COVID we saw how isolating it was for them to be at home and for them to come back and be with their peers and spend time in a community.”*

*“It's being with their peers on a day to day basis is really important, not being with someone that's there paid to look after you but being with someone that's there, that's your friend.”*

## Service gap between children's and adult services

- Discrepancy between children's and adult's respite. This is often not explained to parents and parents are not clear of entitlements to physio, OT etc.
- Concerns were reported over recent changes to the Preparing for Adulthood team and the transition to adult social care. This team are not seen to be attending Annual Reviews now so what is their role?
- Careers Southwest is an option but not appropriate for the level of need of complex care children.
- When CYP go onto 100% health support EHCP stops and disappears, so this does not help with placements.

## Geographical need

- Devon is a rural county. With the alternative provision detailed on the maps clustered around the larger towns what is there for anyone who can't access these?
- All of the efforts are to try to keep people living independently at home but this can increase social isolation if there are no other social opportunities available.
- Public transport is unreliable, under resourced and not always accessible for some service users.

## 4.0 Summary and recommendations

It is widely understood that Devon County Council is under considerable budgetary pressures and that challenging decisions are needing to be made about adult social care provision. Across all the focus group conversations there was a consensus that there needs to be full transparency about any future decisions.

### Recommendations

- Provision that can meet everybody's needs "*... so that everybody, no matter what their disability and no matter what their medical or care needs are, they can be like everybody else in the environment*".
- Any next steps must ensure that the more severely disabled people are not discriminated against because their needs are more complex.
- Enabling peer interaction, in whatever form, is seen as vital.
- Staff should be appropriately redeployed.
- The already accessible and adapted buildings should still be utilised and used imaginatively.
- Holistic, preventative and person-centred assessments of family need, including consideration of locality provision.
- To improve the transition between children's and adult services, importantly including health provision.
- An up to date and accessible list of alternative provision with clear information about how each meets specific care or health needs that is shared with parents, carers, providers and ASC team members.
- Clear communication pathways: –
  - parent carers need to understand where they can access support if needed;

- ASC team members need to be able to explain funding decisions;
- Alternative provision opportunities need to be widely shared and promoted with ASC teams, with educational establishments, with other providers and elements of the health service so that this can be cascaded appropriately to families.

These recommendations should all help minimise families need to fight for services.

### Day Centre Consultation Theme Summary

Total number of attended focus groups = 5

Total number of participants = 17

If a theme was raised it was then widely discussed by participants in that focus group

Across all 5 focus groups the discussion around impact were wide ranging and included perspectives from parents, providers and professionals depending on who attended. The sessions were facilitated to keep focused on the impacts of Day Centre closure so any extraneous comments have not been included.

Where a participant makes a comment more than once conveying the same point, this is counted as one comment.

ID	Emerging Theme	Times mentioned in the consultation
1	Person centred care is still key and the need to consider respite needs; the impact of new routines; people's complex needs; and support for mental health	In all 5 Focus Groups 14 comments
2	Assessment of need- concerns raised about the perceived increasing thresholds to access funding for day activity provision and addressing unmet need	In 4 Focus Groups 12 comments
3	Minimal communication, (particularly by social care practitioners) about decisions; alternative provision; and signposting to other services	In all 5 Focus Groups 13 comments
4	Funding / provision being reduced because of increasing staffing and transport costs.	In 4 Focus Groups 12 comments
5	Impact of travel - having to travel longer distances to alternative provision is often a challenge to coordinate and a further demand on parent/carers time	In 3 Focus Groups 10 Comments
6	Awareness of alternatives - it was consistently reported that providers don't know the details of alternative provision.	In 3 Focus Groups 10 comments
7	Quality of provision - concerns about PA support and the lack of regulation in comparison to CQC regulated care home provision.	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments
8	Impact of transition between CYP and adult services - concerns that the transition between CYP and adult services is not thorough enough, particularly in respect of health needs	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments

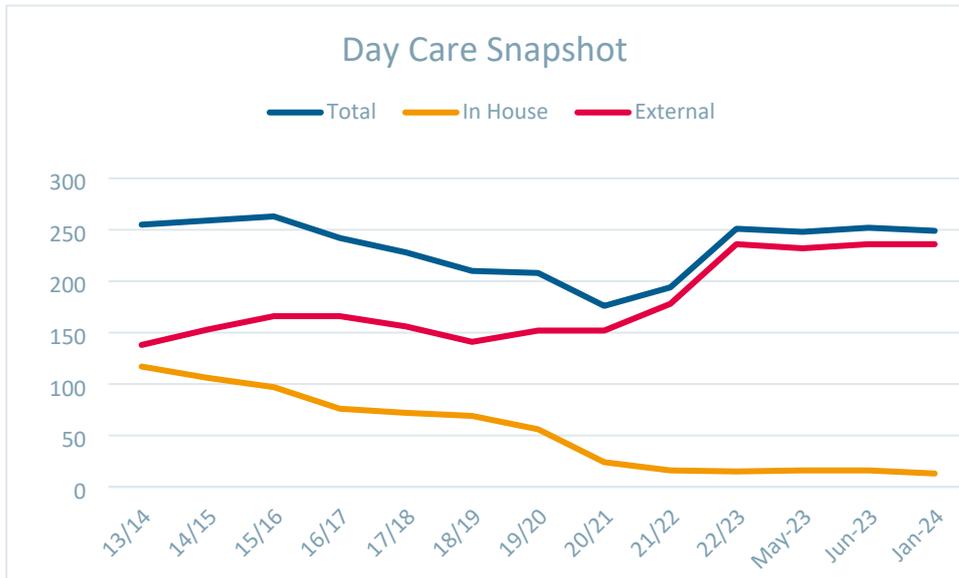
9	Funding - complexities on managing direct payments, of how health needs are funded and the lack of funding to help tackle loneliness for example	In 4 Focus Groups 9 comments
10	Provider involvement - providers commented that they are not included in ASC annual reviews despite service users being at their service daily	In 2 Focus Groups 4 comments
11	Awareness of provision - Professionals are needing to search for diverse day services when young people leave school provision. It was reported to be a struggle to find where these services are and how young people will be supported.	In 4 Focus Groups 8 Comments
12	Provision for complex care needs - there were concerns that this proposal could discriminate against those who need personal care and / or are most severely disabled.	In 4 Focus Groups 9 comments
13	Importance of peer interaction - peer interaction is so important and 1 to 1 enablers are not always able to provide this.	In 3 Focus Groups 12 comments
14	Service gap between children's and adult services. Discrepancies are not often explained to parents and who are not always aware of entitlement	In 3 Focus Group 8 comments
15	Geographical need - Devon is a rural county. With the alternative provision detailed on the maps clustered around the larger towns what is there for anyone who can't access these?	In 3 Focus Groups 11 comments
16	Reasons for low attendance at the day centres - there was a consistent view that the reasons for low attendee numbers should be explored and there must not be an assumption made that needs are being met just because people are not turning up to these services.	In all 5 focus groups 14 comments
17	Staff and facilities - there was a consensus that staff should be appropriately redeployed if provision is being reduced and that the already accessible and adapted buildings should still be utilised, whether this is via the county council or in the VCSE sector.	In 4 focus groups 6 comments
18	Holistic approach - It was agreed that any changes to provision will impact the whole family, and so any assessment of need must be holistic.	In all 5 focus groups 15 comments
19	Prevention - regardless of provision, a consistent theme was that prevention is key. It is essential to "actually meet people's needs" before crises start. The transition between children and adult services is particularly key.	In 4 focus groups 13 comments
20	Transparency - it was widely requested that, whatever the next steps are in the consultation, that DCC are transparent about the decisions made.	In 3 focus groups 6 comments

### Appendix 1 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers

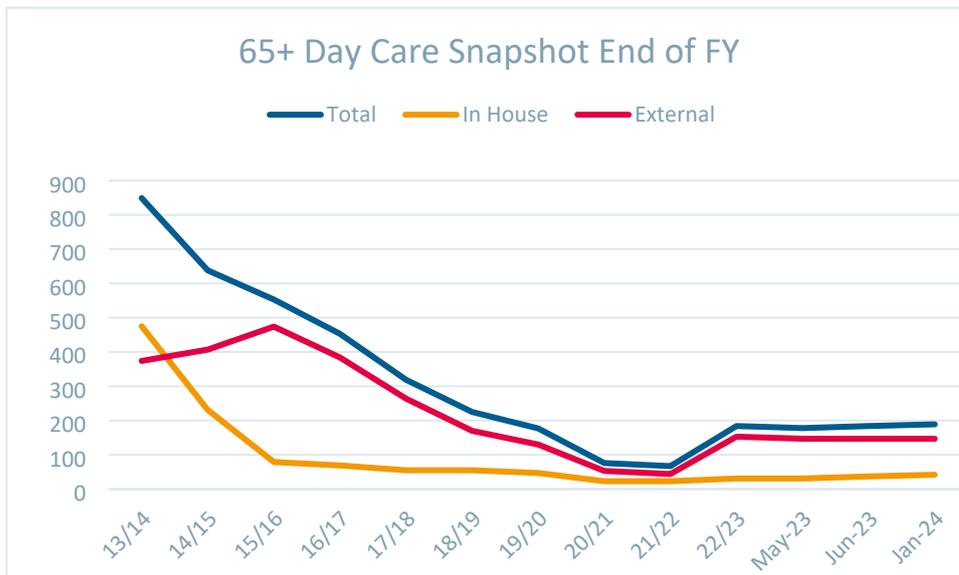
The FAQs from the Living Options report have been removed as they are an old version. The latest version of the Frequently Asked Questions can be found here : <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultation-on-the-future-of-devon-county-councils-adult-day-services-faqs/>

**Appendix B – The use of Day services across Inhouse and the Independent Sector.**

The graph shows the directly commissioned day services for people with a learning disability within Devon County Council across its Inhouse and Independent Sector provision.



The graph shows the directly commissioned day services for older people within Devon County Council across its Inhouse and Independent Sector provision.



**Appendix C - Descriptions of the buildings in the scope of this consultation are detailed below:**

**Newholme, Honiton**

The building is an extended domestic dwelling, The areas formerly used by the learning disability day services are configured as follows. The ground floor has 3 rooms for service delivery, sized 36m<sup>2</sup>, 27m<sup>2</sup> and 10m<sup>2</sup> respectively. Additionally, there is 1 changing place, 3 toilets and bathroom. The lift to the first floor offers kitchen, dining room, toilet, and bathroom.

**Lyric, Okehampton**

The building is in the form of a domestic dwelling. The areas used by the learning disability day services are configured as follows. The ground floor has a lounge 14m<sup>2</sup>, kitchen, conservatory 17m<sup>2</sup> and toilet, steep and narrow staircase to the first-floor rooms sized 6m<sup>2</sup>, 9m<sup>2</sup> and 14m<sup>2</sup> respectively, plus a toilet.

**Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge**

The specific area for the day service building is leased from Anchor Housing with shared access to the stairwell. The areas formerly used by the older people's day services are configured as follows. The ground floor has 2 rooms for service delivery sized 79m<sup>2</sup> and 13m<sup>2</sup>, assisted bathroom, conventional toilet, kitchen, office and reception area. The internal square metrage is 125 m<sup>2</sup>. The areas formerly used by the learning disability day services are configured as follows. Lift to the first floor, 4 rooms for service delivery, 34m<sup>2</sup>, 23m<sup>2</sup>, 12m<sup>2</sup>, 11m<sup>2</sup> respectively and 3 assisted toilets plus 1 conventional toilet.

**Silverhill Learning Disability Service, Barnstaple**

The building was purpose-built for social care services. The areas formerly used by the learning disability services are configured as follows. There are 5 rooms for service delivery sized 43m<sup>2</sup>, 27m<sup>2</sup>, 34m<sup>2</sup>, 9m<sup>2</sup>, and 9m<sup>2</sup> respectively plus a small kitchen, shared toilet facilities, 3 separate toilets and 1 shower room.

**Rosalind, Tiverton**

The building was a former domestic dwelling which has been extended in the past. The areas currently identified for use by the learning disability day services are configured as follows. On the ground floor there are 3 rooms for service delivery sized 21m<sup>2</sup>, 13m<sup>2</sup>, and 38m<sup>2</sup> respectively. Plus a small toilet, assisted changing room, and an office.

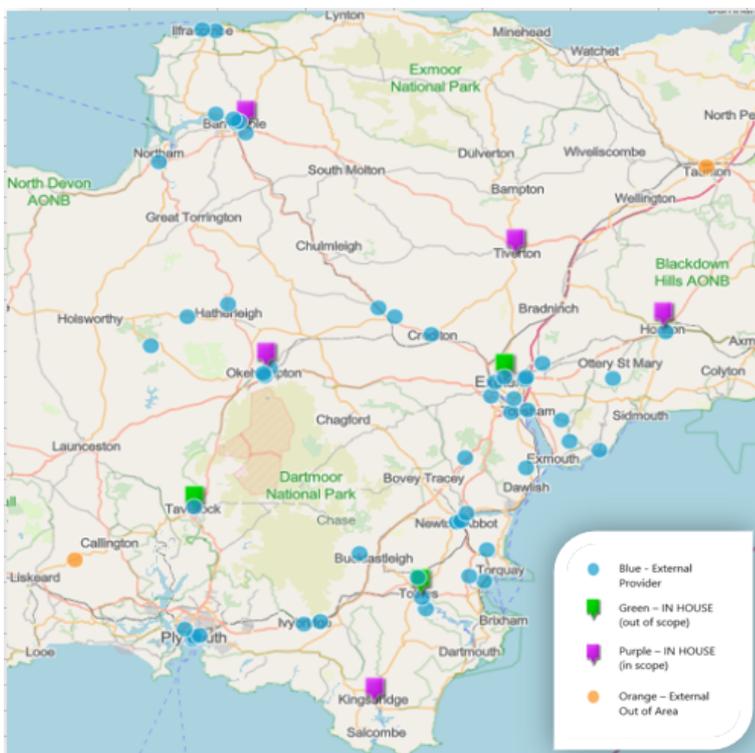
## Appendix D - Location of day services

The Council commissions 81 independent sector providers, to deliver day services in Devon, and 53 of these services support individuals with a Learning Disability.

The table below shows the Devon County Council commissioned independent providers within an approximate 30-minute drive of the Devon County Council centres within the scope of this consultation. Source: Devon County Council Commissioning Data

Name	Number of day care services within an approx 30-minute drive time <i>NB: providers could be included in more than one drive time zone</i>
Lyric, Okehampton	10 (plus 2 Services for people with other needs)
Newholme, Honiton	12 (plus 8 Services for people with other needs)
Rosalind House, Tiverton	11 (plus 3 Services for people with other needs)
Silverhill, Barnstaple	8 (plus 4 Service for people with other needs)
Tumbly Hill, Kingsbridge (Older people and LD services)	5 Learning disability services No service for people with other needs

### Map 1 – Learning Disability Day Services



Map 1 shows locations of all 53 commissioned learning disability independent sector day services and in-house learning disability day services in Devon and surrounding areas. This includes the services within an approximate 30-minute drive as displayed in the table as well as those further away. (Please note some of the blue circles represent more than 1 day service)

## Map 2 – Service for people with other needs

There are no day services for older people within an approximate 30-minute drive of Tumbly Hill day service in Kingsbridge.



Map 2 shows locations of independent sector day services for people with other types of needs, and the in-house older person's services in and out of scope. This shows the services within an approximate 30-minute drive as displayed in the table as well as those further away. (Please note some of the blue circles represent more than 1 day service)