



**Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny  
Committee**  
29 April 2021

**Report from the Strategic Director  
of Community Wellbeing**

**Day Centre Services and COVID-19**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	0
<b>Background Papers:</b>	0
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**1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To update members about the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on day centre provision, including managing any disruption for service users, and the current extent of services.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to note the report.

**3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 John Billam Resource Centre (JBRC) and New Millennium Day Centre (NMDC) are part of Brent's Direct Services provision that provide day based support for 135 Brent clients. The service offers a range of day-based activities across the sites. There is also a Supported living accommodation (Tudor Gardens) providing tenancy and support based accommodation for 15 adults with 24/7 care and support needs.
- 3.2 The FTE for staff in Direct Services in March 2020 comprised of 88 staff.

## Staff utilisation Since March 2020

- New Millennium Day Centre and John Billam Resource Centre Closed due to COVID 19 restrictions in March 2020.
- 13 staff from the Day Centres have been supporting Tudor Gardens on shift rota basis to cover absences and the shortfall of agreed staffing levels.
- 27 staff members were medically shielding following assessment and guidance given by Occupational Health. These staff are supporting with the coordination and delivery of well-being calls and online activities.
- 13 staff members were supporting customers in the community and provided taster sessions back in December 2020.
- 9 remaining staff were Team Leaders/ Manager and administrative staff

## Current Staff Numbers

- 15 staff took EVR since March 2021
- 1 Ill Health Retirement
- Leaving Direct Services with staff team of 72 FTE equivalent

- 3.3 The Covid-19 Pandemic has provided immense challenges in continuing to support residents with wide ranging care and support needs. In line with wider public health council guidance and planning with Brent's Commissioning arm of Adult Social Care building based activities have in the main been ceased since March 2020.
- 3.4 The approach taken mirrors that of the majority of London Boroughs where decisions to cease building based activities were made in the context and recognition of the vulnerability of the majority of Brent residents using the building resource were vulnerable to serious ill health or mortality as a result of Covid-19 infection. NMDC closed on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 3.5 Initial support was provided through welfare calls. These were made weekly or up to 2/3 times per week depending on need. This became an essential strand of support for clients and carers, often the first point where arrangements and contact was made to provide alternative support. In the early phase of the pandemic the welfare calls identified immediate support needs and regularly supported and signposted clients, family and carers many of whom were shielding.
- 3.6 In June 2020 the PII Insight team with the support of library staff surveyed carers and residents who (pre-lockdown) were in receipt of day services to determine their views. Over 100 calls were made and 80 responses were received. Of these 51% indicated that they wished to return to a building-based service as soon as they could, while the remainder were split between wanting to wait for several months, until Covid was no longer a significant risk at all and a small minority who did not wish to return to building-based services at all. These findings were presented to Brent Carers Board and the ASC Departmental Management Team in order to inform their decision making around when to re-open services. Brent Carers Survey conducted a Carers

survey in November 2020 and these findings were also shared via the Carers Board in December.

3.7 In May 2020 NMDC developed a range of activity packs which were sent out To 65 clients on a monthly basis. These included diverse subject areas such as:

- Mindfulness exercise
- Word search
- Gentle exercise examples
- Numeracy and literacy
- Recipes
- Colouring booklets
- Puzzles and other mind stimulating games
- Sensory activities such as: birds listening and watching, stretching exercise in the garden, smell or taste examples of activities that could have been done at home safely

3.8 From December 2020 NMDC staff introduced a range of virtual sessions That were taken up by 45 clients. These included: Exercise and aerobic session, Mindfulness, Yoga, Art session, Drama Workshop, Virtual Café, Storytelling and creative writing, Game sessions, Dance and Sing along, Healthy Eating and Lifestyle.

3.9 JBRC like NMDC closed in March 2020. The service supports 42 clients With Care Act Assessed Needs. The service is a Specialised Autism and Complex needs service with Advanced Accreditation from National Autistic Society. All clients received weekly welfare calls for this service and 7 clients Received ongoing community support up to December 2020.

3.9.1 Out of 42 clients, 18 have been receiving virtual activities that includes: Exercise and aerobic session, Mindfulness, Yoga, Art session, Drama workshop, Virtual Café, Storytelling and creative writing, Game sessions, Dance and Sing along, Healthy Eating and Lifestyle.

#### **4.0 Digitalisation**

4.1 During the period of lockdown, we enabled our staff to be digitally connected with the teams and managers with the distribution of 65 iPhones. Staff working from home were equipped with additional devices to enable them to make wellbeing calls, log the conversations and lead the online sessions.

15 Chromebooks were distributed to customers who had no devices or connectivity. Working in partnership with Age UK on a pilot project to offer training and support to service users on digital inclusion.

#### **5.0 Building Based Pilot Sessions in December 2020**

5.1 In JBRC 12 clients attended sessions that included storytelling, dance and Movement and physio. The content reflected higher need and complexity of need and again were subject to stringent infection control measures based on

advice from public health. In NMDC 25 clients took part in a range of carefully planned sessions in Pottery, Arts and Dance Therapy.

- 5.2 Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic Direct Services were beginning to apply a campus type model to day care provision. The continued challenge to move from traditional large group generic activities to sessional personal centred approaches were key to meeting desired outcomes for clients. Though the pilot was curtailed the work completed has provided a platform and knowledge base for day services staff and a springboard for the person centred model the service are striving to implement.

## **6.0 Future Planning /Resumption of Activities and Contingency**

- 6.1 Regular meetings are being held with public health for advice and support and to discuss options. All customers risk assessments are being updated. A comprehensive review of buildings is underway to ensure buildings are compliant with Public Health recommendations.

- 6.2 The service will register for on-board testing for staff. Staff will test regularly at home so this will identify staff with no symptoms carrying COVID-19 who may pass this on to other staff members and people who use day care centres. Meetings with transport services are taking place to discuss flexibility and safety protocols. All parties except transport arrangements will be a key factor in ensuring the three pillars of support offer will continue and we are looking at scaling up activities in Building activities, Community support and Wellbeing calls. Transition back to the services - Prepare social stories, take photos of the building to reduce anxieties and help with visualisation.

- 6.3 The provisional timescales are :W/C: 12.04.2021 Restart of community support such as Parks, zoos and outdoor places reopens, social distancing applies, groups of support up to six people.

- 6.4 From W/C: 21.06.2021: Restart of building taster sessions with combination of a lower number of group activities to be reintroduced to customers with a mixture of online remote sessions. Lower number of contact hours to be considered. Virtual sessions streamlined to meet assessed Care Act needs. To give customers choices to shape their needs in a personalised manner.

## **7.0 Beyond Resumption/ Further planning**

- 7.1 The management group and staff are looking to further develop Direct Services. Initial areas of development to include:
- Enablement project in partnership working with Autism Lead in children services to support transition from child to adulthood. Focus on life skills such as travel training, cooking, shopping, and money management, safety in the community, general wellbeing, employment prospects, and links with other organisations in the community.
  - To further utilise the coproduction and wider partnership working with independent day care providers in the borough.

- To develop Apprenticeship programme in Health and Social Care Levels 2 and 3

## **8.0 Independent Day Care Providers**

- 8.1 Approximately 220 people use independent day care services in Brent, through a combination of commissioned services and direct payments. In addition to the two in-house day centres in the borough, there are five independent older people day care providers and six learning disability providers. Brent service users also use a number of day centre providers based outside of Brent that offer provision that isn't available in-borough.
- 8.2 Independent day care providers closed their building based services in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this time providers have been funded, based on commissioned care packages in March 2020, to put in place alternative models of support for people who were attending day centres.
- 8.3 The council's ASC Commissioning Team has supported independent day care providers throughout the pandemic and worked with them to develop alternative models of care that have been delivered whilst building based services remain closed. The services have been focussed on three key areas –
- Virtual services – activities delivered virtually using programmes such as MS Teams and Zoom. The council has supported this, providing nearly 70 laptops to people without the equipment needed to access these sessions, which have been distributed by the day care providers to their service users.
  - Community based services - support provided to people in small groups or 1:1 using community facilities such as parks or libraries.
  - Outreach services – respite support in the home, or on a 1:1 basis with service users, to ensure continuity of care and to prevent carer breakdown.
- 8.4 Each provider also has their own suite of services that they have offered to their service users, including a free meals service, weekly welfare calls and activity boxes to support virtual activities. Despite the disruption to services caused by the pandemic, no service user has gone without support, and alternatives to building based care have been put in place where needed.
- 8.5 ASC Commissioning is supporting commissioned providers with their own pilots as service users start to return to building based services. The learning from the Direct Services pilots will be shared across the day care sector in Brent, as well as support on risk assessment, and mitigating the risk of Covid-19 with vulnerable service users. Regular forums are held with day care providers, and 1:1 meetings on service planning will take place by early May to discuss the specific service issues with each provider and to help them prepare for re-opening.

8.6 Moving forward, the ASC Commissioning is working with day care providers and people who use day care services on the future of day care provision in Brent. There is an acceptance from providers that we shouldn't revert back to delivering services in the way we were prior to the pandemic, and that a mixed model of care, including virtual, outreach and community provision needs to be an important part of the offer. There is still much to do to develop proposals, but providers are fully engaged in this and working with the council on the future of day care provision. Further updates will be brought to the Community and Wellbeing OSC as the programme of work takes shape.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

9.1 Implications are included within the main body of the report.

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 Implications are included within the main body of the report.

## **11.0 Equality Implications**

11.1 Implications are included within the main body of the report.

## **12.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

### ***REPORT SIGN-OFF***

***Phil Porter***

Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing