

29th July 2021

Dear People we support, Parents and Carers

Outcome of Modernisation Engagement, Wirral Evolutions update.

We opened the Day Service Modernisation Engagement on the proposals described in my earlier letter, on [24 May 2021 \(Easy Read Version\)](#). It was originally scheduled to run until 13 June 2021 however, the period was extended for a further week in response to a request to broaden the engagement consultation and closed on 18 June 2021. It comprised of: -

- virtual meetings with parent/carers and people we support,
- questionnaires,
- personal emails, phone calls and
- extensive promotion on media platforms to reach out to as many people

We launched the engagement with a series of meetings, held virtually over Zoom, and engaged with over 100 parent/carers, to discuss the modernisation proposals and to gather their views and respond to questions or concerns. Those who were unable to attend the virtual meetings were offered alternative opportunities to participate in the process.

Similar themes emerged:

- Friendship groups being maintained
- Staffing changes
- Moving to different locations
- Transition
- Transport

Although reassurance was given at the meetings and in our correspondence that **levels of service would remain unchanged**, the greatest concern highlighted was *would there be a reduction in service levels for people we support?*

In addition to virtual meetings, we promoted easy read questionnaires containing four questions, available online and as printed copies. There was a good response to the questionnaire, with a total of 249 returns equating to 59% of the people



supported which is significantly above the national benchmark of 33% for questionnaire response rates.

Statements of feelings also emerged in the response to the question of what the changes would mean to the individual and were repeated in the section inviting comments. Observations ranged from recognising the “outmoded” traditional approach of centre-based activities; the changes could provide opportunities to widen choice and there were some concerns around the effects of the change in a short period of time

It is acknowledged that change brings levels of unsettlement and anxiety however, people can manage change well when they are fully involved in the process. Wirral Evolutions always considers the impact of changes and are committed to ensuring that people we support would be fully involved and have a personalised meeting to discuss options and develop a transition plan, with the valued input from their circles of support contributing to the process, to establish a flexible option in a way that works for them. It is also recognised that those attending several centres may not experience the same degree of change and we would commit to providing as much continuity as possible during any change. Individuals will always receive support based on their unique needs, appropriate in its design reflecting their wishes.

The questionnaire also invited alternative ideas to be put forward and a small number of respondents offered some different suggestions to the proposals which included enthusiasm to try new things, more socialising with people of a similar age, making use of the centres out of business hours, merging day centres, reducing overheads and management costs.

Some doubts raised were around the speed for the implementation of the proposed changes and we did acknowledge that it was far quicker than we would have liked. However, making any decisions or changes to services are always hard set against a backdrop of reduced funding.

What was made very clear in all the feedback is the importance of day services and that it is a critical element in the lives of the people we support and their parents. I and the Board of Wirral Evolutions are committed to ensuring that the provision is maintained, enhanced, and continuously improves for all in the Wirral Evolutions family.



We presented the feedback from the engagement to a workshop with the Chair and Group Spokespersons from the Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 9 July 2021. Subsequently, they have now requested a further report on the proposals from Council officers to be submitted to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 8 September 2021 for consideration. ***The Modernisation plans will, therefore, be paused until after this date. Following this meeting, I will write to you again with a further update***

At Wirral Evolutions we recognise the importance of the services and their impact on people's lives and feel this is a reasonable decision by Councillors and welcome the delay. This will provide an increased level of assurance, enabling a measured response to the proposals. In the meantime, we will continue to effectively focus on the best outcomes for the people we support aligned to our values and Company Strategy.

I would like to thank everyone for their feedback on the proposals, cooperation and understanding during this process, and to those who were able to take part in the engagement events and completed the questionnaire.

Kind regards

Jean Stephens

Managing Director

