



A Good Day

Our report and ideas for changes

24 June 2020

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Introduction

The first draft of this report was written in February 2020. Since then the UK is experiencing Covid-19 and the social and economic consequences. For people with a learning disability it has meant losing their Day Opportunities and being confined to their home.

In these circumstances, the staff have been keeping in regular contact with those they work with, and some have been doing outreach work.

The question 'What does a Good Day look like?' is still relevant! And, perhaps given the experience of lockdown, it will be more relevant as people are able to say what it is that makes the difference. Also, for some, there is the feeling that the rest of the world now knows what it feels like when going shopping is the weekly big event, or how bad it can be for your mental health to be restricted to being at home.

In a post-lockdown Torfaen, there are questions about how Day Opportunities adapt in the short term to continued restrictions for people with learning disabilities. However, there are also the longer-term questions that prompted this work, and with almost everything stopped for the foreseeable future, decisions about how things are re-started may help achieve the long term goals.

So, this report presents the information gathered between October 2019 and February 2020. However, the analysis and focus for the future has been adapted to the current circumstances.

Why we did this work

The main aim of A Good Day is to re-define and re-design Day Opportunities in Torfaen using a coproduction model.

This re-design aims to provide support that will be based on the following principles:

- Person Centredness;
- Flexibility and responsiveness;
- Involvement (voice and control);
- Being connected to others and our communities;
- Strong evidence and measuring impact;
- Long term thinking;
- Partnership; and
- Prevention and proportionality.

Central to this transformation process is that the Good Day is one that is valued. Valued by the person living it, and seen to have value by wider society. In Torfaen, this wider society value has been spoken about in two ways. For Torfaen in general, the Council's Corporate Plan uses the following words to describe what is valued:

- Being healthier
- Being more independent and developing skills
- Being safe from abuse and indignity – respected
- Reducing hardship and poverty
- Collaborating – with organisations mostly
- Building communities
- Preventing bad things

In a narrower context, the Gwent Charter and Better Future Lives defines value as:

- Choice, control and power
- Respect and dignity

- A good life
- Independence/ employment/skills
- Focus on strengths
- Collaborating – including individuals – coproduction, user design
- Connecting to others
- Being healthier
- Building more inclusive communities

Therefore, in developing new approaches and shaping a Good Day for people currently attending Day Opportunities, we will be attempting to see an improvement in these things that is seen from the perspective of the person.

To put this into context. If a person currently attending Day Opportunities wants to work, or move to mainstream volunteering, and this is achieved, then they can be seen to have grown in independence, skills, connecting to others and being part of a more inclusive community. This can be celebrated!

However, if it means the person loses all contact with valued friends in Day Opportunities and is unable to go to social events they used to enjoy, then the change might not be seen as good by themselves.

So, for a change to be acknowledged as increasing the value in a person's life, it needs to be agreed by the person as valuable and any negative impacts are seen as worth it.

Our plan of action

The project has two stages:

Stage 1 – Fact finding and consultation

Stage 2 – Trying out new ideas

This report is the result of Stage 1.

Our plan said:

Stage 1

1) We will recruit a team of people with and without learning disabilities to do the work – The Team.

2) We will recruit a group of people including people who attend Day Opportunities and Parents/carers to be a Reference Group.

3) The Team will talk to:

- People with Learning Disabilities
- Parents and Carers
- People who provide support

We will ask them

- What happens in your day now?
- What would you like to happen in your day?
- What opportunities are available locally?
- What is needed for changes to happen?

4) We will run events to help people to see what is possible

5) We will write a report that will recommend 3 things that can change. The report will be checked by the Reference Group

6) Decision makers will make plans for stage 2.

Stage 2

7) The new ideas will start in April 2020.

8) We will check that things are getting better in the first year so that changes last.

What we found out

We have written this section to be accessible to as many people as possible. There is more detail in the Appendices.

As a starting point we worked from the report Better Future Lives and the Gwent Charter. We found that few people had seen the report, so were not aware of the gaps in service that had been identified.

Torfaen County Borough Council told Welsh Government that there were 368 people with a learning disability that they were delivering services to (Welsh Government statistics 2019). There are more people than this as not everyone with a learning disability gets a service.

Following our plan, we talked to people with learning disabilities, their parents/carers, staff in Day Opportunities and people who manage services that they may access.

People attending Day Opportunities say

- they are happy with what they do
- they would like to do more things.

When we visited Day Opportunities they were

- safe
- people had some choice about what they did
- some were more 'work-like' and people had less choice
- staff were interested in people and supported them well

People with learning disabilities, their parents/carers and some staff we talked to sometimes did not know about all the opportunities. We are not sure that people with learning disabilities have had a fully informed and real choice when they made the decision about what to do.

In the Council run activities people with learning disabilities sometimes make things and sell them. It was not clear where the money went.

Some people with learning disabilities have been in Day Opportunities for a long time. Some could get work that pays – but they and the staff that support them think there is no-one to help them find work.

A few people are getting work, but a lot of people say they want to work. We have been told that:

- the Council wants to set up supported employment
- Employability services can help people with learning disabilities
- Engage to Change can help people aged 18-25. They say they have helped 7 people in Torfaen
- Growing Space has a project that has helped several people

Meeting up with friends and doing things together is important for people. We have found out that:

- The Gateway club meets every week and is popular
- People can go along to Synergy at Cwmbran stadium
- People who go to Evolve sometimes have an evening social that is free
- The My Mates project works across Gwent but doesn't have many people from Torfaen involved

- Many people say they haven't heard about Torfaen People First
- Some people have been helped to start new activities by Community Connectors, but it doesn't always work
- Transport and support outside of 9-4 Mon-Fri are problems for some people.
- Growing Space is starting a Travel Buddies scheme to help people be more independent.

Meeting with parent carers they have told us that

- Sometimes daily life is a struggle
- They often feel they don't have enough information
- They are afraid of change because they have worked hard to get the support they have
- The person they care for often stays at home when there is no support to take them to activities or no transport

We have looked at a sample of Care and Support Plans (CASPs) and it seems that

- The plans concentrate on the services that people receive rather than the goals or outcomes that they have
- The plans seem to be about maintaining what a person has rather than having aspirations for a better life
- More people than we expected have been categorised as not having the mental capacity to make their own decisions. We are checking whether the evidence provided backs up these decisions.

We talked to the leader of the Direct Payments team. She told us there were 35 people with learning disabilities who received a Direct Payment. This is 1 person in 10 who receive services. 22 people have a support worker they pay using Direct Payments.

Welsh Government has said that Direct Payments can be used to purchase services provided by local authorities. At the moment Torfaen does not allow this. If this changed, it would make services more flexible for people. People could 'purchase' one-to-one support from people who are currently employed to provide support in Day Opportunities.

We wanted to talk to staff of supported accommodation in Torfaen, but have not had the opportunity so far.

Ideas for change

We had some ideas for change. These have been thought about again because of Coronavirus.

The first thing we thought about was how to cope when physical access to services is not available. In this crisis management stage we have developed a Decision and action tree to help social services. This is in Appendix 4. We think this will lay the foundation for a different approach to providing Day Opportunities that is more person-centred and co-productive.

It will be a long time before people with learning disabilities will be able to do things in groups unless they live with the people.

It will be possible for people with learning disabilities to be supported by a support worker to do things in their homes or go out into the community to do shopping or take exercise. This will depend on their health condition and a risk assessment.

Having a social life is hard with social distancing. You can still phone people, have a video chat or send messages on social media. People should be able to do these things. They should be helped to have the equipment and supported to get access to on line apps, activities and resources.

If you have a job or volunteer, then your manager will decide when it is okay for you to be at work. Some businesses and charities are closed and activities are not happening. But in time all businesses and other organisations will open again.

The question we have asked is: with all these restrictions what can Day Opportunities do to help people have a Good Day?.

The first thing is that any solutions should be co-produced. That means that people who might get support have the deciding say

in what they want to do or try to do. The people who help them then work with them to work out how this can be achieved.

There may be ways this support can be provided by friends, family or people/groups in the community. If this is not possible, then paid support may be necessary.

The outcomes that people with learning disabilities may have can include helping others as well as doing things that benefit themselves. This could mean raising money for a favourite charity or cause, or volunteering for a Coronavirus related project.

Idea 1: Review the Care and Support Plan with the person supported and record the main points of the What Matters to You conversation.

In this context, a service or a day opportunity is not what is looked for. Outcomes are things like having friends, meeting my friends, learning new things, enjoying the outdoors, getting fit, losing weight, seeing family, enjoying a hobby or interest, looking after animals, being creative. If a person says an activity, there may be several reasons for that activity being important. If you can record why the activity is important, then if that activity cannot take place, an alternative may be possible.

Looking at the desired outcomes, it may be possible to provide some of the support required to achieve the outcomes from the family/friends or shielders of the person. Or there may be on-line options. In this regard, it may be appropriate to provide broadband connections and tablets with suitable software to enable video calling or group meetings via zoom or other apps.

Idea 2: If paid support is needed, offer direct payments as a first option and help the person find someone who could provide that support.

In the current situation, it seems best to see if there are local people who could provide the support, to prevent travel between

communities. Also, if individuals have their own support, then one person is not contacting many people who may be vulnerable.

Where a person has a desire to do any activity, see if a local group has any members that would be prepared to be a paid support worker for that activity. This could include crafting and things that are done in the home or walking or cycling.

Idea 3: As restrictions relax, see if there are synergies between people who are doing the same thing to see if a person would like to do that activity with someone else, especially if that person is a friend.

Often when the widespread use of direct payments is suggested, there are thoughts of pooling the payments in some way so people can access shared support. This may be possible in the future but can take time to set up. What is suggested here is the option of doing an activity with a friend who also has a learning disability. This would increase the social interaction and also provide more activity for the same overall budget.

There are three extensions to this idea:

- 1) It may be that such arrangements result in people being able to support each other as they do things they enjoy.
- 2) In a similar way to Gig Buddies, it may be that there are people who are willing to volunteer to accompany a person with learning disabilities.
- 3) Combining this idea with Travel Buddies training and/or My Mates activities would add value.

Idea 4: The co-production Research and Development Officer and Barod could work with people to enable them to capture their activities and experiences on video using tablets.

The videos could be posted on a dedicated You Tube channel or on a website so people can see what others are doing, generate

some discussion and give people ideas of what they might like to do themselves.

The other ideas that the team had are probably not able to be implemented until there is a vaccine for Coronavirus and people with a learning disability have far more freedom:

1) Helping people into employment

- Test whether Bridges into work will work for people with Learning Disability – we will support a number of people to access the service who are ‘researchers’ to get their feedback.
- Work with Torfaen Council to get their supported employment scheme off the ground. This will have job coaches who are council employees to work with people in work placements that will become jobs if both parties are happy.
- Liaise with Day Opportunities staff – introduce them to Elite workers, Growing Space and Bridges into work workers – seek to have 3-5 current attenders get additional work placement ‘tasters’ for 3-6 months to see if they want to get work.
- There are volunteering opportunities for café work placements in the Leisure Trust, with Growing Space and in the Power Station. Can these be used?
- Can a ‘getting into work’ support role be created and can either
 - a) staff time at Ty Nant Ddu be given to it, or
 - b) a staff member be seconded into itto facilitate these links and provide additional support for the people looking into getting a job.

2) Improving social lives

- Addressing the lack of information about what services and activities are available by involving people with learning

disabilities in making short videos about the things they do. These videos can be shared on social media and act as an encouragement for those who don't ask because they don't know.

- Every 3 or 4 months have a 'moving around' day within the in-house and commissioned services, where people have an opportunity to visit another service and see what it's like.
- Work with supported accommodation providers to see if there are ways to support people from different providers to do an activity together.

3) Entrepreneurship and Day Opportunities

Currently a number of the Day Opportunities undertake commissions, contracts or make things for sale. There is business support available for setting up a market stall or other ways of starting up businesses.

The aim would be to gain skills in marketing/selling and get experience to see if that sort of work would be wanted.

An Action Plan for Day Opportunities

The next steps for Day Opportunities are:

1) Short term help during the crisis

It is important that everyone is safe and healthy. Where lockdown is making people unwell or making relationships difficult, then support should be given.

If Carers are finding it difficult they should have a carers assessment. There may be support for them, or respite care for the person they care for. This should not be confused with support for the person cared for.

Using technology to overcome the restrictions of lockdown or shielding is a priority. If people are online, then reviews can be held by video or apps like Multi Me can be used to do person centred planning.

There are examples of direct payments being used to provide devices so that people can be on the internet to keep in contact with friends and family.

Some day opportunity providers are meeting online or having quizzes. Some are doing doorstep visits. Some are using video calls. Everyone should be looking at ways to maintain social links or make new ones.

Some self advocacy groups are hosting things online. Cardiff People First is holding open zoom meetings. Gig Buddies are hosting online gigs.

Appendix 4 gives a flow chart of questions to support a person during lockdown.

Planning for medium term support

Everyone who was receiving a service will need a review. This is a lot of work. Torfaen Council has said that no buildings will be open before October. This means there is 3 months to try to sort out what can happen.

The role of accessible information in the review process will be important. Before, social workers talked about what the Day Opportunities were or offered people a visit. Now, support will be tailored more to what people want to achieve, so there is no menu of services. This means:

- Finding the right support worker will be important. The ideas above may help.
- Some videos showing how people have used Direct Payments to get the support they need will help.
- Videos of what is possible at the moment or in the near future will be helpful.

For some, access to the sensory room will be a priority.

For some, a direct payment to provide equipment at home or a support worker to help them achieve their goals will be the best way forward.

The staff who were providing support at Ty Nat Ddu and the other activities could provide one-to-one support (outreach), with the aim of developing new weekly routines for people.

At the moment Torfaen doesn't allow Direct payments to be used to purchase local authority services. If this changed, then people would have more control over the services they received.

2) Planning for the long term

Where there are outcomes that activities have supported well, then these activities may restart when covid-19 is no longer a threat. But it should be considered whether, for example, supporting an individual or small group to be a part of a local allotment is preferable to restarting Green Wellies. The possibility of

pooling Direct Payments to support a small group to have an allotment could be a cost effective solution.

If there are no longer group based activities that you sign up to for 7 hours a day, with transport laid on etc, then people are likely to be more selective about what they want. As there is no 'easy solution', all activities will be just as easy/difficult to arrange and the choices may be different.

If people are receiving more individual support, investigating volunteering opportunities or work opportunities will be possible as part of the support package. This will probably need some staff development, helping them to engage with volunteering agencies or employment support schemes.

Appendix 1: More detailed evidence

Gathering information

We had a plan for gathering information about what made a good day for people with learning disabilities and their families/carers.

1) We recruited a team of people with and without learning disabilities to do the work. We had three people without learning disabilities: Bryan, Lucy and Kim. We had five people with learning disabilities: Nicola, Simon, Alex, Gareth and Linda.

2) We had a group of people with experience of Day Opportunities who would check our work and give us advice. They were called the Reference Group. There were three people who attended Ty Nant Ddu and three parents of young people with Autism.

3) We read the report of work that had already been done called 'Better Future Lives'. This had a list of things that needed to get better. We used this list to tell us where to concentrate our work.

4) We visited the Day Opportunities and saw for ourselves what people did, how they were supported and asked them their opinions. After each visit we sat down and talked about the visit and filled in a reporting sheet. A blank reporting sheet is included in Appendix 2. We visited

- Sensory life
- Woodchips
- Farm friends
- Green wellies
- Countryside
- Real life
- Evolve
- Able Radio

- 5) We found out how people access Day Opportunities and the mixture of services that they use.
- 6) We arranged some meetings for parents and carers. One in Ty Nant Ddu and one in Crownbridge School Only 4 people came.
- 7) Social services selected 15 people who attend Day Opportunities. We have talked to talked to them and their parents/carers to find out what they do now and what would be a good day for them.
- 8) We plan to talk to social workers about how people use direct payments to help them have a good day.
- 9) We talked to people who help people get into employment and with the Human Resources department in the Council about supported employment and whether people with learning disabilities can get help to get a job.
- 10) We talked to Community Connectors about how they have helped people with learning disabilities do things with community groups.
- 11) We plan to talk to accommodation providers to find out how support is organised during the evenings and at weekends.

Better Future Lives

As a starting point we worked from the report Better Future Lives and the Gwent Charter. We found that few people had seen the report, so were not aware of the gaps in service that had been identified.

As a team, we looked at the report and identified actions that related to Day Opportunities, or having a Good Day. These are listed in Table 1. All together there were 57 gaps listed. Of these the following 11 were within the A Good Day project and were prioritised.

- 5 More coproduction of services and interventions in partnership with people with learning disabilities.
- 6 Ensuring there is separation of care and accommodation in supported living models
- 10 Coproduce produce accessible information for people with learning disabilities and carers
- 17 More support and creative thinking about employment
- 30 Things happening at weekends and evenings
- 31 Better easy to understand information about opportunities
- 33 Rethink what day services are for and can they enhance people's lives without being their whole life
- 37 Having safe community spaces
- 48 Planned transitions from child to adult life
- 56 Lack of flexible support
- 57 Working together needs to happen in relation to the individual, strengthening natural community support and public services

Table 1: Gap analysis of Better Future Lives – mapping to A Good Day and other ICF funded projects

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
1	Better sex education, contraceptive and advice and support as a matter of course	Underpinning	N	ICF safer lives project
2	Training may be needed for professionals, especially those working in primary care (midwives, health visitors, and community nurses, GPs) to help them to identify vulnerable prospective or actual parents with learning disabilities and prepare them for parenting.	Underpinning	N	ICF safer lives project
3	Training for generic service providers and communities generally to increase their understanding and skills in engaging with people with autism and learning disabilities	Yes	N	ASD info Wales Safe Places People First Group Mencap
4	Multi-agency working across services using a standardised approach to assessment, intervention and support, including long-term support, with service protocols and outcome measures in place.	Underpinning		TCBC social care team Commissioning team ABHB LD team/CHC Integrated wellbeing team Integrated autism team

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
5	More coproduction of services and interventions in partnership with people with learning disabilities.	Yes	Yes	LD regional partnership TCBC social care team Commissioning team ABHB LD team/CHC Integrated wellbeing team Integrated autism team
6	Ensuring there is separation of care and accommodation in supported living models	Yes	Yes	TCBC social care team Commissioning team
7	Opportunities for professionals to shadow other professionals in different teams' maybe create learning secondment opportunities across organisations	Underpinning	No	TCBC HR ABHB HR Partner organisations
8	Co-producing strategies, materials and tools with people who use service and where appropriate with carers and families	Yes	Yes	Multidisciplinary frontline team
9	Better evidence that services and interventions (including social work) make a difference	Underpinning	Yes	Govtech Catalyst
10	Coproduce produce accessible information for people with learning disabilities and carers	Yes	Yes	Frontline staff, coproduction lead, people with LD and Carers

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
11	Developing joint commissioning arrangements and pooled budgets	Underpinning		Regional partnership/ leadership
12	Use strength based, person-centred approaches in all organisations	Underpinning		OD team, social care teams commissioning
13	Ensuring a single practitioner – who should act as a 'named worker' – to coordinate care and support.	Underpinning		Social care team
14	More robust use of principles of mental capacity act especially for young adults	Underpinning		Social care team
15	Independent advocacy universally and equally available across the region	Underpinning		Commissioning team
16	Ensuring people have better support around managing their money	Yes		Commissioning team
17	More support and creative thinking about employment	Yes	Yes	Bridges into work Growing space DWP TCBC HR Day Opps team Social work team
18	A Gwent Charter to make decisions based on these statements:	Done		
19	o We are adults. Treat us like adults			

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
20	o We want you to treat people how you want to be treated			
21	o We want options – and we want the choice to be ours			
22	o We want the power to say ‘no’.			
23	o We have rights.			
24	o We want to be safe.			
25	o People who use services should help change services.	See 5 above		
26	o Friends are important.	Yes		
27	o The free bus pass is important	See 32 below		
28	Help for people to make friends and keep in touch	Yes		
29	Better support for people to have relationships	Underpinning		Safer lives
30	Things happening at weekends and evenings	Yes	Yes	Gig buddies My mates
31	Better easy to understand information about opportunities	See 10 above	Yes	Coproduction lead and others
32	Help to travel safely	Yes		Travel Buddies – Karen Morgan
33	Rethink what day services are for and can they enhance people’s lives without being their whole life	Yes	Yes	Day opps team Social work team Coproduction Lead

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
34	Better information and support about work and benefits	See 17 above		Coproduction Lead Growing Space BASE Elite
35	Learning and support about starting businesses	See 17 above		Community catalysts Social firms Wales
36	Opportunities to use direct payments differently	Yes		Direct payment lead
37	Having safe community spaces	Yes	Yes	Safe places scheme – Torfaen People First
38	Learning about money and improving money skills	See 16 above		Adult education Banks Support providers Day opps team
39	Commissioning needs to involve the person with learning disabilities and their parent/carer.	Yes		Social work team Commissioning Day opps team Coproduction lead
40	Developing opportunities to micro-commission using direct payments.	Yes		Community catalysts Direct payments lead Social firms Wales
41	Rethinking social worker role and link with commissioning. How are identified needs translated into what services are commissioned.	Yes		Social work team Commissioning Day opps team Coproduction lead

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
42	More opportunities for people with learning disabilities to run, or be involved in running, services	See 5 above		Coproduction lead TCBC
43	Involvement of people with learning disabilities in developing new opportunities and new services	See 5 above		Coproduction lead TCBC
44	Use of person centre communication needs to be better developed including the use of technology	yes		Specialist advice?
45	Access to high quality postural care including hydrotherapy and physiotherapy	yes		ABHB/ specialist advice
46	Developing high quality sensory interventions	yes		TCBC Specialist advice Schools
47	Developing high quality, creative, flexible provider market	Underpinning		Commissioners
48	Planned transitions from children's to adult life	Yes	Yes	TCBC/ schools/colleges
49	Develop/implement competency framework for commissioners, providers and care workers	Underpinning		OD team
50	Improved monitoring of provider outcomes	See 9 above		Commissioners
51	Access to good practice and sharing this information amongst providers	Underpinning		Commissioners
52	Information and support around tenancy and housing rights in accessible formats	Underpinning		Commissioners

Number	Gap identified	Part of A Good Day?	Priority?	Who can do something?
53	Creation of positive blame free cultures in public sector bodies	Underpinning		Leadership
54	Council and public bodies have strategies/policy to actively employ people with disabilities and autism.	See 17 above		TCBC leadership/HR
55	A change in attitudes around work is needed, from Job Centre Plus workers, to employers, to parents and people with learning disabilities themselves	See 17 above		National Gov National/grassroots organisation and local authority
56	Lack of flexible support	See 6 above	Yes	Govtech catalyst commissioning
57	Working together needs to happen in relation to the individual, strengthening natural community support and public services	Yes	Yes	PSB Integrated wellbeing Grassroots community work

Visiting Day Opportunities

People attending Day Opportunities say

- they are happy with what they do
- they would like to do more things.

In general people who attended Day Opportunities were well engaged in the activities and seemed happy to be there. Several people told us about how they used to attend more days in the week, and were bored at home when they were not at the activity.

The team noted the following aspects of the Day Opportunities. They were:

- safe
- people had some choice about what they did
- some were more 'work-like' and people had less choice
- staff were interested in people and supported them well

There were access issues with some opportunities not being fully accessible. This restricted the opportunities that Nicola (a wheelchair user) could attend.

People we talked to sometimes didn't know about all the opportunities. We are not sure that they had a real choice when they made the decision about what to do.

In the Council run activities they sometimes make things and sell them. It wasn't clear where the money went. Woodchips and Green Wellies in particular spoke of making things to sell. At Evolve they make cards that are sold in a number of local care homes for the elderly and other places. The funds are kept to one side for celebrations.

Some people have been in Day Opportunities for a long time. Some could get work that pays – but there is no-one to help them find work. The Team lead responsible for Working Life service said he had assisted a couple of people to get employment, but he didn't have the time to do all the leg work required.

Visiting people and their parents/carers

We have spoken to five people who attend Day Opportunities and their parents/carers and six other parent/carers.

People with learning disabilities, their parents/carers and some staff we talked to sometimes didn't know about all the opportunities.

Parents spoke of Day Opportunities as 'Big School' or 'work'.

Parents reported that sometimes the implications of applying for a benefit were not clearly laid out. They also reported being given a relatively short list of options for services. We are not sure that the people with learning disabilities have had a fully informed and real choice when they made the decision about what to do.

Some parent/carers reported having difficulty finding support workers. One person reported difficulties with the new direct payments system.

Parents say that sometimes daily life is a struggle.

Parents often feel they don't have enough information.

Parents say that they and people they know are afraid of change because they have worked hard to get the support they have.

Parents say that the person they care for often stays at home when there is no support to take them to activities or no transport

Talking about Employment

A few people are getting work, but a lot of people say they want to work. We have been told that:

- the Council wants to set up supported employment
- Employability services can help people with learning disabilities
- Elite host a project called Engage to Change that can help people aged 18-25. They say they have helped 7 people
- Growing Space has a project No More Barriers that has helped several people

We have had meetings with managers in Torfaen CBC Human Resources and Employability Services. They have told us that Torfaen CBC intends to set up a supported employment scheme. There are a number of risks or potential blocks to this:

- The Council wants to have a dedicated job coach role within the Council to identify suitable roles, liaise with managers and staff, match with a potential employee and support the employee for at least the first six months. This needs funding and there is not currently the budget within the Council to do this.
- The Council wants a scheme that is for all parts of the Council, not just say, Environmental Services. This is good in establishing the expectation that supported employment is available in all departments, but also means that the policies and procedures have to work across the whole Council. This may delay things and also prevent some flexibility within a service or department.
- The council want it to work and feel the need to build some momentum in the scheme before rolling it out. This also risks delay in implementation and also means that the first few placements are seen as 'having to work'. This approach rather than a 'learning from mistakes' approach means that

Thrive). Communities for Work provides support for people in certain localities to find work.

We have been told that a number of adult learning tutors and staff in the employability service have experience in working with people with learning disabilities, and that these staff would be available to support people who are referred.

The manager of employability services also indicated that there were many employers who were waiting for placements, and that matching work hunters with a work placement would be possible.

Further discussion also indicated that a cohort of people from Day Opportunities might be able to do a short (several month) course aimed at giving them the work place skills and job seeking skills needed. This would be funded provided elements of basic literacy and numeracy were integrated into the bespoke course. This could also incorporate a work placement as a volunteer in a café at Powerhouse.

Engage to Change is available for adults with a learning disability who are under 25. It provides a paid work placement for 6 months, so the employer can try out a person with a reduced financial risk. There is a team based in Pontypool, but we have been unable to have a meeting so far.

The Growing Space 'No More Barriers' project aims to help people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues to find employment. They help people to write a CV, give them supported work experience in their café or within other projects and seek to match them with available opportunities for work placements with employers.

Torfaen Leisure Trust have employed several people with learning disabilities in their leisure centres. They also have opportunities for work placements in ground works and café work.

Considering the people attending Day Opportunities, the manager of Life Works says that he has assisted several people to get employment that has used the skills they gained in the Countryside Day Opportunity. The employment was sustainable

but took a long time to arrange and used his personal and professional relationships with the employers.

Talking about social lives

Meeting up with friends and doing things together is important for people. We have found out that:

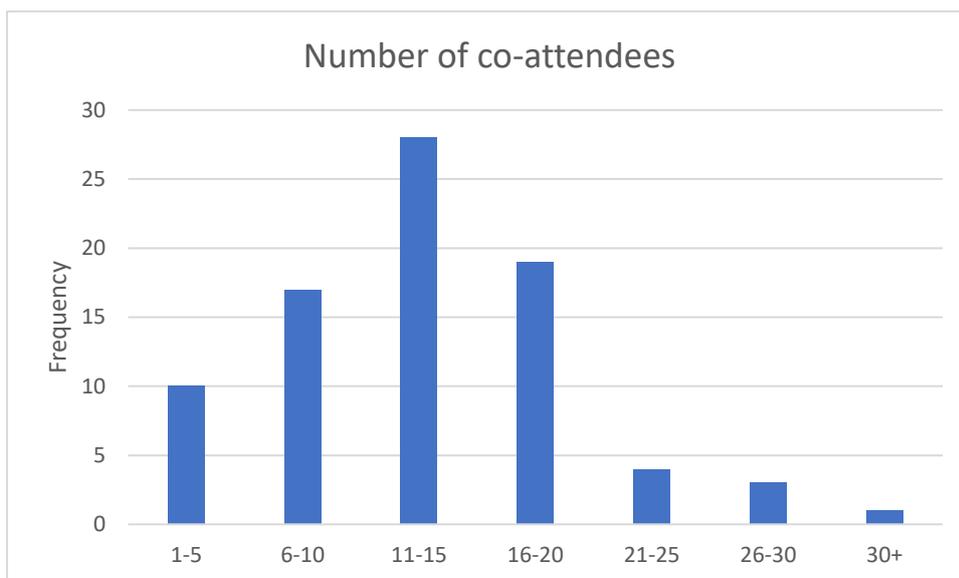
- The Gateway club meets every week and is popular
- People can go along to Synergy at Cwmbran stadium
- People who go to Evolve sometimes have an evening social that is free
- The My Mates project works across Gwent but doesn't have many people from Torfaen involved
- Many people say they haven't heard about Torfaen People First
- Some people have been helped to start new activities by Community Connectors, but it doesn't always work
- Transport and support outside of 9-4 Mon-Fri are problems for some people.
- Growing Space is starting a Travel Buddies scheme to help people be more independent.
- People attending Day Opportunities value the social interaction that regular activities provide.
- People who move activities often those they were with, but are often not supported to maintain those relationships.

We looked at the social interactions of the people attending Day Opportunities. Two research projects have indicated that people with learning disabilities in the UK have an average of 32 or 22 people in their social networks with ranges from 7 to over 50⁵.

⁵ Bhardwaj, A.K., Forrester-Jones, R. and Murphy, G.H. (2017) Social networks of adults with an intellectual disability from south Asian and white communities in the United Kingdom: a comparison. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 31 (2). pp. 253-264. ISSN 1360-2322. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12351>
Forrester-Jones, R., Cambridge, P., Carpenter, J., Tate, A., Beecham, J., Hallam, A., Knapp, M.R.J., Coolen-Schrijner, P. and Woof D (2006) *The Social Networks of People with Intellectual Disability Living in the Community 12 Years after Resettlement from Long-Stay Hospitals*.

These networks are greatly biased towards family and Day Opportunities. This compares to over 124 for the general population⁶. For the 82 people who attend the Council provided Day Opportunities, they attend an average of just under three times a week in groups that range from 1:1 to 11. The attendees have between two and 35 people that they attend groups with. This is shown in the graph overleaf, with most attendees having 11-15 other people they are in groups with.

Given the low number of people that people with learning disabilities know, this is likely to represent a large proportion of the social relationships that they have. Therefore any plan to move people on from Day Opportunities must take into account the likely loss of social connections.



Evidence from Care and Support Plans

We have looked at a sample of Care and Support Plans (CASPs) and it seems that

Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 19 (4). pp. 285-295. ISSN 1360-2322. DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3148.2006.00263.x>

⁶ Hill R.A. and Dunbar R.I.M. (2003) Social Network size in humans. Human Nature, Vol. 14 (1), pp. 53-72

- The plans concentrate on the services that people receive rather than the goals or outcomes that they have
- The plans seem to be about maintaining what a person has rather than having aspirations for a better life
- More people than we expected have been categorised as not having the mental capacity to make their own decisions. We are checking whether the evidence provided backs up these decisions.

About Direct Payments

In May 2020, the following information was provided about the use of Direct Payments in Torfaen:

There are 35 people with LD receiving DP

Number of LD with PA	22
Number of LD with Agency	1
Number of LD with Leisure Card	3
Number of LD with Day Service	5
Number of LD with Respite	4
Number of LD with Respite as 2nd Service	3

This shows that approximately 1 in 10 of people receiving services are using Direct Payments. This is similar to other areas of Wales, but not as many as the best practice areas.

There are set hourly rates for support workers employed by Direct Payments. This includes elements for national insurance and pensions etc. When a person is offered a Direct Payment it is usually linked to a number of hours support a week, making the budgeting easier for the person receiving the payment.

There are no examples of people pooling their Direct Payments.

Recently, the support for people to manage their Direct Payments was taken 'in house'. The service is now established, and the team are looking to increase the number of people receiving Direct Payments.

During Lockdown, in different areas of Wales, Direct Payments have been used to:

- PA's self-isolating with DP recipients that LA provided additional beds within the DP recipients home so that continual support can be provided safely
- PA support changing to meet the change in need by phone support, face time, collecting and delivering shopping and medication.
- PAs talking people through tasks remotely
- PA and child were linking up over facetime onto a big screen in order to undertake activities together to keep continuity for the child by seeing the PA at the regular times/days.
- PAs thinking and initiating ways to entertain a child in order to continue working
- PA supporting someone with LD to maintain structure to their day. Timetable compiled with a different activity every hour including the PA going to the home in order for the person to go for a walk everyday which gave parents a break.
- Laptop to support alternative social contact via technology.
- Pay as you go mobile phone to enable appropriate daily contact with PA.
- Garden chair to enable a child with complex needs to have their own quiet space away from the family.
- Treadmill to support exercise and excessive energy issues.
- Bicycle to support exercise, activity and daily routine.
- Gardening equipment to support activity of interest, time away from family etc.

- Outdoor play equipment to provide stimulus, activity away from family etc.
- Air B&B to provide respite in a safe environment away from family home with people vulnerable to the virus.
- Desk and chair to support daily educational activities.
- T.V and small sofa to create safe space for young person to have time away from their family.
- Basketball hoop – To support activity of interest to the young person. Something to stimulate and engage the person away from their immediate family.
- Magazine subscription
- Educational Apps
- Headphones to help a young person who was unable to tolerate the noise from his siblings 24/7.
- Play equipment – Used to support young child, but also to enable family to develop play skills.
- Cross trainer – To support person to maintain exercise routine as local gym is closed.
- Garden chair to help create a safe space for the child to have quiet times away from family.

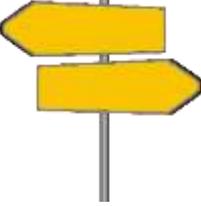
In each of these cases there is a clear rationale for the use of Direct Payments, linked to outcomes and taking into account the living situation and finances of the person.

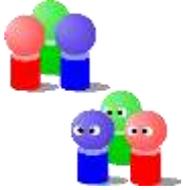
Appendix 2: Tools we used

We used the following tools to gather and record information.

- We took notes of all team meetings and reference group meetings
- We had a reporting sheet for site visits
- We had an information sheet and a consent form for people we interviewed.
- We had a list of questions for interviews with people with learning disabilities and their parents/carers.
- We used excel spreadsheets to keep track of project activities and report to ICF.
- We communicated using Facebook Messenger, text, phone and email.

A Good Day

	Name of Day opportunity
	How do people get here?
	Indoors or Outdoors?
	Are the signs good?
	Is it accessible?
	Food / drink – provided or bring your own?
	Are there any safety concerns?

	<p>Are people happy?</p>
	<p>Are people supported well?</p>
	<p>How do staff and people communicate?</p>
	<p>Are staff patient?</p>
	<p>Can people do what they want?</p>
	<p>Are there enough support staff?</p>
	<p>Filled in by</p> <p>Helped by</p> <p>Date</p>

Notes



A Good Day - Summary



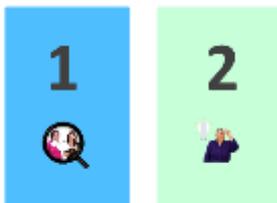
Torfaen County Borough Council want to know what a Good Day is and how they can help people have good days



Barod is doing the work



Jim Wright is in charge



There are 2 stages in the project



Stage 1 – Fact finding and consultation



Stage 2 – Trying out new ideas



Stage 1

Fact finding and consultation



We will talk to:



People with Learning Disabilities



Parents and Carers



People who provide support



We will ask them



What happens in your day now?



What would you like to happen in your day?



What opportunities are available locally?



What is needed for changes to happen?



We will run events to help people to see what is possible



We will write a report



We will recommend
3 things that can change



The report will be checked by the Reference Group



Decision makers will make plans



Phase 2 – trying out new ideas



The new ideas will start in April 2020



We will check that things are getting better in the first year



So that changes last.



Any questions?



Phone Lucy on 07773467478

Bryan Collis
2 October 2019

A Good Day

CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT ID:



About Me



My Name is *(please print):*



Please read the information sheet about A Good Day



Please ask any questions you have



Taking part in A Good Day



I have read and understood the information sheet about A Good Day



I have been given the chance to ask questions



I agree to taking part in A Good Day



I agree to being recorded or being in a video



I am volunteering to take part. I know I can withdraw from the project at any time.



Using my information in A Good Day



I understand that my personal details will not be shared to people outside the project



I understand that my words may be quoted in reports, web pages and social media



You can use my real name when you tell people what I have said

Please sign so we can legally use your information



I agree to my information being used in the A Good Day project

Signed by me

Date

Questions for Parents / Carers

1) Are you happy with the service being provided?

2) What could we change about the service / what would make it better?

3) What do you see happening for (name of person) in the future?

4) What opportunities are there for (name of person) outside of the service?

5) Do you find transport an issue for (name of person)?

6) What have you tried already that hasn't worked? Why hasn't it worked?

7) What would make a good day for you?

Questions for people who use services

1) What services do you already access

2) What other services/activities would you like to try?

3) How do you get to and from Day Opportunities and services?

4) How many days do you attend Day Opportunities?

5) What would you like to do in the future?

6) What do you do in your spare time? (Social Life)

7) Who helps / support you? (Important / significant people)

Appendix 3: How we co-produced the work

The Team

We recruited a mixed team of people of different ages, gender and experience of services:

Bryan: Team Leader. Worker Director at Barod CIC. Bryan does training, research and evaluation.

Lucy: Research, Coproduction and Development Officer, Torfaen CBC. Lucy was a play worker with Torfaen CBC. She is the backbone to the team.

Simon: Worker, Barod CIC. Simon is also Co-chair of AWPf National Council, Chair of Cardiff People First and a Gig Buddies Ambassador.

Alex: Gwent Charter Ambassador. Alex joined the team to provide his experience in self advocacy with Newport People First and his understanding of services.

Gareth: Gwent Charter Ambassador. Gareth lives in Torfaen and knows lots of people.

Kim: A researcher from Cardiff University. Kim used to be a manager of day services in England.

Nicola: A self advocate, volunteer and activist from Torfaen. Nicola wanted her first paid job and so joined the team. Sadly Nicola died in November.

Lynda: A member of Torfaen People First. Lynda doesn't use services, but wanted to help things change.

Anne: A worker with Barod CIC. Anne does social research and has years of experience working with people with learning disabilities.

The Team (Lucy and Anne are missing)



Everyone was paid for their work. Bryan, Simon and Anne were paid the living wage by Barod. Alex, Gareth, Nicola and Linda were paid the national living wage by Growing Space, who were reimbursed by Barod. Kim was initially paid by Barod, but changed her role and became a researcher for Cardiff University within the project. Lucy was employed by Torfaen CBC and was paid at spine point XX.

Lucy had an enhanced DBS check as part of her employment with Torfaen CBC before joining the Team. The other members of the team were not DBS checked as their contact with vulnerable adults was not going to be long enough in one setting or often enough to be eligible for a DBS check.

During the work we experienced some difficulties with health and Nicola had a sudden illness and died in November 2019. We were undergoing recruitment work with members of the Independent Living group at Pontypool College when Coronavirus caused the project to be suspended.

Working practices and roles

Bryan and Lucy were the team leaders and made sure meetings happened, reported to Jim, the manager in Social Services, and to Samantha, the person looking after A Good Day in the Independent Care Fund, our funder. They also ensured timesheets were kept and returned to Barod or Growing Space.

Bryan authorised travel or subsistence expenses. These were reimbursed in cash at Team meetings when a VAT receipt was provided.

After team training, we organised into pairs or threes for site visits, interviews and meetings with professionals. The team decided who did which meetings based on availability and having a male/female and learning disabled/non learning disabled mix. Sometimes the team decided that the pair/three would not have a person with learning disabilities if it was going to be very technical.

Data collection tools were designed together and interview questions and site visit records are shown in Appendix 2.

When arranging the interviews for the case studies we worked initially as two pairs, making the phone calls to arrange the visits. However, it fell to Lucy to complete this work with those who didn't answer during our session.

Nicola typed up notes of team meetings and kept us on our toes about communication.

Lucy typed up notes of site visits. She also read the CASP forms and other information on Social Services's IT system. As an employee of Torfaen CBC she could do this.

Bryan and Kim kept their own notes of meetings.

Bryan led some training for the team on:

- What is coproduction
- What is evaluation
- Data protection and confidentiality

- How to do site visits
- How to do interviews and
- How to arrange interviews.

Lucy and Bryan kept the electronic filing system up to date.

We held meetings at Ty Nant Ddu, Canalside, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and the Environment Centre. Team members were responsible for their own travel arrangements, but lifts were available if needed. Gareth, Simon and Linda generally travelled by bus. Alex got a lift from his parents. Kim, Lucy and Bryan owned cars. Nicola used an accessible taxi. All travel expenses were reimbursed by Barod.

Team meetings were generally led by Bryan or Lucy. They were held weekly from early October.

Reference Group meetings were chaired by Nicola, Simon, Gareth and Bryan. The agenda was prepared at the team meeting before the Reference Group.

The team met to discuss the findings at different stages of the project. Often this was a short part of a normal team meeting.

The framework for the report was discussed by the team and it was agreed by the Reference Group that the report would be in everyday English, with the main text being a shorter version. Details for professionals and decision makers would be included as appendices.

The Reference Group

The Reference Group's role was threefold

- To advise the team on how to go about the work
- To read the report and comment on the ideas for the projects in year 2
- To receive reports on progress and advise/help solve problems

The membership was:

- three people who attended Day Opportunities run by Torfaen CBC. These were supported by two centre staff
- three parents of people who used Day Opportunities or whose children were in transition.
- the team

The meetings were chaired by one of the Team. When possible, this was a person with learning disabilities.

The venue was Ty Nant Ddu as this was familiar to those who attended Day Opportunities, was fully accessible and had car parking and a bus stop.

The agenda was in easy read and was circulated the week before the meeting.

All items were spoken about in full, so people who could not read were not at an immediate disadvantage. If papers were prepared, they were in everyday English.

Notes were taken, or work on flipcharts kept and written up by a member of the team.

Appendix 4: Crisis management – keeping people safe and well

The following decisions and actions are for anyone in the current situation who may need support during lockdown and the following months.

1) If a person is in lockdown or unable to do their usual activities, help them to plan and keep to **a daily and weekly routine** that helps you to make decisions about what to do next, and keeps their body in some kind of rhythm. (go to 2)

2) Identify the primary need:

a) carer support (go to 3)

b) activity (go to 4)

c) social contact (go to 7)

3) The carer needs support. Are there safeguarding concerns if no support is given?

If yes, then support needs to be given to prevent harm. This could be outreach work to support the carer, occupy the person cared for in their own home, take them out (see under activity) or provide respite care.

If there are no safeguarding concerns, facilitate community based support or provide support to enable the carer to cope.

4) Activity is needed. Is the person shielding?

If Yes, go to 5. If No go to 6.

5) If shielding,

a) Seek to provide Coronavirus specific volunteering or fundraising ideas the person can do at home (eg Captain Tom). This focuses on things that have value and give a reason to get up.

b) suggest suitable inclusive exercise guidance on line. Could local physiotherapist do some seated exercise on-line?

c) provide or support to choose a craft kit or other things that can be done at home.

6) If not shielding,

a) Any of the three ideas for those shielding can also be used.

b) Support the person to risk assess going out of the house to get exercise, do shopping, etc. The use of cash may be a problem, so seeing if a Debit Card can be used or obtained can be considered.

c) If the person has a work placement or volunteers or has employment, support the provider/employer to do a risk assessment.

7) Social contact is needed. Is the person able to be 'on line'?

If No, go to 8. If Yes, go to 9. If already on line, go to 10.

8) If the person cannot access social contact digitally, provide phone calls and call on the person and have a doorstep/front garden chat, talking from a safe distance. This could be done as often as needed.

9) If the person has the possibility to be 'on line', assist them to get a router, dongle, phone account with data, laptop, iPad or smart phone. If they have a managed budget, this could be used, or a community grant scheme could be set up.

Support the person to set up the device and download any apps needed. An outreach visit or visits may be necessary.

Once the person is on line, are there apps they can use easily (Zoom, Messenger, Whatsapp, Zoom, Facebook, Twitter). If yes, support them to get them installed and provide outreach or remote support to get them using them.

10) Provide support to access on-line resources. At a minimum provide weekly updates to people on what is available on line. Examples include the Keeping Safe website, Gig Buddies online karaoke and quiz events that are run by self advocacy organisations. More intensive remote support might include inviting people to a watch party on Facebook, or using Messenger or Zoom to provide a daily video call.

This should supplement some face to face contact on doorsteps.

This needs to be supported by Information, Advice, Assistance and Content.

Information.

The local authority needs to be in contact with what is going on locally in terms of community activity that is coronavirus specific. Some form of central shared information resource needs to be used, and made accessible to people (easy read, videos?)

An information strategy and process need to be set up, so that:

- new or self organising activities know who to tell or where to send information,
- existing informal networks are sent information proactively, either by email, social media or in hard copy
- an accessible version of information is communicated
- mainstream information resources are used, eg libraries and community hubs.

Advice

As well as information, people should be able to access support to interpret and use the information. This might be a phone number or a web chat facility, so people can talk to a real person who can help them decide what activity or opportunity is best for them. Torfaen People First may have some people able and willing to help provide this.

Assistance

This is where a community connector role is essential. They may work remotely and support people to access on line resources or events. Or a more intensive support worker role would check up on progress or engagement on a weekly basis and troubleshoot or suggest new things as they become available. People could be encouraged to support one another remotely, contacting friends, suggesting they join in on line events.

Content

Finally, Day Opportunity providers should facilitate people or provide on line resources that are relatable (ie a Zoom meeting where you meet up with people from your day opportunity or a craft or skill demonstration by a person). On line quizzes or competitions can provide opportunities for social interaction and learning and activity that support wellbeing.

These support mechanisms may be the only ones available during lockdown or for people self isolating or shielding. However, as daily lives become less restricted, they provide a platform for growing a shared community led way of providing support.