

TITLE OF REPORT: Results from consultation on the Councils Vision for Disability Day Services and Equalities Impact Assessment

REPORT OF: David Bunce, Group Director, Community Based Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) Inform Cabinet of the results of the consultation on the Vision for Disability Day Services.
 - (b) Report on the outcome of the analysis of the Equalities Impact Assessment and makes recommendations for implementation of the Vision and consequent decisions.
 - (c) Seek approval for the implementation of the Vision for Disability Day Services with effect from 1st April 2012.
 - (d) Seek approval to withdraw learning disability services from Birtley Day Centre.
 - (e) Consider the outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessment and approve actions identified to mitigate implementation.

Background

2. In July 2011, Gateshead Council Cabinet agreed to consult on its Vision for Disability Day Services for the following reasons:
 - To enable disability services to be clear about its future role and direction aligned to the adult care commissioning strategy.
 - To maximise the expertise quality and skills of the current workforce.
 - To recognise the need to effectively target services to minimise long term dependency and provide support to those most in need.
 - To respond to the current financial pressures.
 - To address current service gaps in the independent and third sector.
3. Extensive consultation took place with people who use services, their carers, and other stakeholders between 20th July and 28th October - see **appendix 2**.
4. The Vision made proposals based upon both local and national priorities, the council's knowledge of the people who use services and known needs of family carers. It proposed changes to some services, expansion of other services and the closure of one service.
5. This report provides a summary and analysis of the responses received to the consultation, in order to inform the Council in shaping its final Vision for Disability Day Services outlined in **Appendix 5**.

Consultation with User, Carers and Stakeholders

6. The following took part in the consultation:

- Adults with a disability currently using day services
- Carers of people who use our services
- Staff supporting people across our services
- Colleagues in Assessment and Commissioning teams
- Private & voluntary sector organisations and their staff who provide services to people in Gateshead
- Advocacy providers
- Health & GPs
- BME & Faith groups
- Voluntary & charitable organisations
- Gateshead LINK
- Education establishments
- Elected Members & MPs
- Trade Unions

7. In total we received 430 completed responses. 54% of responses were from people who use services. Further information on the consultation process is provided in **Appendix 2**. Key outcomes from the consultation are summarised in this report, with further detail provided in **appendices 2 & 3**.

8. In total, 81 carers attended a range of events across the borough. 233 people who use services attended events supported by advocates and carers. 21 residents responded by a new on line mechanism¹ (from the Council's website – You Choose). Five staff teams completed submitted a response. The respondents to the on-line survey included both employees and residents views.

9. The questionnaires and on-line consultation asked people to express their views on the proposals contained within the Vision.

10. Data and information received through the consultation endorses the Vision for Disability Day Services, as a result no changes have been made to the Vision.

Summary of outcomes from Consultation with people who use services

11. Almost everyone who uses day services expressed that they enjoyed attending day services to see friends, do activities and socialise. For some people this is the only opportunity to leave the home and be apart from carers. Friendship is very important to people. Some people said they would like the opportunity to volunteer or get a paid job; other people had negative experiences around this. Some people wanted services to be more flexible and staff to have more time to do things individually with them, perhaps at evenings and weekends. Transport was an issue for some people with a learning disability as few people are able to travel independently - **see appendix 3**.

Summary of outcomes from consultation with carers of people who user services

¹ Gateshead Council employees responded to the on line survey and their views are included in this analysis. 60% of Gateshead Council employees are residents in Gateshead.

12. Carers of people who use day services generally valued current service provision. Some people liked the idea of providing more opportunity for people to volunteer or get paid employment and others did not. Carers were concerned about staffing ratios to be able to support people in an individualised way. Many carers raised concerns about the assessment process and the pace of change. There were also concerns about transport to and from services in the future – **see appendix 3.**

Summary of outcome from consultations with other stakeholder groups.

13. The Healthier Communities Advisory Group generally welcomed the proposals. There were concerns however regarding people in employment and what would happen for their retirement. There was also concern that many people did not like change and that this would need to be well managed.
14. Responses from staff were a mixture of pride about delivering what they perceived as good services and excitement about the future model of service but also concern for their jobs and the increased pressure that fewer staffing resources brings.
15. Other stakeholder responses included feedback on the potential for increased partnership working with other agencies and developing user led services.
16. No responses were received from colleagues in Health and Educational establishments.
17. Trade Unions were consulted throughout the consultation period.

Equality Impact Assessment

18. Overall, there are six proposals with a potential equalities impact. These are:

Service	Proposal to	Groups affected
Marquisway Centre	Change	People with a learning disability
Marquisway Bungalow	Change	People with autism and complex needs
Community Bases	Change	People with a learning disability
Blaydon Centre	Change	People with mental ill-health and physical disabilities
Phoenix Centre	Change	People with a physical disability.
Birtley Centre	Close	People with a learning disability.

19. In all cases the family carers of people with a disability will also be affected. **Appendix 4** outlines the full list of these proposals highlighting the type of potential impact that has been identified. Services are currently engaged in assessing the potential impact of the proposals on specific groups and individuals. Critical to this process is identifying how it will be possible to mitigate the adverse impact on these vulnerable groups or individuals against the areas identified above.
20. It should be noted that some people consulted who use the Birtley Centre do not support the withdrawal of the service from this building. Their reasons are highlighted in **appendix 3.** However the Council will identify, following re-assessment, alternative

services to meet the needs of this group from other locations and this has been fed back to people affected. Day service provision at Birtley will not be withdrawn until this process has been completed and the Council is therefore confident that users and carers assessed needs can be met.

Conclusions and Recommendations

21. Cabinet is recommended to:

- a. Receive and consider the comments in respect of the consultation on the Vision for Disability Day Services.
- b. Endorse the Vision for Disability Day Services following consultation.
- c. approve the implementation of the Vision for Disability Day Services with effect from 1st April.
- d. Approve the withdrawal of learning disability services from Birtley Day Centre subject to the availability of suitable alternative provision.
- e. Note the outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessment and approve actions identified to mitigate impact of implementation.

22. For the following reasons:

- To ensure that Disability Day Services continue to meet the needs of local residents in the most cost effective way and in doing so, deliver services that achieve excellent outcomes and are in line with both local and national priorities.
- To deliver efficiency savings to the council.

23. Appendices:

1. Options & recommendations
2. Consultation summary
3. Consultation outcomes
4. Equality impact Assessment
5. Vision for Disability Day Services

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APPENDIX 1: Options and recommendations

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report support the vision for Gateshead as set out in Vision 2030 and the Council's Corporate Plan. In particular the Vision for Disability Day Services will ensure the Council's resources are focused on delivering its priorities and meeting the needs of local communities and Vision 2030.
2. In 2006 the Department of Health's (DOH) white paper advocated the transformation of social care "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". Following this in 2007 the Department of Health then issued 'Putting People First' which set out information to support the transformation of social care, as outlined in the 2006 Health White Paper.
3. Valuing People Now, DOH, January 2009, set out the vision that all people with a learning disability are people first with the right to lead their lives like any others, with the same opportunities and responsibilities.
4. Other policy drivers, in respect of people with disabilities, including "New Horizons: A Shared Vision for Mental Health", Cross Government Strategy, December 2009", promote the benefits, to both the individual and society, of people with a disability having the opportunity to get involved in work related activities including paid employment.

Background

5. In July 2011 Gateshead Council produced the Vision for Disability Day Services. The document contained proposals for changes to council run services for people with disabilities. Outcomes from the following consultations are incorporated in this report: During the consultation the following groups were consulted:
 - Adults with a disability currently using services
 - Carers of people who use our services
 - Staff supporting people across our services
 - Colleagues in Assessment and Commissioning teams
 - Private & voluntary sector organisations and their staff who provide services to people in Gateshead
 - Advocacy providers
 - Health & GPs
 - BME & Faith groups
 - Voluntary & charitable organisations
 - Gateshead LINK
 - Education establishments
 - Elected Members & MPs
 - Trade Unions

Context

6. The Council provides a range of in-house day service opportunities for people with a learning disability, physical disability, and mental ill-health, including older people with mental health difficulties. Most are provided across the borough from a range of

buildings owned by the council. However some services provide support in the community, and in the homes of paid carers. The Council also recruits volunteers to work with people in their community. Lots of good things are happening in our services at the moment and the quality of staff support is excellent, but that does not mean we can't make things even better.

7. The Vision proposals include:

- Changing the way we deliver services to people with a disability, to enable better outcomes and help people to be more involved in their local community.
- Making sure that people have personalised services.
- Not having too many buildings that we don't need in the future.
- Helping people to learn new skills.
- Helping people to gain employability skills and employment if they wish to.
- Helping people to take part in user enterprises and volunteering opportunities.

8. The proposals within the Vision have been developed in the context of the economic position and the proposals reflect the Council's need to respond to tightening budget allocations from central government. Withdrawal of the learning disability day service from Birtley Day Centre will contribute to the councils efficiency agenda.

Consultation

9. This report provides an analysis of consultation that has been undertaken on the Vision for Disability Day Services. The details of the outcomes from the public consultations is included in **Appendices 2 & 3**. Analysis of the consultation data has endorsed the Vision for Disability Day Services. The equality impact data in appendix 4 includes further action identified as necessary to mitigate against the impact of the implementation of the Vision including the specific concerns of users and carers in relation to the withdrawal from Birtley Centre.

Alternative Options

10. Option 1: Implementation of the Vision for Disability Day Services. This will ensure that services are cost-effective and deliver the best outcomes for the residents of Gateshead who have a disability and their family carers.
11. Option 2: Implementation of the Vision for Disability Day Services, subject to those actions required as necessary to mitigate impact of implementation. This includes the assessment of all users and family carers using Birtley Centre and ensuring alternative services are in place to meet assessed need prior to withdrawal of the service. Provider services and assessment team will work together to ensure this is completed.
12. Option 3: No change. Services continue in their current form. Services will not change to reflect local and national priorities and no efficiencies will be released. .

Implications of Recommended Option

The recommended option is Option 2: Implementation of the Vision for Disability Day Services subject to mitigating actions.

13. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Finance and ICT confirms that the £138,000 efficiency savings arising from this proposal, subject to Cabinet approval and ongoing budget consultation, will be incorporated into the 2012/13 budget for disability day services.
14. **Risk Management Implications** – the council would be at risk of judicial review proceedings if it did not ensure that all users and carers affected by the Vision were offered a re-assessment of need, and plans put in place to meet assessed eligible need.
15. **Human Resources Implications** – The proposals within the Vision are likely to include the deletion of some posts as services change and at Birtley Centre where the proposal is to close. As the Vision is implemented across services there will also be a need to alter the working locations and job profiles of some staff. All HR issues will be addressed by engaging the Council's agreed HR framework and all appropriate employees and their representatives will be fully consulted.
16. **Property Implications** – As the Disability Day Service is not the sole occupier of the Birtley Centre an alternative user will have to be identified to ensure that the building is fully utilised. If an alternative occupier cannot be identified this may have implications for the future of the building.
17. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – A full Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been developed and attached as **appendix 4**. This will be updated and reviewed throughout the implementation process. The Council recognises that the Public Sector Equality Duty is engaged by the decisions envisaged in these documents and will have due regard to that duty throughout the implementation.
18. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – an increase in crime and disorder may result as a consequence of any buildings being left empty and unused.
19. **Sustainability Implications** – there will be no sustainability implications as a result of this report.
20. **Human Rights Implications** – The decisions that will be made as a result of this consultation may potentially impact upon service user's and carer's human rights; especially Article 8.
21. **Health Implications** – The proposed service developments support the current health and well-being agenda by promoting independence, social inclusion and citizenship. The impact upon the health and wellbeing of individual people is recognised and actions taken to mitigate.
22. **Area and Ward Implications** – the withdrawal from Birtley Centre will impact upon the Birtley ward. This may also impact upon other users of the building including the Nursery and Youth Club. The Nursery are a private concern and operate Monday – Friday. The Youth Club operates three evenings per week and is operated by four part-time council staff. Although flexible about where the service operates from, the youth programme is considered necessary in the Birtley area.

Gateshead Disability Day Services ConsultationThursday 21st July - Friday 28th October 2011

“Gateshead services are like Concord compared to Yorkshire which was like Ryan Air!” – Carer’s comment

Consultation methods:	Numbers engaged and/or responding
Carers at Day Services	76
Carers at Advocacy session	5
Service Users at Day Services - Learning Disability	177
Service Users at Day Services - Mental Health	18
Service Users at Day Services – Physical Disability	13
Service Users at evening event – Learning Disability	25
Staff Team Responses	5
Consultation Questionnaire – hard copies	83
On-line consultation – accessed	(72)
- completed	21
Partnership Boards (not included above)	1
Community & Voluntary Organisations (not included above)	2
Others (including letters and emails)	4
Completed Responses – TOTAL:	430

An extensive consultation was held from Thursday 21st July until Friday 28th October 2011 with 23 consultation events held around the Borough for service users and carers. A total of 314 people attended these events. All of our 350 existing service users and their Carer(s) were sent an information pack about the Consultation and were invited to the events.

The style of the Consultation events enabled carers to talk directly with Senior Managers and find out more about how they or their relative might be individually affected. Senior Managers took on board comments and summary notes of each meeting were collated. Attendees were also encouraged to submit a formal response.

The sessions with service users took a different format. People with learning disabilities who are part of the “IN” (Involvement Now) Team and supported by Your Voice Counts helped with this. They created sessions they could use for people with learning disabilities so that they had the best chance to understand information and give their ideas as part of the response to the consultation. Similar ideas were used and developed with service user volunteers from Gateshead Access Panel and Mental Health User Voice to gather similar information from people with physical disabilities and mental health problems.

Service Users from black and minority ethnic groups were specifically informed and engaged through the SADA group and the Diversity Forum. This approach

was taken to try and ensure views from this group of stakeholders as we potentially have low engagement from this group on disability issues.

Voluntary, community, private and statutory sector stakeholders were engaged through 7 different Partnership meetings. Attendees were encouraged to submit either individual or group responses utilising the paper based or on-line versions of the Questionnaire. A notice was also contained in the Autumn GVOC Newsletter which has a circulation of over 600 community and voluntary groups. Several key partners within the voluntary sector were also written to individually and encouraged to respond. Responses were low from this group.

The consultation was publicised on the front page of the council website throughout the Consultation period. The consultation documents and questionnaire were available for on-line completion.

There were staff briefings in each of the service areas where staff were encouraged to take part in the consultation. There was also communication drawing attention to the consultation in several internal staff bulletins and communications including the Team Brief and e-bulletins.

Responses came predominantly from existing service users and family carers of existing service users. Consultation feedback shows that the views and needs of different stakeholders vary. This will need to be taken into account when considering if changes are required to the proposals and recommendations so that a balance of different stakeholders interests is achieved to ensure services are fit for the future.

A full Consultation Plan with information about how all Partners and Stakeholders were consulted was attached to the original Consultation Proposal in July 2011.

Full detail (subject to data protection) is available from all Consultation Events, Sessions, on-line and completed questionnaires.

A summary of responses and potential Implementation issues is available in Appendix 3.

1. Summary of Service User sessions:

233 people who use disability day services attended 17 separate sessions that were arranged with support so that people with learning disabilities, mental ill health and physical disabilities could understand the information and tell us their views about the proposals. The IN Team facilitated these sessions for people with learning disabilities who use different services. Service user volunteers from Gateshead Access Panel and Mental Health User Voice worked with the Involvement Officer at Gateshead council to create the sessions for other disabled service users.

It is not surprising that different stakeholder groups and service users from different services have different views about the future direction of the vision for day services. For instance, many of the responses from those currently attending existing day services believe that things should not change whereas many people attending social enterprises and community links had a number of ideas where services could be improved.

1a. Community Bases and Day Centres:

The main message from service users was that they enjoy going to these Centres to see friends, do activities and socialise. They like the friendly, helpful staff. For a lot of people this is their only opportunity to socialise and do activities with friends. Some reported that their attendance here keeps them well and gives them something to look forward to, a break from home life, a break from parents, husband/wife or other carer, and for some is their only opportunity or reason to leave their home. People report learning new skills and being more independent as a result of attending a day service.

"I have learnt to travel independently to the base from my home."

The number of staff and availability of transport can have a big impact on when and how often activities can take part outside the Centre/Base.

Quite a few people said they would like the opportunity to volunteer or get a paid job. Some also have interests that can be expanded into Enterprises (particularly in relation to crafts). However, others also reported negative experiences of volunteering and been given "rubbish" jobs and not feeling valued.

In the larger Centre(s) service users report less flexibility and rotas being "fixed" for long periods of time. People asked for more flexible timetables and flexible support so that they can do the things they want to. Some people also reported having to participate in group activities as there are not enough staff to support them in smaller groups or on a 1-2-1 basis. People were keen to undertake fund-raising activities if the money they raised would be put back into the Centre.

Some people were worried that as a result of the Consultation more people might join their Centre - that it could become too busy and staff would have less time. However, this was also balanced by others saying they wanted new people to join their services and they enjoyed meeting with and spending time with new people.

Service users also talked about wanting to do things at different times either wanting longer opening hours and/or the chance to be supported to do activities during the evening and at weekends.

Those people who also take part in volunteering roles, either within their Centre/Base or outside report that they really enjoy this role.

People also reported difficulties getting out and about within their local communities (ie lack of dropped kerbs) and inaccessible facilities within leisure centres (ie specialist hoists – poolside & changing rooms) which affect the activities they are able to participate in.

1b. Birtley Service Users

12 people attended the session with the “IN” Team. Of the people who identified which service they use, 7 people who attend Birtley Centre either completed or were supported to complete and return Questionnaires.

On the whole, the people who attend Birtley Centre gave the same messages as many others who attend the Centres. They enjoy the opportunities it provides to meet friends, socialise and do activities. They talked about being worried if the Centre closed, that they might be left at home alone, they wouldn't have anywhere to go, they would miss staff and friends, they didn't like the big centre at Marquisway and worries about how they could travel to another Centre. One person said he would need help to think about what he wanted if the Centre closed. Some people talked about wanting the chance to volunteer or work.

“I'm worried that what my sister says she wants might not be what I want. I need help to think about what I need.”

One person lives in Durham, he said that if the Centre closes he will lose contact with his friends. He doesn't think he will be able to continue attending another Centre in Gateshead because of where he lives.

1c. Community Links, Guidepost & Social Enterprises

A key message from service users and volunteers who access this type of support is the value of friendships, socialising and meeting new people. Members who attend some of these services have ideas about how to make them better but they don't have enough time with staff to make them happen. They are also keen to attract more people and know that more could be done to encourage more people to attend – for some this is about having access to transport like they have at the day services and for others it is about better advertising.

“I get lonely in the house because I live on my own so I come for company and to meet people.”

Having good transport links and/or support to get to the service is also important. The location is important. People who use Blaydon Guidepost also like the fact they can use other local facilities which makes it easier to run a variety of activities.

People enjoy doing different things but feel that the staff don't have enough time to organise the activities that people do. If there was more support to help volunteers do it themselves it would be more user-led rather than staff doing it on their behalf. Some people would like to have more of a say in how the service is run and how they would like to help more people in finding jobs and with volunteering opportunities. People feel they could take on more responsibility if given the right support to do so (through the week, at evenings and weekends not only when the service is open) and develop links with the local Community which would provide more opportunities for people who need help from the service (for example like the Community Asset pilot between Marquisway & local Bensham people and groups, working with local schools).

The distinction between staff and volunteers is more "blurred" at these services. Volunteers talked about "choosing" what they do and when they do things, about feeling more equal and feeling valued. However, most recognised the need for more support from paid staff in order to help more people or take on more work or make/grow stuff to sell.

People enjoy volunteering because of the independence and confidence it gives them. Some said they would like to raise money to buy more equipment for the business and some would like to earn their own wages. However people are also concerned about the future with social enterprises seeking clarity about their independence, funding and premises.

"I come to volunteer. It gets me out the house and gets me involved".

1d. Summary of evening session:

Approximately 25 people who use learning disability services attended the evening session at Whitehall Road Methodist Church Hall. At this session we aimed to find out what people enjoyed doing and the places people went to from where they live, rather than what they do at a day Centre or Service. We also wanted to establish if these things were different and how far people travelled and what transport they used to do these things.

We learnt that mostly people do things with their families or Carers at evening and weekends. People mostly made short journeys of less than an hour to go to places and were driven there by car or taxi. Some people used the bus but very few people walked to an activity close to where they live. We noticed very little independent travel during the evenings and weekends.

People enjoyed going to a limited number of specialist activities (for example Mencap Club, Washington Disco, the Alan Shearer Centre) and there was not much evidence of people accessing a range of services in their local Community.

It was difficult for people to develop their own ideas and thinking about things they would like to do if they had a choice. This would have taken more time than we had available and is worthy of further consideration if the council is to develop truly person centred, goal orientated services.

2. Summary of Carers sessions:

81 carers attended 6 separate meetings across the Borough.

Carers generally value the provision of day services, many view the services as good quality and speak highly of the staff and relationships they and the people they care for, have built with them over the years.

Many carers raised issues and concerns about the assessment process – about being involved in it, excluded from it, disagreeing with the outcome, the frequency and meaningfulness of reviews.

Some carers felt the increased emphasis on training, employment and volunteering opportunities are a positive step forward whilst others voiced concerns about the reality of this often being tokenistic and/or menial. Carers raised concerns about the availability, capacity and staff ratios of staff to support people on a personalised, individual basis in these areas at a time when budgets are more restricted and investment is required to achieve the Vision.

Some Carers raised issues about a number of buildings where services are provided for example the size of buildings and the need for improved facilities. However, Carers feel safe and secure with buildings based services.

Some Carers raised concerns about travel and/or transport to new or changed services.

2a. Birtley carers:

24 carers attended the Birtley consultation meeting and 8 carers of people with a disability returned a Questionnaire.

2 Carers at the meeting and 6 who returned questionnaires specifically stated that they do not want the Birtley Centre to close. Carers raised the following concerns; changes create more pressure on life at home, service users will need ongoing support to maintain their friendships, worried that X would not accept a move of day centre and travelling to another Centre. Carers also asked “why?” Birtley Centre was suggested as the only place for closure in the vision document.

Carers are particularly anxious about the process of re-assessment and the IMPACT this would have on the person they care for if the plan to close Birtley went ahead. They are worried their loved ones may lose important friendships, they would become more isolated, they would be at home more and that the closure will cause more stress on the carer(s)/family and the individual. Some are worried that they will be unable to cope through any changes. Carers also access support through the staff team at Birtley. Carers asked for reassurances that there is ‘choice’ of where to go, that people will get

the same levels of support as they do currently and a guarantee there will still be somewhere for people to go.

They want to ensure any transition process is handled sensitively and gradually and take into account individual's "routines and rituals" to minimise frequency of and heightened behaviours. Carers are worried about the proposed closure and changes in other services. They pointed out that IF the Council make changes these need to be managed carefully and at a pace that suits service users. They want to be kept informed of timescales for change and regular communication throughout the process.

3. Summary of completed Questionnaires

82 completed written questionnaires were returned. Where people indicated, the majority of these were from service users and family carers (see data table status of respondents). Some of the statistical data from these completed questionnaires is also attached as part of this Appendix. It was particularly encouraging to see the number of people who are directly affected by the Vision making a response. It is also clear to see from this data that many of the people who are using the support of Disability Day Services have been doing so for a considerable period of time (see data table length of time with service). The vast majority were also over 40yrs of age (see data table respondents by age group). These people, and their carers are likely to need additional support in order to achieve the Vision of personalised services. These, other issues and impacts around the ethnicity of service users and respondents are covered within the Equality Impact Needs Assessment.

Many of the positives of attending services have already been stated - the routine, friendships, security, safety, friendliness of staff and activities are repeatedly mentioned. As are some of the negatives – inflexible hours, inflexible holidays, same activities, led by staff rather than service users.

It is worthy to note again the value that many Carers also place on these services to provide them with some regular respite.

Some people also noted concerns about making people more vulnerable by doing activities within local communities. Also that there are not enough local community services and at a time of cut-backs by the council that these are likely to reduce even further.

Some other groups also use the building at Birtley which is proposed for closure. They have sent concerns about the services they provide might continue if the building were to close. The Pre-School Group raised queries about the on-going responsibility for the building. They are worried that if the building closes they will be forced to move, the costs associated with this and the detrimental affect this could have on early years education.

On a positive note, a response from members at one of the Social Enterprises said:

"We have found some fantastic resources in the Community."

4. Summary of on-line responses & written responses

72 people accessed the on-line Consultation. Throughout the Consultation period for the Disability Vision a number of other public consultations were running from various other services across the local authority. At the time it closed 5 other Consultations were ‘live’. A number of people, seemingly in error, opened the Disability Consultation and started completing it thinking it was a Consultation on Street Cleansing. This could be the reason for the high number of opened yet incomplete responses.

21 people completed the on-line survey. There were no mandatory fields so people did not have to tell us who they were. From the information provided we are aware that completed responses came from:

On-line Survey:		Written:
Vol Sector	4	3
Carer/Parent	7	0
Service User	5	0
Other	5	1

Some of the useful & helpful comments included; the need to bring staff on board with the developing agenda and used changes in the mental health service as a benchmark for this. To look to the voluntary sector for alternatives and to develop links and services that are truly user-led and valued by people who use them. People supported increasing the use of personal budgets as it will increase the number of people using ‘normal life services’. Also the recurring theme that Respondents want to ensure there is funding for transport as not all service users can travel or are safe to travel independently and worry that this will lead to more caring at home, extra costs for carers and the value of day services providing a much needed break for carers. There was also support for keeping Marquisway as a Centre for providing much needed support to people who have complex needs and who could not access any of the services described in the Vision document due to the nature of their disabilities.

Providers in both the Private and Voluntary Sector indicated their will to work with the Council in developing opportunities to support people living more independently. One of the Voluntary Sector agencies was also disappointed that the consultation on the Vision did not focus on a whole system and joined up way of supporting people and felt this could result in a low response from the voluntary sector.

“I would have welcomed a consultation on what VCS services could offer in the council’s new vision.”

Advocates also made the point that individuals and carers also need appropriate support after decisions have been made and changes start to happen. They would like to ensure that people and families are referred to independent advocacy support if and when they are being re-assessed.

5. Summary of Staff Responses

All staff responses were from Provider services and the nature of their response varied depending on where they currently work. Overall they view current service provision as a place where service users are given an opportunity to have a voice, work towards achieving their goals and aspirations and supporting people in local community settings.

Staff in day services and community bases raised concerns about having insufficient funds or cuts to funds to run a good service, poor responses from assessment and review services, some people using transport when they have mobility vehicle available for their use, lack of access to adult education or other suitable educational programmes. Personally some staff noted that they are worried about the future security of their jobs, the closure of additional services and how they will cover additional work load with less staff, being asked to work in an area not of their choice and a reduced quality of service.

Staff teams working in an area of suggested development and growth recorded their general excitement about some of the service expansion proposals.

“We feel that the new opportunities will open up chances for volunteers to become more involved in more enterprises, personalised services and widen the social networks and the informal support available for adults with

Staff also felt that service users attending all types of service should be reviewed in-line with the new Vision for Disability services and not only those where a service might be closed.

6. Summary of issues from BME and Faith groups

The people from these groups who engaged with this consultation feel that people from BME communities are not aware of what provision exists within Gateshead. They are concerned that services might not be culturally appropriate and that they do not cater for people where their first language is not English or make provision for single sex groups. They are not aware of any people from within their communities who attend day services. They spoke about the additional support they offer within their own communities and would want to work with the Council in making them more aware of the support they offer to vulnerable people and their families.

“They prefer to come to the Muslim Society Centre as the services provided here are culturally appropriate.”

People who are engaged with the work of the AASHA Project (independently funded through GVOC working with BME communities in learning disabilities) also indicated that IF they do seek help or support they are more likely to look within their Community first.

7. Conclusion:

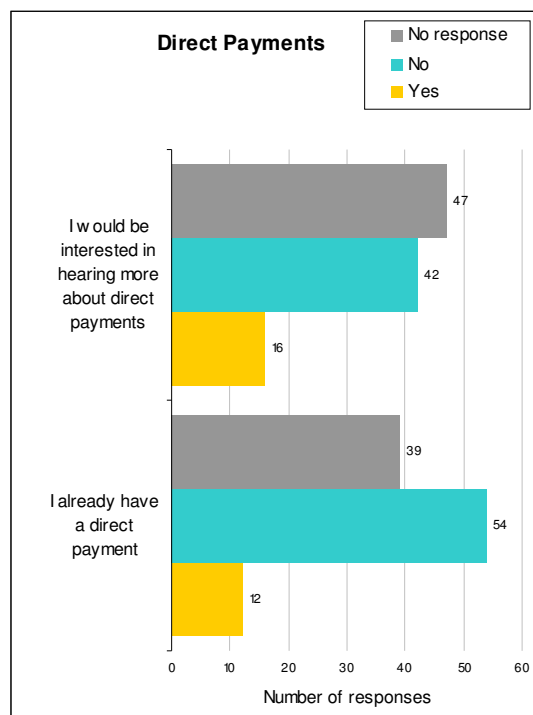
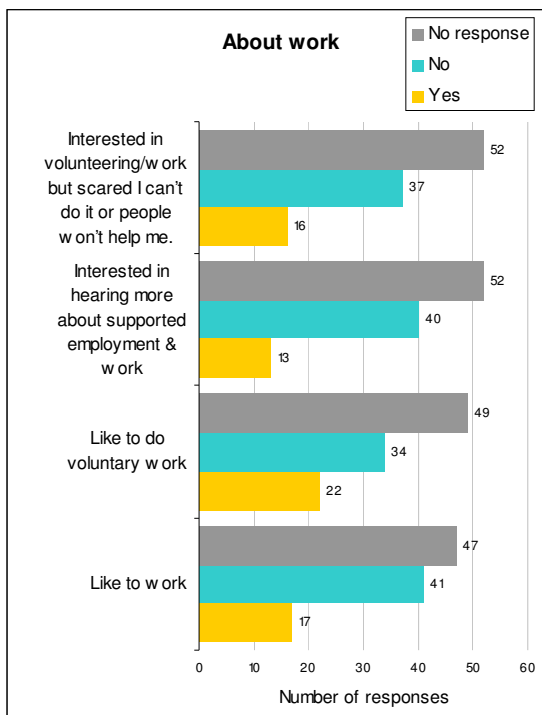
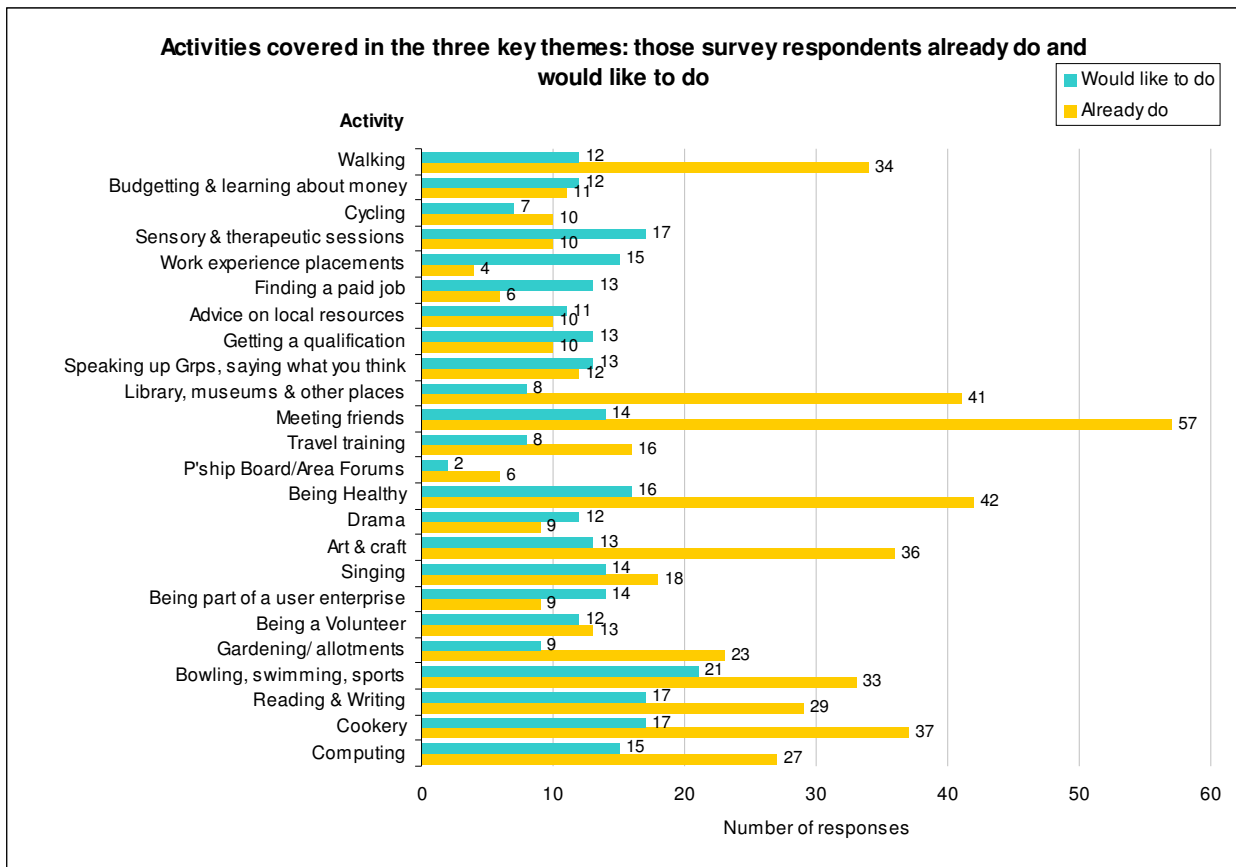
Apart from the concerns of some service users and carers about the proposal to close the Birtley Centre (see Section 1b and 2a) there were few negative comments about the Vision itself. Most people were in agreement that disability services should be more personalised; that people with disabilities should be supported to be involved in their local community and their independence encouraged. A number of service users indicate that they would like more opportunities for volunteering and/or getting involved in social enterprises.

Most of the issues and concerns raised throughout the Consultation relate to the *Implementation* of the Vision. These issues are contained in the above text and summarised below:

- **Communication** – people want timely information about changes and decisions and regularly updated about timescales
- **Advocacy support** – individuals and families are offered the support of independent advocacy before they start their review/re-assessment. Some service users will need this support BEFORE their assessment as they want help to think about things they want to do.
- **Review/Assessment** – ensure that Carers and service user views are heard and included, Carers have their own assessment and people understand what they can do if they disagree with the outcome. Better dialogue between assessment and provider services.
- **Transition** – if a service is to close make sure this is managed sensitively and at a pace to suit the service users.
- **BME** – more work with ethnic minority and faith groups to understand services and support available. Also how they utilise 'personalisation' within their communities.
- **Transport** – this is available where required but also that people are supported to travel independently.
- **Staff to Service User ratios** – When Centres and Bases offer places to support more people to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate to maintain help for everyone. Make sure there are enough staff to deliver truly personalised services
- **Availability** – people want the opportunity to do things at different times, for example longer opening hours and the chance to be supported at evening and weekends. Availability of Access to courses and further education. Availability of staff to support people into employment.
- **Voluntary sector** – working in Partnership to explore the delivery of services leading to independence, different models of support, opportunities for employment and volunteering
- **Staff** – train and develop the workforce so that they are properly equipped to deliver changed ways of working and achieving a cultural shift. This refers to the way staff provide services and to outcome focussed assessments and how changes/improvements are measured.
- **The building** – explore options for other Groups who use the building to deliver services.

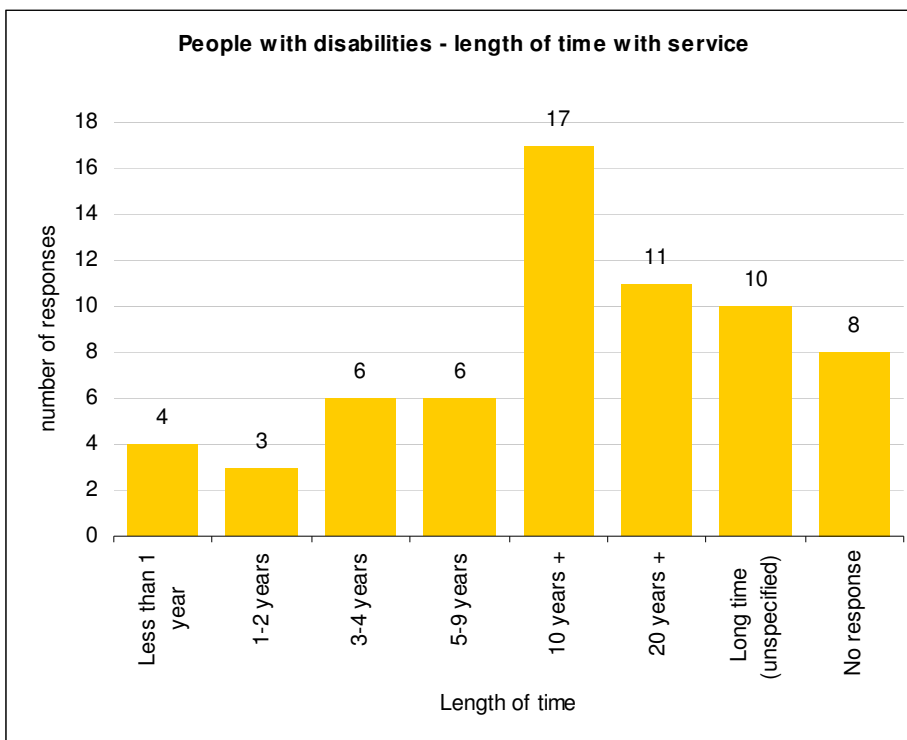
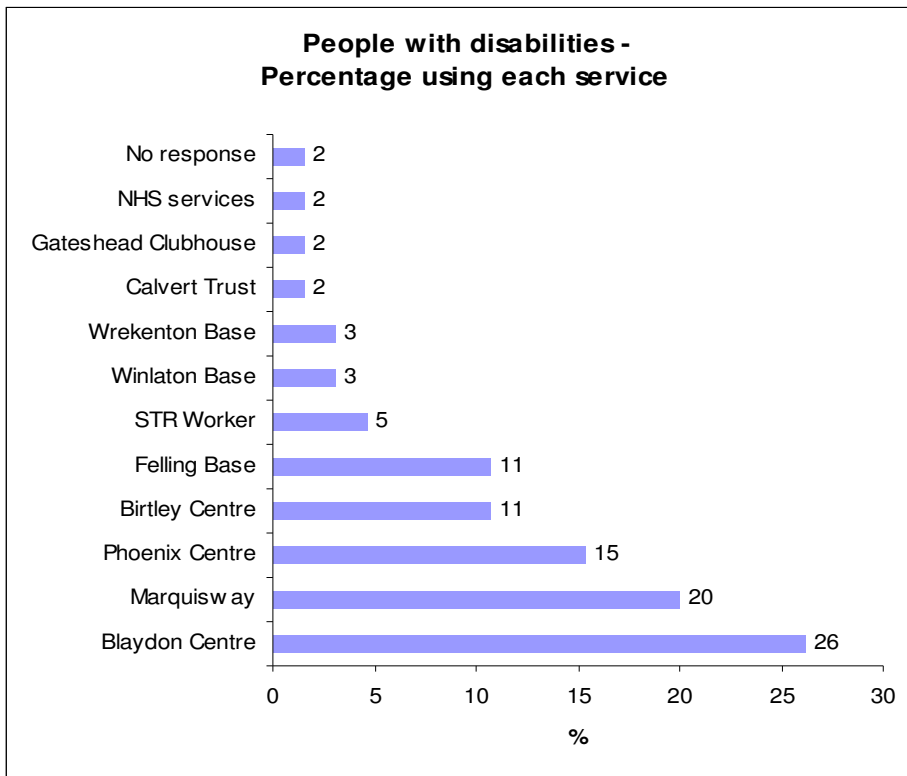
Appendix 3

Questionnaire responses – some data analysis



People with disabilities – when indicated which service they use

(65 respondents)



Appendix 3 – Summary of Consultation Responses & Issues

Demographic profile of respondents (where indicated)

