

A report on the future of day services



This document was written by **Mencap Cymru**. It is an easy read version of 'The Future of Day Services'.

July 2023

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 22**.



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Introduction

Before COVID-19, day services helped people with a learning disability stay connected to the:

- friends
- places
- and activities that are important to them.



COVID-19 caused lots of services to close.



Day services offered less support. Most only offered support to people with complex needs.



When they reopened services were doing things differently.



Some services closed.



Some services continued to offer less support.



People with a learning disability and their families have been struggling to get the support they need.



Many people contacted the Wales Learning Disability Helpline for advice to get the services they needed.



In February 2023 we at **Mencap Cymru** together with the **Learning Disability Consortium** did a survey.

It was to find out what people with a learning disability and their parents and carers think about day services and what had changed.



In this document we tell you what we learnt through the survey and a national conference.

What is happening to our day services



The **Learning Disability Consortium's** day services survey had responses from 293 people.



People with a learning disability or their parents or carers answered the survey.



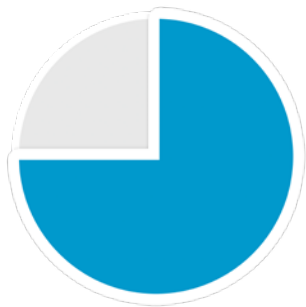
People who completed the survey said:

They were getting less than half the hours of day service each week compared to before COVID-19.



Most people said they got less support. This affected their **well-being**.

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.



More than half of the families and people who use the day services said that they did not get to share their opinions about reduced hours and doing things differently.



Some local authorities made a **traffic-light** system to help see who needed support the most.



They gave more support to people who live with unpaid carers than those in supported living.



In other local authorities, more support was given to people in supported living than those who live with unpaid carers.



Parents and carers and people with a learning disability said they were not part of any decisions made.



People felt day services support was cut in some areas to save money.



Many families said the community-based support they have through **direct payments** or from local authorities does not help people to make friends or stay connected.



We had a conference to talk about these issues on 20 March 2023 in Cardiff for people all around Wales.

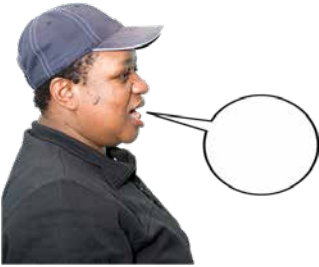


More than 100 people took part in the conference.

They included people with a learning disability, parents and carers, commissioners, service managers, and support staff.



People who spoke at the conference looked at different ways of providing support.



We asked people their views, experiences, or questions about the presentations at the conference.



These presentations focused on

- **co-production**
- **online support** and
- **community asset-based** ways of working.

What we found out

Co-production



Co-production means including people who use services in all decisions. They are equal partners with professionals.



People who work on Mencap Cymru's **MeTime** project in Rhondda Cynon Taff spoke about their work running a co-produced day service.



We then asked everyone at the conference to tell us their thoughts.

What people said



Co-production is about teamwork. It is about people working together.



People come together with different experiences to share ideas and power.



People are treated equally and fairly.



Co-production can make people more independent, give people more chances to do things and feel good about themselves.



It helps people with a learning disability to have a voice, choice, and control of things to do.



People feel valued as they make the decisions.



Co-production encourages local authorities to be more open and honest.

Issues about co-production



Many people did not know the meaning of **co-production**.



Some people said the word **co-production** is used a lot and is difficult to understand.



Many people think **co-production** is about organisations working together and does not involve individuals.



Families and professionals need to support people to be more independent and make decisions.



Co-production takes time. It is slow.



Some people can find making decisions difficult.



Co-production needs skilled staff and lots of time.



People agreed that leaders and managers need to work together to make it happen.



People asked if there was a way to check if **co-production** works.



People said services and projects should be about the positive effects it has on people not the hours spent.



Co-production could make people think they can achieve things that are not possible.



We need to work together to understand **co-production** more.

Online forms of services

Insight

Innovate Trust talked to everyone about their app called **Insight**. Using Zoom they asked people across Wales to talk about how the app helps them.



We then asked everyone at the conference to tell us their thoughts.



What people said

Online services were important during COVID-19. It helped people to stay connected with friends.



But it should not replace real life, in person contact.



People should have both choices, online and in person.



Online services help people to be part of new friendship groups.



It helps people to meet new people in other parts of the country, without needing to travel.



It helped tackle loneliness during COVID-19.



People can connect with others who have a shared interest or hobby.



Digital literacy is a chance to learn new skills and technology.



During the pandemic many people with a learning disability ran their own meetings online.



In some villages, slow internet speed was an issue.



Broadband and devices can be expensive and difficult to learn if they are new to you.



Many people worried about online safety.



Families and support providers need clear and easy guidance about online services.

Community asset-based ways of working



Community asset-based ways of working are about recognising the strengths of the community and using them. For example, physical spaces, experience, skills, buildings.



Mencap Mon from Anglesey talked about their experience bringing people's direct payments together to do group activities.



Joey from Mencap spoke about her **My Community** project in Tenby. It is about using people's strengths to improve the area.



We then asked everyone at the conference to tell us their thoughts.

What people said



Not many people know what **community asset-based** ways of working means.



People need to know the difference between **asset-based** ways of working and **co-production**.



Asset-based ways of working is not only about buildings.



It is about working together and recognising that we all have skills and talents we can use.



It can build people's confidence and skills.



We must make sure people with a learning disability get paid for the work they do.



Community asset-based ways of working can get disabled people more involved in communities.



It can be a good use of community **resources**.

Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example, buildings, vehicles, information, money, and staff.



Making use of people's talents and skills is more **sustainable** than services.

Sustainable means something will last a long time.



Local authorities must make sure they include local **community assets** in plans and work they do.

Recommendations to Welsh Government



Recommendation means saying what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.



1. Have rules and guidance on having consultations for any changes to services. This will make sure people can share their views on the changes.



2. Have clear understanding of **co-production** and **community asset-based** and set rules for them.



3. Make sure local authorities and organisations explain how they have **co-produced** changes to day services. Involve people in any decisions or changes made from the start.



4. Make sure local authorities and organisations check how changes in services could affect people's friendships and relationships.



5. Make sure local authorities and organisations check how changes in day services could affect family carers.



6. Have rules for online day services. Make sure people can choose to have day services online or in person. Provide broadband and devices for people with low income, **vulnerable adults** and those in rural areas.

A **vulnerable adult** is someone who needs support to look after them, or to keep them safe from abuse.

Hard Words

Community asset-based

Community asset-based ways of working are about recognising the strengths of the community and using them. For example, physical spaces, experience, skills, buildings.

Co-production

Co-production means including people who use services in all decisions. They are equal partners with professionals.

Recommendation

Recommendation means saying what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.

Resources

Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example, buildings, vehicles, information, money, and staff.

Sustainable

Sustainable means something will last a long time.

Vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is someone who needs support to look after them, or to keep them safe from abuse.

Well-being

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.