

SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

FINAL REPORT - MARCH 2007



Foreword by Dr John English

Chair of the Social Care Task Group

Social care delivery in Wiltshire is currently going through a period of significant change. The Department for Community Services is attempting to introduce a cultural programme where people's independence is promoted through the use of the community services and activities.

The scrutiny review took place at a time when implementation of this new model for care was in its infancy. This has allowed the task group members to gain an understanding of the key issues and to witness some of the pilot schemes currently taking place. As part of its evidence gathering the task group went on a series of site visits to speak to people at the 'coal face' of service delivery. This provided valuable material and enabled the task group to make informed conclusions.

Although the work of this task group is now complete, the role of scrutiny in the social care modernisation programme should continue. There are a number of significant issues that must be monitored to ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect the vulnerable of society. With that in mind the report recommends that the Management Committee invite a series of monitoring reports in relation to issues that require further review.

Finally, as Chairman of the Social Care Scrutiny Task Group, I would like to thank my fellow members for their valuable contributions, support and hard work during the review, and I commend the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

John M English.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
29th MARCH 2007**

SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – FINAL REPORT

Purpose

1. This report is a summary of the work undertaken by the Social Care Task Group December 2006 – March 2007.

Membership

Dr John English (Chair)	Liberal Democrat member for Salisbury East
Mr Mike Hewitt	Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee & Salisbury District Councillor
Mr Andrew Davis	Conservative member for Warminster East and Wylde
Mrs Judy Rooke	Liberal Democrat member for Chippenham West
Mrs Pat Rugg	Conservative member for Bromham and Potterne

Terms of Reference:

2. From July - October 2006 Wiltshire County Council's executive Corporate Recovery Plan was scrutinised by the Corporate Recovery Task Group. The recovery plan had been put in place to respond to the cost pressures of £7 million which had been identified in excess of the Department for Adult & Community Services (DACS) 2006-07 budget.
3. During this review the task group highlighted concern about the potential impact of the recovery measures on DACS service users, particularly the reliance on community and voluntary services for future care delivery.

4. In response the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (November 9 - 2006) established the Social Care Task Group with the following terms of reference:

To review DACS proposals for:

- (i) Transitional arrangements for all client groups*
- (ii) Development of the local voluntary and community sectors in Wiltshire*
- (iii) Future involvement of users and carers*

5.

Meetings	Purpose and Witnesses
14th December 2006	Scoping session
9th January 2007	Mr John Thomson – Cabinet Member for Adult Care Jeanette Longhurst – Head of Service Barbara Criddle – District Director
9th February 2007	Mr John Thomson – Cabinet Member for Adult Care Jeanette Longhurst – Head of Service Rhonda Jenkins – Service Development Manager
15th February 2007	Site visit Middlefield Day Centre - Chippenham Meadow Lodge respite home – Chippenham
20th February 2007	Site visit Kennet Learning Difficulty & Planning Group – Devizes
26th February 2007	Site visit Sarum Centre – Salisbury Elizabeth House Drop in Centre – Salisbury Amesbury Activity Centre
March 5th 2007	Interview with parents/carers Consideration of final report content
March 13th 2007	Agreement of final report content

Background

6. The Department for Community Services (DCS formerly DACS) is currently changing the way it delivers adult care services across Wiltshire.

7. To promote independence, part of this cultural change programme includes increased exposure for people to community facilities and services such as leisure centres. Also included in this vision is the provision of a safety net for individuals who may be placed at risk by this change in policy.
8. In addition, a new commissioning framework is in the processes of going live. This will provide users and carers with the opportunity to be involved and influence the planning and commissioning of services.
9. This change programme is not purely a reaction to the financial difficulties faced in 2006/07, but is part of a long term commitment to modernise. In the case of learning disability services this programme of modernisation began in 2004 in response to a Best Value Review and the 2001 White paper.-‘Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning disability for the 21st century’.
10. The speed of change has, however, been accelerated by the financial challenges faced by the department, as illustrated by John Thomson (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) in a newsletter to staff:

“The short answer is that we just cannot carry on providing adult care services in the same way as before- the cost is just too high.”

“Changes to the way we provide services were already planned over the next five years but a substantial shortfall in our budget – partly due to NHS funding crisis – means we have to start now. We are currently overspending at the rate of £160,000 per week!”

John Thomson - June 2006

11. The department has now tasked itself with the mission of meeting its statutory responsibilities for social care, within budget. Attempting to deliver a sustainable service has required the department to take difficult decisions that have affected the level of support provided to users.



Evidence Gathering

12. The first two evidence gathering sessions were held in County Hall and were attended by senior officers and the cabinet member. DCS officers provided the task group with detailed information packs, around which discussions were based. The task group then went on a series of site visits meeting staff, service users and carers before returning to County Hall to agree the final report content.
13. The evidence collected has been broken into the 3 distinct areas specified within the terms of reference:

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL CLIENT GROUPS

14. The task group explored in detail the types of change taking place within DCS at the start of the review. This included the proposals for the Home Care Service and the termination of leisure payments.

However, it was the changes taking place in Day Support Services, especially for adults with learning disabilities, which the task group focussed on when considering transitional arrangements for clients. This was due to the extensive/imminent changes proposed and the number of service users, many vulnerable, potentially affected by the proposals.

Background: New model for Day Services

15. Day support services in the future will be structured around a 3 tiered model. Tier 1 focuses towards those with the greatest support needs, whereas tier 3 will be geared to users with greater independence.

Day Services Tier Definitions

1. A safe place for people at risk without a daytime intervention, including relief for carers.
2. Services providing personal development programmes which will lead to people accessing more local community based supports.
3. Services providing service users with information, advice and signposting that also includes discrete, low level support services.

16. The department was undertaking a review of all service users at the time of scrutinising. This process would identify which tier of the new model people would be entitled to.

Results captured to date are detailed below:

- 57% need carer respite/place of safety
- 40% need educative/skills development
- 0.5% drop in only
- 2.5% not eligible

17. The department at the same time had been assessing people against new eligibility criteria for transport. This would establish whether service users were still entitled to transport.
18. The 12 week scrutiny review took place at a point where the assessment process for both day services and transport was yet to be finalised. The evidence gathered was very much about the transitional arrangements in place for those users awaiting implementation of the new model.
19. Evidence gathering for this section of the review included visits to the Sarum Centre (Salisbury), Middlefield Day Centre (Chippenham) and Meadow Lodge Respite Centre (Chippenham). The task group also spoke to carers, service users and representatives from Mencap.

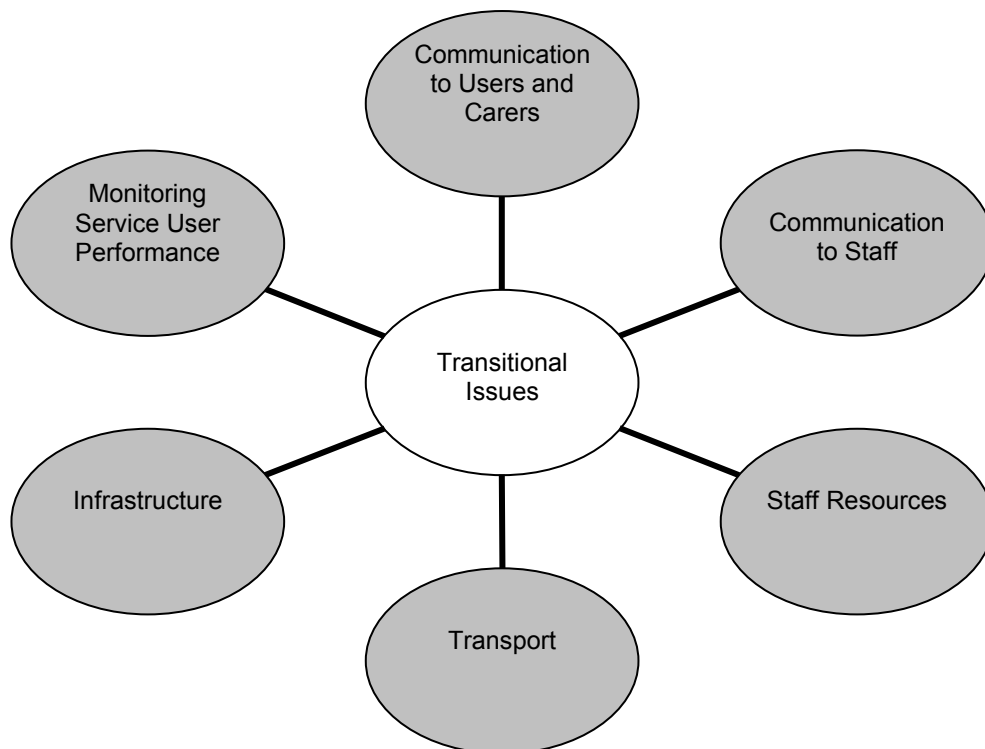
Middlefield Chippenham



Sarum Centre, Salisbury



20. The diagram below represents the themes to emerge from the evidence.



Communication to Users and Carers

21. The review established that the department had invested heavily in consultation. In August 2006, officers undertook 19 consultative meetings with service users, carers, providers and other stakeholders. Consultation meetings were also undertaken in November (one in each of the four large day centres), with Gateway consultants commissioned to facilitate this process. This provided users and carers with an opportunity to understand the changes and to also voice any concerns.
22. The task group was also given access to written material produced for users and carers that explained forthcoming changes. Members felt the documents were well written, easy to follow and avoided large amounts of technical detail. The leaflets were accessible on the web and available from team offices. The public also had the option to ring the social care helpdesk for information.
23. The users and carers who contributed to the scrutiny review seemed to all understand why the department was modernising. However, the potential changes did lead to an element of uncertainty amongst people who had accessed the same service for a number of years.

Communication to Staff

24. The task group discovered that there had been a large investment in communication with staff. This included the use of the Wiltshire intranet, newsletters and staff bulletins.

Face to face sessions between cabinet members/senior management and staff had also taken place over the summer of 2006. These meetings informed frontline staff about the plans to modernise and reinforced the message that staff would be supported when implementing this programme.

Staff when questioned by the task group appeared to have a sound understanding of the modernisation programme. However, opinion towards the changes was mixed and the explanation for this can be in part accounted to staff resources.

Staff resources

25. A recruitment freeze was put in place in response to the budgetary difficulties faced by DCS in 2006. This had impacted on day care service users attending centres such as Middlefield and Sarum. Operating with fewer staff meant some service users living in residential care were given reduced access to the day centre. For example the Sarum Centre was currently running with 2 less staff. This resulted in the centre supporting on average 35 daily users, whereas with a full team this number would be 45-50.

Staff acknowledged that the change in access had affected the service users, some of whom had been receiving the service for many years. The period of change was stressful and the alterations to routine had resulted in some people demonstrating increased challenging behaviour. Staff also found this time difficult as they were concerned that vulnerable people whom they had supported with clear dedication, were not receiving adequate support.

26. The ability of residential providers to manage this change was equally important. Providers were now expected to deliver a day service function for people who had historically received this via the local authority. The ability to do this is an area that will require further scrutiny (cross ref - recommendation 2i), especially when recognising the DCS proposal for **all users** in residential care to be provided with day activities through their residential care providers. Currently 226 service users live in residential care, 33% of the total day service users.
27. Staff had been through a formal consultative period that ended early in December 2006. A first round selection for posts had also taken place. Here staff were interviewed to assess their suitability for posts in the new service.

Morale was poor during this period of change. Staff felt that they were caught in limbo until the assessment of service users was complete. Until this process was finished it was not clear how many people would be required to staff the new service. The task group was told that the delay in assessing service users (timetabled to be completed by the end of 2006) was caused by the thoroughness of each review. However, the delay was damaging and some questioned whether interviews should have taken place before the assessment of service users was complete. Concern was raised that the treatment of staff would lead to an exodus, resulting in the service losing skilled, qualified and committed individuals. The evidence to date did not support this with senior officers and centre managers confirming that very few (if any) staff had left the authority in response to the changes.

28. The task group was impressed by the social project observed in Middlefield. CARS - Chippenham Aluminium Recycling is a social project that works in conjunction with Hills Waste. Service users are responsible for preparing aluminium materials into recycle bags which are then sent to Hills for recycling. Other projects run out of Middlefield and Ashton Street included film making, voice theatre and gardening. The fear from the service staff was that in the future they would have insufficient resources to continue this work.

Aluminium Recycling at Middlefield



Transport

29. Working in parallel to the day service assessment process DCS had also introduced a new eligibility check for transport. Results to date suggested that of those users qualifying for tier 1 of the day service model - 7% would not be eligible for transport, whereas 27% of tier 2 users would no longer qualify.
30. Day centres were unaware of who would be eligible for transport because of the ongoing assessment process. This was a concern as training people to use public transport independently is resource and time intensive.
31. Fears were raised that service users would have their transport guillotined with insufficient time to prepare to travel independently. The task group noted the Cabinet commitment *that service users not eligible for transport would be given notice to stop using transport within one month of establishing they do not meet the revised eligibility criteria*.
32. The department highlighted that they had secured 167k from lottery funding for bus buddy support to benefit up to 67 users. The task group could not explore in detail the practicalities of how this might work and questions surrounding this area need to be explored in further scrutiny (cross ref – recommendation 2 iv).

Infrastructure

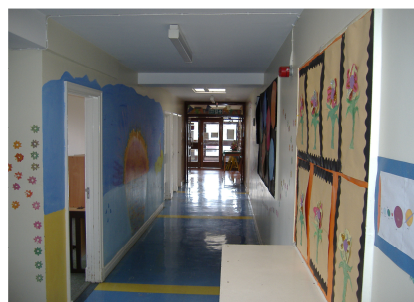
33. The site visits highlighted that the existing buildings used at Middlefield and Sarum were not suitable for modern day service delivery. For example whilst at Middlefield members witnessed poor changing and toilet facilities.

The day centres consisted of multiple buildings that resembled old school houses, with large maintenance and heating costs. In

Middlefield activities also took place in ageing portacabins that were subject to regular acts of vandalism over weekends and evenings.

Despite the difficulties presented by the buildings the activities observed taking place inside appeared stimulating, relevant and beneficial to the service users.

Middlefield



Sarum Centre



34. The task group also visited the Amesbury Activity Centre, a smaller modern building along the lines of which the new day centres would be modelled. The members were impressed by the customised smaller scale facilities that appeared more conducive to day service delivery.
35. Identification of the replacement day centres was not finalised at the time of scrutinising. Carers interviewed questioned the viability of sourcing suitable buildings.

To allay fears for service users and carers the cabinet member **confirmed that centres would not close until a replacement was available and ready for use** (cross ref - recommendation 1).

Monitoring service user performance

36. To promote independence the new day service model will specify that all services are time limited and outcome focussed. Quality performance management is essential to support this vision of personal development programmes. At the earliest stages of the review members discovered that DCS felt they could improve in the area of monitoring performance and progress of users, and would be concentrating on future development.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTORS IN WILTSHIRE

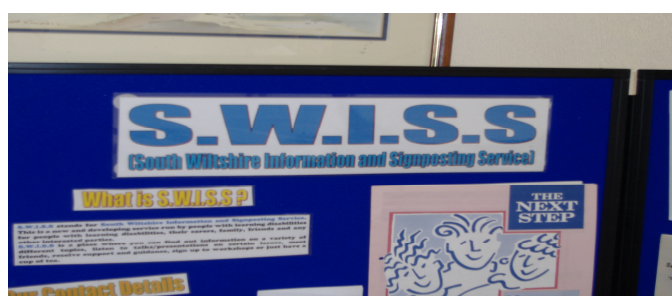
37. The use of the community and voluntary sectors in helping service users maximise their independence is integral to the new vision for social care. A network of drop-in centres are at the forefront of this development. These will provide a point of contact in the community where people can get information, advice and guidance regarding local facilities and services. The 'drop-in service' users will predominantly be those assessed as eligible to tiers 2 and 3 in the new day service model.
38. At the time of scrutinising drop in services were only at a pilot stage with examples in Trowbridge, Salisbury and Amesbury. The task group as part of its evidence gathering visited the Salisbury drop in centre.

The Salisbury centre was run by a committee of service users with support from DCS staff. The task group was given the opportunity to meet with the committee to understand how the service was working.

The Salisbury drop in service also known as the South Wiltshire (Learning Disability) Information and Signposting Service (S.W.I.S.S) had been open for over a year and its current operating times were:

Mondays	11 – 15.00	Elizabeth House, Salisbury
Tuesday	10– 12.00	Baptist church, Salisbury
Fridays	10 – 15.00	Amesbury Activity Centre, Holders Rd

Users of the S.W.I.S.S service were also given a mobile phone telephone number to use if information was required outside of the drop in service opening hours.



The following issues emerged from the meeting with the S.W.I.S.S committee:

The location of the drop in centre

39. The experience of the committee members suggested that the best location for the drop in service was in the centre of Salisbury. This provided access to public transport and was at the heart of the facilities available in the community such as the library. S.W.I.S.S had only used Elizabeth House for 2 weeks so experiences were limited, but this was located on the fringe of the city centre and did not offer the same level of access as the Baptist church.
40. The committee also felt that there were benefits in hosting the drop in centre out of one fixed location. Marketing and advertising one drop in centre rather than multiple sites had clear advantages, especially when considering that this was a new scheme to which a primary goal was making people aware of the service.
41. One site would also help the provision of IT facilities. Moving locations during the week made it extremely difficult to provide computer facilities with internet access, a vital tool when attempting to access services and information.
42. S.W.I.S.S's experiences in Amesbury had not been totally positive. The drop in service was run from the Activity Centre (used also for day service delivery & located on the fringe of the town) but attendance had been disappointing in comparison to Salisbury.

Positive Impact

43. The committee when questioned all spoke positively about the opportunity the drop in centre had provided and how they felt much more independent for the experience. The committee felt confident enough to say that they would like to have more ownership over their budget, allowing them to fully determine the direction of travel for their service.
44. The key concern for the task group was whether the committee members felt that they had someone to speak to if they ever required help. This was part of a general worry that people assessed as being eligible to minimal day support had the potential to slip through the net. Unanimously, each person highlighted that they were aware of the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities (CTPLD) and would use them if they were felt they were in trouble. The CTPLD team includes social workers, community care officers, physiotherapists, psychiatrists and nurses, and has a crucial role in ensuring that any changes to people's circumstances can be fed back into the system.

Information

45. A key function of the S.W.I.S.S committee had been the development of a database used to sign post individuals to activities and facilities in the community. Approaching organisations had been a positive experience but it was felt that more activities could be offered with the support of extra CRB cleared volunteers, which were in relative short supply. The task group were also told that Salisbury College no longer had dedicated placements for people with learning disabilities, an activity that people could have previously been signposted to.
46. The task group did not explore in detail the ability of the community to respond to the cultural changes taking place in DCS. The challenge is perhaps best illustrated through the evidence received at the Amesbury Activity Centre. The centre is physically joined to the Amesbury leisure centre, yet because the leisure facilities are fully utilised by local schools, day centre service users have to travel to Tidworth leisure centre. The ability of services like leisure centres to play a full role in the new vision is essential, but this is an area that requires further scrutiny to ensure people do not miss out (cross ref – recommendation 2 iii).

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF USERS AND CARERS.

47. In June 2006 the Cabinet approved a new commissioning framework for adult social care services. This new approach was intended to give users and carers the opportunity to get involved in the commissioning and planning processes.
48. The structure of this new framework was divided into 4 levels:

Level	Description
Level 4	Stakeholders. The general population of Wiltshire, service user groups, self advocacy groups, carer support groups, representative bodies such as Age Concern, Wiltshire & Swindon Users Network and many others
Level 3	District based client group focussed planning groups for older people, learning disabilities, people with physical impairments and people with mental health difficulties
Level 2	The District Commissioning Boards
Level 1	The County Strategic Commissioning Board

49. At level 3 the commissioning framework would include 4 planning groups per district, feeding directly into a District Commissioning Board (level 2), which in turn fed into the Strategic Board (Level 1). Each

planning group would contain 6 service users and 2 carers. Representatives from the planning group would sit on the District and the Strategic Board.

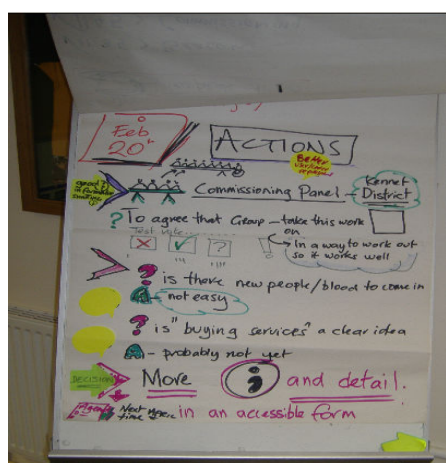
50. The framework was also at a development stage at the time of the review, with the most significant progress in the area of learning disability planning. In response the task group attended a meeting (20th February 2007) of the Kennet Learning Difficulty Planning and Development Group. This was a long standing planning group consisting of users, carers and partnership organisations, which met bi-monthly. The members witnessed a presentation that attempted to explain the new structure and the potential of the planning group taking on responsibility for the learning disability planning within the new framework.

Some key issues emerged at this meeting which impact on the potential success of the framework:

Communicating to Service Users

51. It was evident that it is extremely important to present the new framework in a language and format that can be understood by people with learning disabilities.
52. The presentation observed by the task group was confusing to the audience and did not use appropriate communication. The task group felt strongly that much care, on an individual level, must be taken to ensure that people understand the issues before them, and that they feel safe to give an opinion.

For other parts of the meeting visual materials were used to assist in communication and these appeared to have a positive impact (see below).



Web site

53. Some of the users found it difficult to navigate the Wiltshire County Council web site and requested language used on the pages to be simple for ease of understanding. Somerset County council via its Easy Words package was cited as an excellent example of how an authority uses a web site to communicate to its users. A section of the front page of the Somerset web site is included below. The Easy Words icon in the bottom right hand of the page takes people directly to the learning disability pages.

Programme

Online Payments	
Online Services	
Useful Websites	
Your Somerset Newspaper	
Contact Us >	
Email Us	28 February 2007
Phone Us	28 February 2007
Our Address	28 February 2007
Comments & Complaints	

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 Bem-vindo 欢迎 Mabuhay স্বাগতম Hoşgeldiniz


browsealoud
 ... look, click, listen


Easy Words


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Learning Disability Services

Easy Words





Our Promises to You

	We will support you as an equal person
	We will always be kind to you


Limited resource

54. The Kennet planning group highlighted that they struggled to attract new members to participate on the board and worried about their capacity to take on additional responsibility for work associated with the commissioning framework. Concern was raised about the potential length of meetings. The Planning Group meetings currently lasted approximately 2 hours, with an extended agenda this would increase further.

Recognising the limited numbers available the task group felt that there could be an interaction with committees like SW.I.S.S, who could provide valuable input into the process

Time for Change

55. A clear message to emerge from the meeting was that change cannot be pushed through quickly. Vulnerable people need time to understand the changes and eased into the new system. This was apparent throughout the review at all levels.

CONCLUSIONS

56. By reviewing the extensive changes taking place in DCS the Social Care Task Group has successfully increased awareness of how the department is working towards long term sustainability.

The task group has focussed on day services, especially for adults with learning disabilities. This has enabled the review to explore implications for users and staff during a period of transition as social care moves towards the promotion of independence and greater involvement with our partners in the community.

The evidence collected during this process has allowed the task group to make the following conclusions:

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL CLIENT GROUPS

1. Communication to users, staff and carers has been extensive and largely successful towards informing people about potential changes and how they will be personally affected.
2. The impact of change on staff morale has generally been negative. The effect of some staff being interviewed for jobs in the new service in December, yet being caught in limbo until March, has been damaging. The task group welcome the thoroughness of the assessment process, but question in hindsight whether staff selection should have waited until this was complete. Staff morale was further affected by the changes within existing day services. Staff had invested energy and time to build and develop the current model of service delivery and found it difficult to see this change.

3. It is vitally important that those service users no longer eligible for transport are given the maximum amount of time to plan alternative means of accessing the day centre. This is particularly relevant to those service users who will be travelling on public transport and who may require training in preparation for this step.
4. The task group welcome the decision to replace the existing day centres with smaller, more appropriate buildings that meet the needs of existing and future users.
5. Quality performance measurement of service users is extremely important in the new model and the task group welcomes the department's commitment to improve in this area. The task group would also encourage a degree of flexibility for people on time specific outcome focussed activities i.e. if targets are not achieved in the designated timescale then support should not stop.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTORS IN WILTSHIRE

6. The pilot schemes for drop in centres have had positive impacts for some users. It is crucial that people using these facilities are fully aware of who they need to contact if they require extra support e.g. CTPLD. This will help to address the concern that people will slip through the net when accessing support through the community.
7. The evidence collected suggested that drop in centres were more successful when centrally located. This helped accessibility and marketing of the service.
8. Integral to the department cultural changes is the role of the community. As this change programme was in its early stages it was not possible to scrutinise in detail whether the community was ready for this change.

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF USERS AND CARERS

9. Experiences of the new commissioning framework suggest that appropriate communication of the new structure to its audience is essential. The use of the web may be further utilised to assist in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That existing day centres do not close before replacements are operational, as agreed by the cabinet member.
2. The change programme taking place in DCS is in its infancy in terms of the impact on service users. The task group recommend that the Management Committee continue to monitor the following areas:
 - i. The impact of people living in residential care having reduced access to day services and the ability of residential providers to support this change. (Timescale 6-12 months)
 - ii. The progress towards identifying and enabling replacement buildings to the existing day centres. (Timescale 3-6 months)
 - iii. The progress towards developing the network of drop in services. (Timescale 12 months)
 - iv. The impact of the new transport eligibility criteria. (Timescale 12 months)
3. To commend staff for their work in continuing to deliver excellent services in sometimes difficult circumstances.
4. That the department ensure service users are given a full opportunity to prepare for change in arrangements when considering transport. Any form of guillotining is to be avoided.
5. The department should improve accessibility to web pages for users with learning disabilities. This could mirror the approach of Somerset County Council who has an icon on the front page which takes users direct to the relevant page.
6. To ensure the social projects witnessed are continued in Middlefield and Ashton Street.
7. To develop a consistent method of delivering the commissioning framework message and to include this on the web site.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

60. This task group report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 29 March 2007 for endorsement, following which it will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services for consideration and decision.
61. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will monitor implementation of the recommendations with a review to be undertaken in 12 months

Report Author - Ceri Williams (Scrutiny Officer)