

Using person centred thinking to transform Wiltshire's Day Support Service

Wiltshire County Council's Day Support Service is using person centred approaches to meet the Government's Valuing People and Putting People First agendas.

Diane Jenkins, the Community Resource Manager for day services across the south and east of the county, says:

"We wanted to make sure the people we work with have maximum choice, control and power over the services they receive," she said.

"It made perfect sense with the government's priorities that we needed to be more focused on individuals. Our person centred planning coordinator Jo Francis organised training in person centred approaches for our staff. We knew we wanted to change the way we provided support and this seemed a very straight forward and common sense way to do it."

Since the county-wide Day Opportunities Team has been using person centred approaches, the following things have happened:

- More people have been referred to the employment support team because they want a job.
- More people have been referred to Community Connecting team to use a community facility and become independent in doing that.

- More people are now using a closer local day service that they can walk to.
- More people are now travelling in the community or to their service independently, having successfully completed travel training.
- Some individuals have chosen to leave their day service and are now accessing their community, college or are increasing their employment hours.

Diane said it had been a mammoth task but ultimately very rewarding:

"We've met with all 400 individuals and their families and carers who use our day services across the county. We've spent a considerable amount of time to agree outcomes that will work for them. The task we have now is putting all those things in place they need by continuing to change the way we are work and create flexibility to offer lifestyle support rather than a service within four walls."

Now, our staff can see what's important to an individual and what they want to do during the day; and we can more clearly demonstrate that we're helping them meet their desired outcomes."

How Wiltshire's Day Opportunity Service transformed the way they worked

Diane said that Wiltshire's day opportunity service had always offered lots of different activities for their service users, but they were often restricted in how person-centred they could be. The county is now using Day Opportunity Plans and One Page Profiles (and then working/not working and action planning) to make their services more responsive to individual wishes and aspirations. They worked with people to look at how they wanted live a full life, spend time and take part in meaningful community activities. They also worked with families and carers to ensure they were involved and able listen to and support the person in the most appropriate way to maximise their independence.

“Everyone, including staff members, now have a one page profile that gives information about what is important to and for them, what people like and admire about them; and how they can best be supported. The profiles are owned by the individual and have been shared with family members or carers.” Diane said. **“We used pictures, photographs, symbols and interactive computer programmes to help identify their key outcomes and who could best help achieve them. It didn't have to be someone from a statutory service, but**

perhaps a family member or friend, or even someone hired through a personal budget or direct payment.”

Diane said the one page profiles have provided a consistent approach to working towards agreed outcomes, and also help with getting to know someone really well. She said that parents and carers were finding the process useful and enjoyable and told the story of how one mother was reassured her son was receiving the right care.

“One man we are working with has autism and mental health problems, and his mum was really anxious about the support he was receiving. So we put together his one page profile and asked for her input. When we finished the profile and sent it home, she said ‘that's my son exactly, how did you know?’ It was proof we were supporting him in the right way.”

Diane said the Day Opportunity Plans were informing the activities they offer in their day services. **“We're monitoring the outcomes for individuals every six months through our evaluation process. The outcome forms will be updated and used in the annual person centred reviews process that other members of the learning disability team are doing. The opportunities are flexible and responsive to ensure we focus on what is important to the individual at the time it is important to them.”**

Dianne said working across teams was really important to match where a day service could support someone to achieve an outcome, or whether they should be referred to other teams like supported employment or community connecting.

“We’ve been working closely with a multi-disciplinary team that includes health staff like occupational therapists and specialist nurses. They’re really keen to work with us, so we can better enable social care staff to help and understand the work they do. We’re running workshops with health colleagues in day centres that focus on healthy eating and lifestyles. We’re also looking at how we develop a job in future which encompasses health and social work - it will be interesting!”

The team recently won their county’s award for providing more choice and control within their community services department. Diane’s advice to those

looking to lead this change in their own teams is to be creative and give staff members a sense of ownership over the changes being made.

“Undertaking the training in person centred thinking has been a revelation. It’s reinvigorated members of the team and we’ve started working in a way that gets everybody to contribute and that makes a big difference as well. You need to be creative, have a degree of common sense, put individuals at the centre of everything you do and look at lots of different options to find new ways of opening doors.

Person centred thinking and planning puts the individual at the heart of our work so we are truly supporting them in the way they’re wanting to be supported. Ultimately, we are working towards no longer being service led, but being service user led.”

