

Supported Living and Day Opportunities Survey

Feedback Report

April 2026



1 Introduction

In November 2025, Shropshire Council began work that aimed to capture the views, feedback and suggestions of how day opportunities and supported living for adults with learning difficulties and autism, are delivered externally. These are services which are not delivered directly by Shropshire Council, but which form part of the service overall.

Shropshire Council ensures that there are different services in place for adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism (LD&A) including supported living and day opportunities. Supported living and day opportunities will be used throughout this report and a brief description is below:

Day Opportunities for adults with LD&A includes activities and support offered during the day to help people learn new skills, make friends, be more independent, and take part in their community.

Supported Living enables people to live as independently as possible in their community, with support from staff. This can either involve living by themselves or with other adults who have similar support needs.

To gain real insight into lived experiences, Shropshire Council wanted to hear from individuals who draw on the services and their friends/families, the social care workforce, service providers and anyone who has an interest in this area. This took the form of 3 online surveys.

The surveys ran concurrently from 10th November 2025 to 10th January 2026.

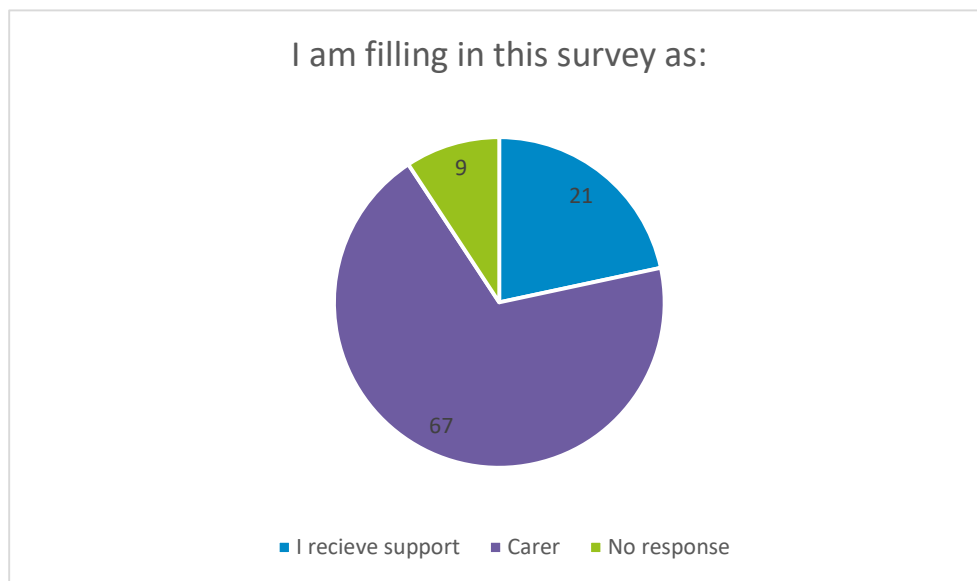
This report describes the survey findings within 6 main sections:

- Section 1: **Introduction** (this section) provides an overview of the survey and how it was promoted.
- Section 2: **Those that draw on the service** covers those that engage in the service as individuals with learning difficulties and autism, and their families/friends, carers or someone nominated to speak on their behalf.
- Section 3: **Service providers** represents those that provide the service.
- Section 4: **Social care workforce** considers the social care workforce' opinions.
- Section 5: **Recommendations** considers an overview of recommendations for the service based on the report's findings.
- Section 6: **Summary and conclusion** provides a summary and conclusion based on the overall analysis of the feedback received.

2. Service users

The survey was responded to by **97** people who draw on the services. In this report service users are defined as adults with learning difficulties or/and autism (LD&A) and informal carers such as a family member who responded to the survey on behalf of the adult with LD&A. The 97 responses were made up of 67 carers, 21 adults with LD&A and 9 blank responses seen in Figure 1:

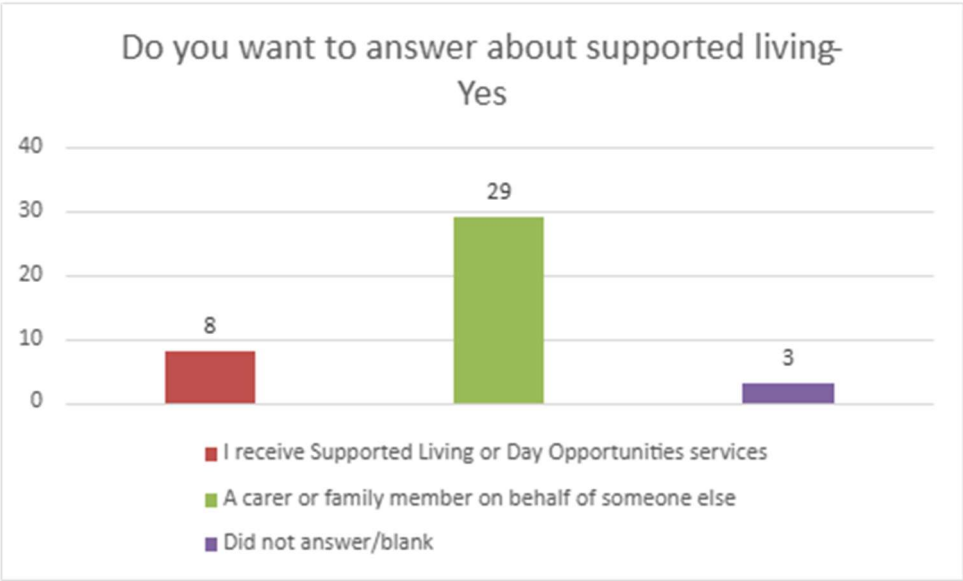
Figure 1: In what capacity are people filling in this survey



The next question asked whether they wanted to answer questions about supported living or skip to answer questions about Day Opportunities. All 97 respondents answered this question and decided based on what care they receive. 59% skipped answering about day opportunities and 41% remained with answering questions about supported living. At this point in the report, it does not necessarily have to be assumed that the 41% who kept with supported living did not also answer questions about day opportunities, as they may also make use of these facilities.

In figure 2, we can see the breakdown of the 41% so we can be more informed about the next questions.

Figure 2: How many wanted to answer about supported living.



This chart shows that of the 40 people who wanted to provide feedback on supported living, 8 were adults receiving supported living, 29 were carers or family members on behalf of someone else, and 3 did not answer or left the response blank. The next question sought to understand which supported living facilities provided support. There were 21 blank responses with 10 responses supplying the name of the facility. It is a shame that 21 skipped the question as more responses would have given greater insight into which facilities are being used, to which frequency, and how they are providing the service. Table 1 sets out the breakdown.

Table 1 : Which facility is used.

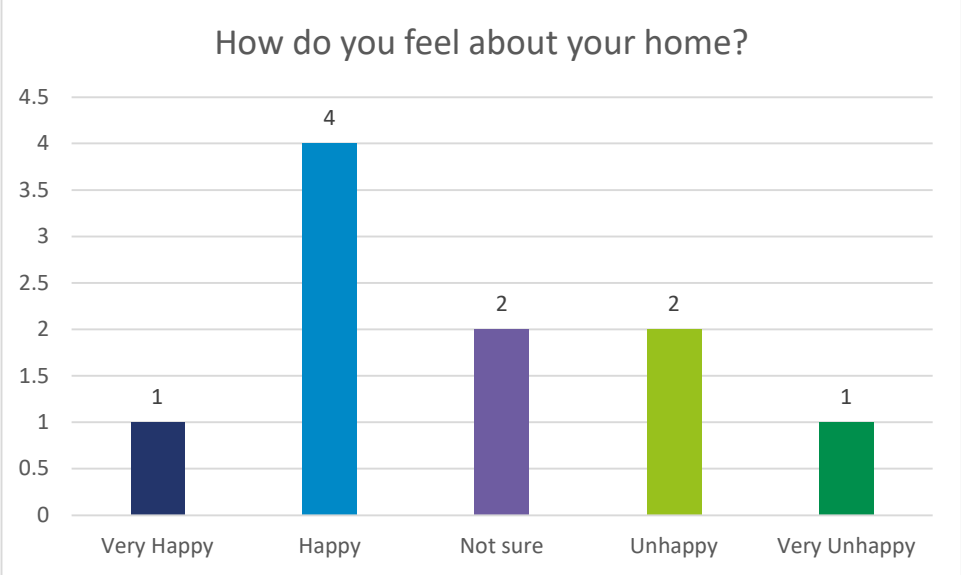
Facility Name	Number of responses
Bethphage	1
Fairmont	2
Pethryn	2
Dimensions	2
Veraty Care	1
None	1
'P'	1
Total	10

This table shows us that Fairmont, Pethryn and Dimensions make up 60% of answers, with the rest making up 40% cumulatively. There might be an argument that the answer that is a standalone letter P could have been trying to put Pethryn, but for accuracy in this report, as that assumption has not been proven, it has been presented as its own entry.

The people who draw on the services were also asked to rate their happiness with their home, with 10 answers. It is helpful that the same 10 who provided answers (including

the one who answered with 'None') to where they were supported, then scored their happiness with the facilities. This can provide some real lived in experience that could help shape the future of the service. Figure 3 shows the breakdown:

Figure 3: How people feel about their home.



This figure shows that 4 people were happy with their home and 1 very happy. There were 2 unhappy, 1 very unhappy and 2 not sure. It is reassuring that though the responses are limited in number, the positive responses, happy and very happy, account for 50% of the comments. The negative responses: unhappy and very unhappy, make up 30% of the responses, and 20% of service users are unsure of their feelings towards their homes.

Further analysis of the feedback shows that one provider has received negative responses, which might prompt the need to explore the service in these specific cases to ensure the client's needs are met. The other negative response was cited against the blank entry, which means it is not possible to determine which service this relates to or use the feedback for service improvement. Similarly, one provider has received positive responses, so positive feedback to the team and service might be considered.

The next questions asked for opinion on their homes and whether they agreed or disagreed with some pre-populated statements. They focused on the more physical aspects of their home, such as space, furnishings and decorations and cleanliness. Table 4 shows the results with the statement either agreed with, disagreed with, neither agreed nor disagreed with, or 'does not apply to me', responses.

Table 2 : Statements about supported living facilities.

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Don't know/ Does not apply to me	Total
My home is in the area I want to live	7	1	3	0	11
I have enough space	7	3	1	0	11
I like the furnishings and decoration	6	3	2	0	11
My home is clean and tidy	6	2	3	0	11
I am supported to eat healthy meals	4	1	5	0	11
I like the people I live with	4	3	1	0	11

Overall, we can see that in all the statements, bar the 'I am supported to eat healthy meals' statement, are agreed with and have received the most responses. It is reassuring for the service to know that the clients who are assisted by supported living are, generally, happy with their homes. There is some further reassurance that the 10 clients who have answered the previous question are also answering here.

The next question was about the staff that support clients and asked for opinions on various statements about the staff. Table 3 shows the breakdown.

Table 3: Statements about the staff.

	Agree	Neither Agree or disagree	Disagree	Don't know/ Does not apply to me	Total
Staff listen to me	30% 3	30% 3	30% 3	10% 1	10
Staff help when I ask	36% 4	27% 3	27% 3	10% 1	11
I could talk to someone if I was unhappy	27% 3	27% 3	18% 2	27% 3	11
I could ask for help if I was unwell	40% 4	20% 2	10% 1	30% 3	10
The staff are kind and treat me well	46% 5	27.27% 3	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	11

There are enough staff	54.55% 6	9.09% 1	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	11
I can get help with travel away from my home	72.73% 8	0.00%	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	11

Again, the same 10 clients answered which maintains consistency within the feedback. The response gaps between agree and disagree are closer in all statements bar 'There are enough staff' and 'I can get help with travel away from my home' where overwhelmingly 'agree' has been chosen; 55% and 73% respectively. There are also more answers for 'Don't know/ Does not apply to me' which might be accounted for by the nature of those answering the question; of the 10 answerers, 8 are a carer or a family member answering on behalf of someone who receives supported living, and they may not know or have opinions on the staff.

The closeness of opinions is further shown in the following question 'Overall, how happy are you with the support from staff at home?'. Figure 5 shows how close opinions are between happiness and the unhappiness of service users with staff.

Figure 5: How happy people are with the support from staff at their homes

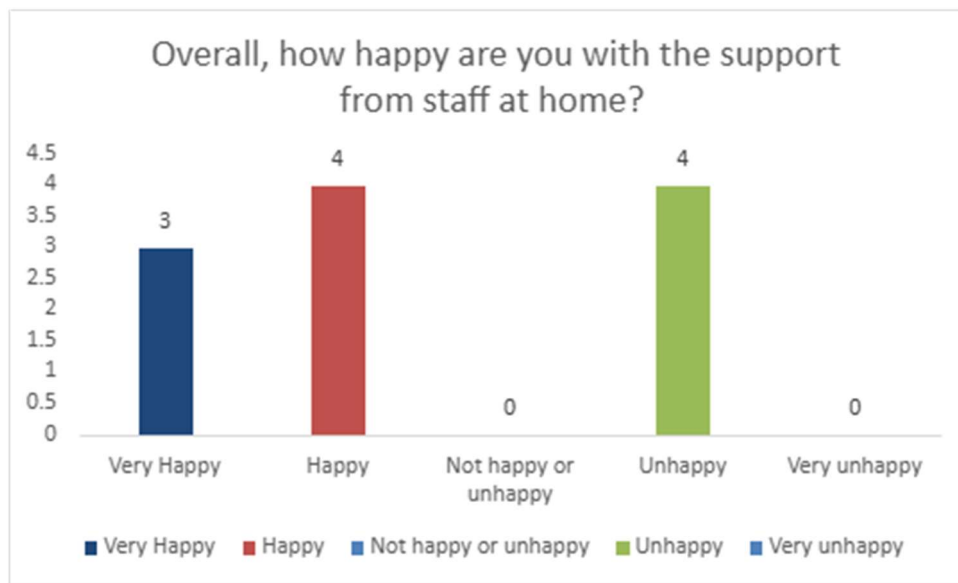


Figure 5 shows that the people who use the service are both happy and unhappy in equal measure with the support from staff in their homes, which backs up the closeness of the previous statements. However, it is pleasing to see that overall, there is a positive response to this question versus a negative one; cumulatively 'happy' and 'very happy' make up 64% of the responses.

They were then asked if they had a Personal Support Plan, which 11 people answered, with yes receiving 91% of the responses and no receiving 9%. A follow up question was then asked, if they had answered yes, to state whether they agreed or disagreed with various statements about the personal support plan.

Figure 6: Statements about Personal Support Plans.

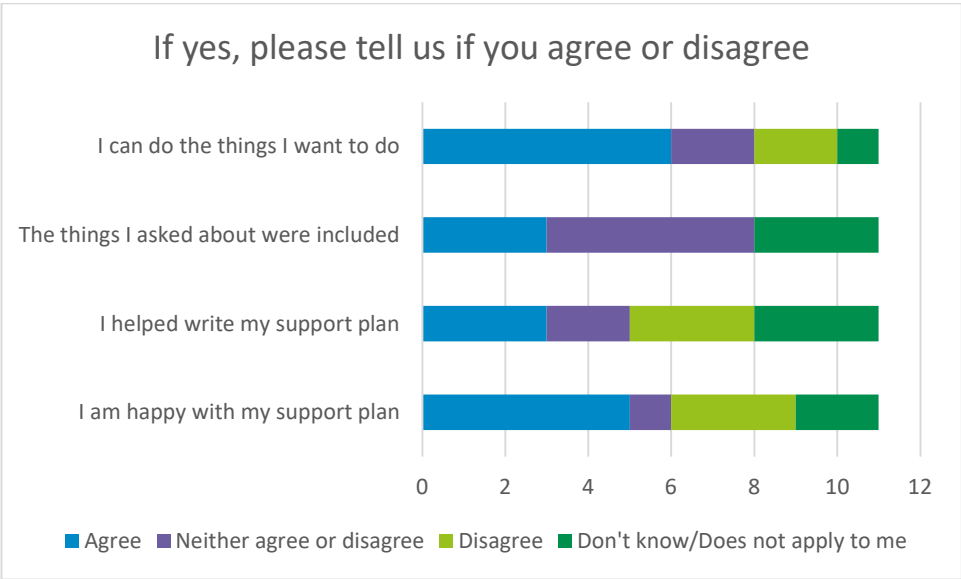
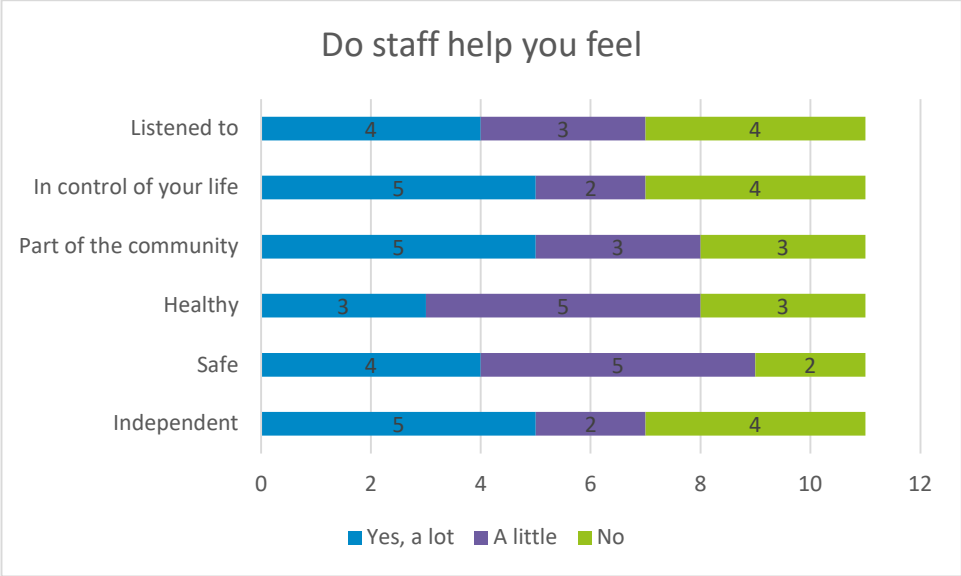


Figure 6 shows that overall, questions about the personal support plan demonstrated either agreement or neutral responses. There is an exception with the statement 'I helped write my support plan' where disagreement and unsure responses feature more than the positive or neutral choices.

The clients were then asked how staff made them feel, with pre-determined statements. Figure 7 shows the results of these statements.

Figure 7: Statements about staff



It is reassuring to see that overall, the positive responses (yes, a lot' and 'a little') are more cumulatively answered than the negative response (no). This adds weight to the results from figure 5, where service users were happier (including feeling very happy) than they were unhappy with the support from the staff.

The people who draw on the services were then asked if you wanted to move home, do

you think you could get the help and advice you need; overall 'No' had 64% of the responses, which equates to 7 out of the 11 answers. 27% or 3 people replied they wouldn't want to move and 9%, 1 person said yes.

This might be an area that the service wishes to focus on in future planning, as it ties in with a personal support plan being individualised and recognising when needs change, i.e. people who draw on the services are allowed to change their minds in relation to what they like or what serves them best.

Regarding money and who looks after it, there were 2 responses to 'I do' which relates to the service user. Overall, family members look after service users' money; 8 responses or 73%. There were no responses to 'care provider' or 'I don't know' and 1 response to 'Other'.

Table 4: Responses to the question about who looks after the people who draw on the services' money.

Who looks after your money?	Responses	%
I do	2	18%
Family members	8	73%
Care provider	0	0%
Other	1	9%
I don't know	0	0%
Total	11	100

Question 13 asked 'if your care provider helps with your money, do they explain what your money is being used for?' 7 people answered, with 'Yes, always' accounting for 3 responses or 43%. 'Sometimes' and 'No, never' account for 2 responses each; 29% each, whilst it is encouraging that overall, should care providers use service users' money, they are told for what purpose, there is some concern that that is not a 100% answer. It is a pity that more survey respondents did not answer this question as gathering information on this from a wider pool would give more meaningful results.

The next 3 questions allowed service users to expand with their own comments about supported living. The first question of 'what do you like best about your supported living accommodation?' garnered 9 responses, of which are below:

- *The people I share with.*
- *In a nice quiet area. Amenities such as shops, pharmacy, and buses are close by.*
- *Some of the staff are outstanding, others are difficult to understand or trust.*
- *Living in my own house.*
- *I am not provided with supported living accommodation.*
- *Friendly polite and helpful.*
- *P*
- *Single occupancy, clean, and warm.*
- *Everything.*

Excepting the comment of not being provided with supported living accommodation and

the single letter p, the comments are generally good and focus on the amenities of the surrounding areas, the facilities, the independence and the staff.

Question 14 asked if there was anything people who draw on the services didn't like and 9 responded.

Example comments:

- *The majority of the staff do not understand how to support me effectively.*
- *Not nearly enough space for my work-related activities and materials.*
- *Now I have got used to not living at home I would like to move into Shrewsbury and have 2 friends I would like to live with so I can continue to become more independent and be closer to the activities I enjoy but have been waiting for support from SW for 12 months now with no allocation despite monthly calls by parent to SW team. Hard work with private landlord and costs are not sustainable as rent has just been increased and not sure how long I can continue to afford to live there.*
- *Out of the county, away from my hometown, family and friends.*
- *I am not provided with supported living accommodation.*
- *No (2)*
- *Out of my home county, not near family and friends. Not in my community.*
- *P.*

Again, there were two responses that are not reflective of the question, and they can be discounted. After that, there were common themes involving being removed from their hometown or home community, not being supported effectively, not having enough space for work and wanting to be closer to amenities and friends. Two responses did suggest there was nothing wrong with supported living.

Question 16 asked 'if you could change one thing about your supported living arrangement what would it be?' There were 9 responses; one is not shown below as it is the single letter p, which has been answered to all questions requiring extra comments throughout the survey.

Example comments:

- *The culture and understanding about how to meet my needs.*
- *An extra room to use as a workspace.*
- *Move into town with my friends.*
- *Live in Shrewsbury, my home town, near family and friends.*
- *I would like to receive supported living accommodation.*
- *Nothing (2)*
- *Move to home county.*

There are two responses that show that the people who use the services are happy with their supported living as they have nothing to change. Thereafter, people want to be back in their hometown or in familiar surroundings, a culture change, understanding from staff around needs, extra room for work, and one person would like to receive supported living accommodation. Though this survey is anonymous, details can be passed on to the relevant department for appropriate action.

The next question asked if the service users would like to answer about day

opportunities. 15 answered altogether, with 60% in the affirmative. The table below shows where people attend day opportunities:

Table 5: Where people who draw on the services attend Day Opportunities.

Facility	Responses	%
Blossom Barns	11	32%
Innage Lane	1	3%
Our Space	1	3%
44B's	7	21%
The Windfall Project	0	0%
Freda's Day Service	0	0%
Fordhall Farm	0	0%
Cherry Lodge	3	9%
Willow Lodge	4	12%
Nineveh Ridge Care Farm	0	0%
Working Together Ludlow	1	3%
Broseley Life Skills	0	0%
Condover Day Opportunities	0	0%
Crows Mill Craft Centre	1	3%
We are Champions	1	3%
Crossbar at Provision	2	6%
Erlas Victorian Walled Garden	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	6%
Other	14	41%
Total	34	100%

We can see that 'Other' was the most popular choice, followed by Blossom Barns and 44B's. Where service users have chosen 'Other', the responses are below:

- *44bs (2)*
- *Shropshire Wild Team - weekly*
- *Greenacres(4)*
- *The Beacon at Mayfair (2)*
- *Identity dance*
- *None (2)*
- *Abbots Wood*
- *Mark Taylor support Telford*
- *Albrighton Trust*

These results show Greenacres Farm is the most popular choice, followed by The Beacon. Some people are choosing 'Other' to choose a prepopulated answer (44b's) and some people are answering 'none' or not being aware of the services.

'How often do you go' was the next question and 32 people answered, with 65 skipping

the question. The results are seen below in Figure 8:

Figure 8: How often people who draw on the services attend Day Opportunities

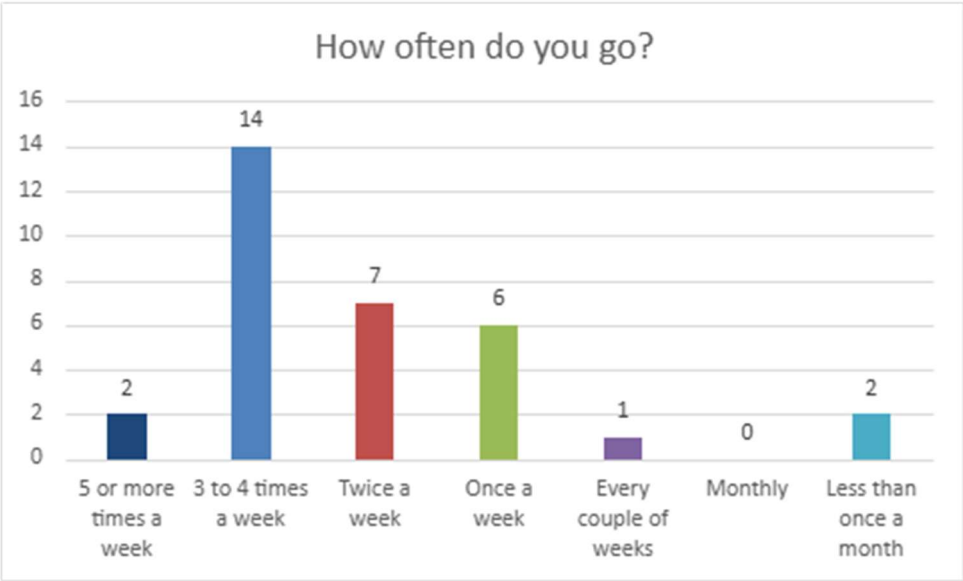
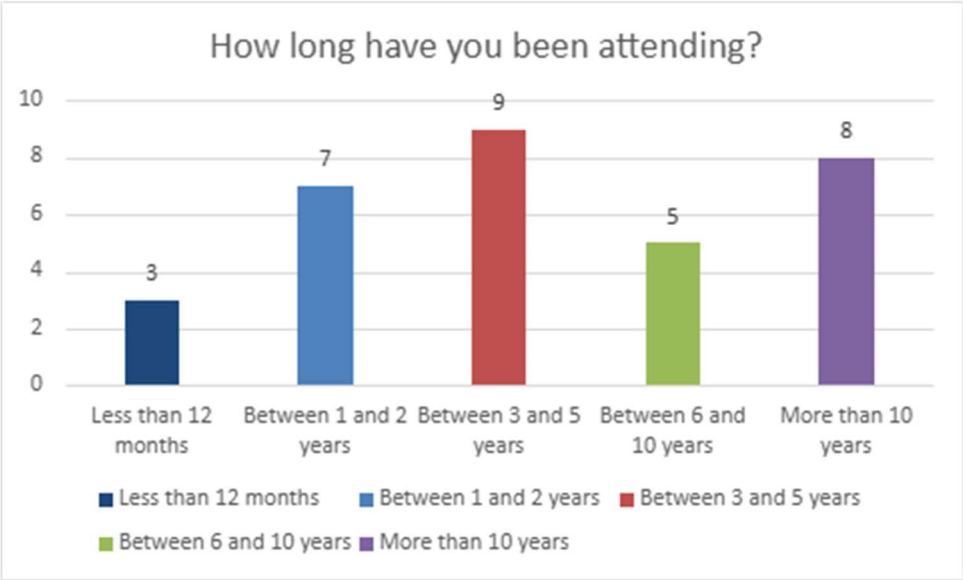


Figure 8 shows that 3 to 4 times a week is the most common choice, and the 'monthly' choices are less common. They were then asked how long they have been attending, of which 32 answered. Figure 9 shows the results:

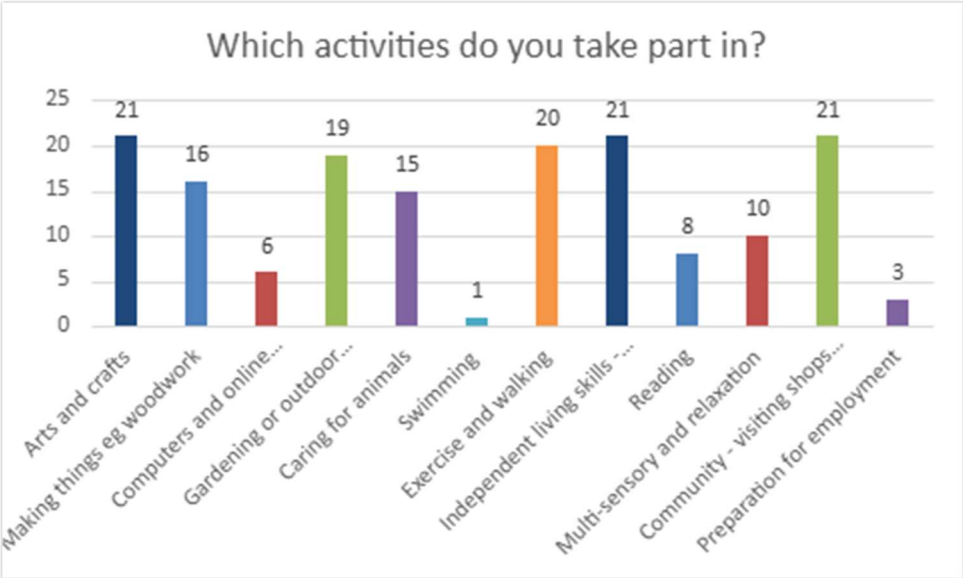
Figure 9: How long the people who draw on the services have been attending Day Opportunities.



Mostly people have attended for 3 to 5 years, more than 10 years of attendance and between 1 and 2 years. The results are evenly spread out and show that overall service users have attended for at least 12 months.

Those that draw on the services were then given options for the activities they undertake at the Day opportunities, and figure 10 shows the options.

Figure 10: Which activities people take part in at Day Opportunities.



The people that draw on services could select all that apply to them, and 32 responded. Overall arts and crafts, community visits and independent living skills were the activities most selected. The least commonly selected activities were swimming preparation for employment and computers/online activities. The survey respondents could also describe any other activities they do, and these can be seen below:

- *Creative writing, litter picking, films, outings, bowling, croquet, crazy golf, belly dancing. Sometimes I cook my lunch, sometimes I bring a packed lunch, or buy from the cafe or a local shop.*
- *Cooking, litter picking, croquet, bowls, crazy golf in the local community and poetry.*
- *Cooking once a week. I cook my own lunch and on other days I either buy from Mayfair’s restaurant or I buy locally.*
- *Barge trips. 1 day I bring my own packed lunch, 1 day I buy a meal at the center, 1 day I cook my own lunch with the group.*
- *Yoga, barge trips, bowling, films. I cook my own lunch as part of the group on the day I attend.*
- *Yoga, 10 pin bowling, croquet, bowls, crazy golf, help in the community center, help deliver letters in community, visit other centers e.g. Blackhurst 1 day. I buy my lunch from the local cafe. The other day I cook my own lunch.*
- *Volunteering opportunities, yoga, therapy dog, visit other centers and have them visit here, participate in wider Mayfair events, barge trips, litter picking, help putting posters up in community. Household tasks like prescription collection, film screenings, entertainers in shop and cook lunches – one day I cook my own, 1 days provided by the restaurant, 1 day buy from local shop.*
- *Dance, musical theatre with volunteer dance teacher role once a week.*
- *Art.*
- *Bowling, go on train, RAF Cosford, theme parks.*

- *Socialising with peers who have known since childhood in local community is a key part of the individualised service with staff who have known me for a significant length of time, providing consistency of care.*

The types of other activities listed included cooking, trips out such as bowling and seeing films, visits to local attractions, and physical activities such as yoga and dance. The comments highlight a diverse mix of different activity types and opportunities.

The next question explored whether the people who draw on the services experience problems accessing the day opportunities. Again, 32 people answered with 84%; 27 responses stating no and 16%; 5 responses, answering yes. It is reassuring that most people do not have problems accessing the services. Those who answered 'yes' were then asked what the problems were. Table 6 shows the responses from 7 people.

Table 6: Potential problems people might experience.

Answer choices	Responses	%
Eligibility	1	14%
Cost to take part	1	14%
Distance to travel	3	43%
Lack of transport	1	14%
Opening days/times	0	0%
Someone to go with me	2	29%
Inaccessible building	0	0%
Staff not trained to meet my needs	0	0%
Attitude of staff	0	0%
Attitude of other people who attend	1	14%
Language or communication barriers	0	0%
Fear of trying something new	1	14%
Finding a suitable day opportunity	4	57%

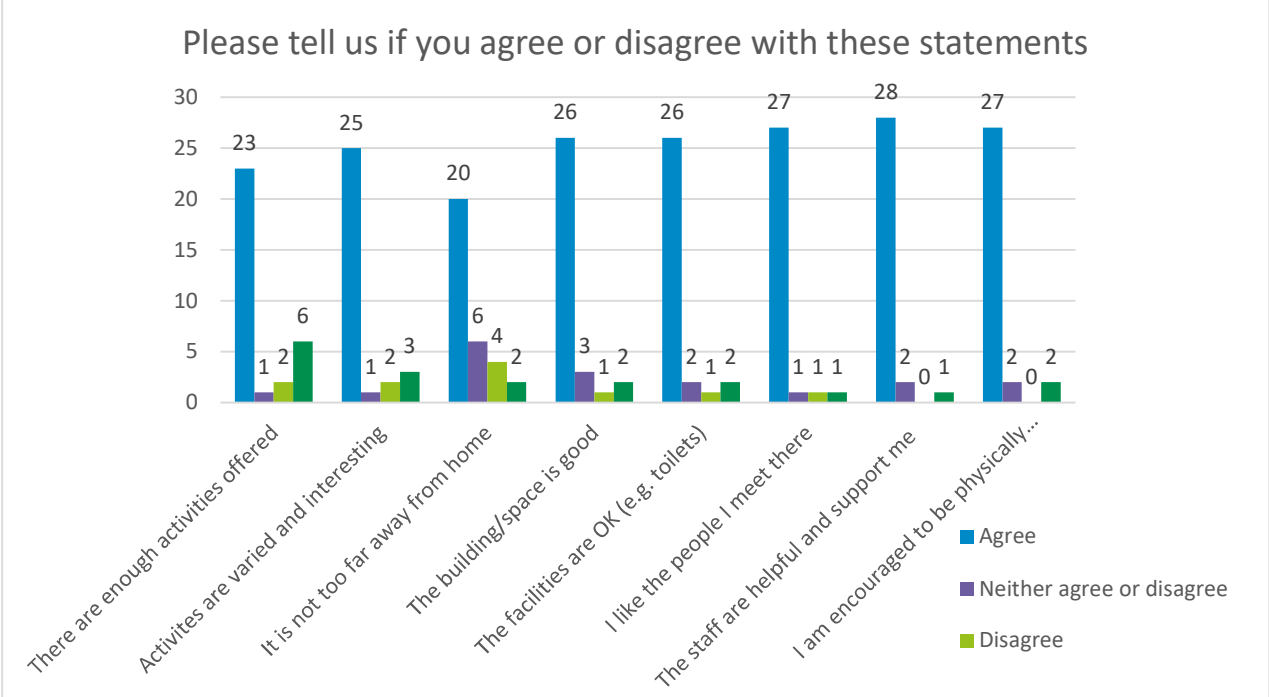
There were two comments alongside these responses:

- *We have had trouble accessing wheelchair accessible taxis in the past.*
- *Not at the moment but wheelchair accessible taxis are very hard to get and keep once you have them.*

The results suggest that finding suitable day opportunities, distance to travel, transport for travel and someone to attend are the top challenges mentioned.

The next question asked for agreement or disagreement with prepopulated statements, and figure 11 shows the results. We can see that overall, people agree with the statements, which is positive to see. The other responses, either neutral or negative, do not feature in a way that would need further exploration, or would cause real concerns. The feedback suggests that satisfaction is generally good overall with a small number of concerns relating to distance to travel and the adequacy of the buildings/spaces day opportunities are provided within.

Figure 11: Statements about Day Opportunities for people who draw on the services to agree or disagree.



The next question focused on what happens at mealtimes, with 4 prepopulated choices. 79% (23 responses) bring their own packed lunch; 10% (3 responses) chose that the centre provides a meal; 7% (2 responses) answered that they buy a meal locally, and 4% (1 response) answered that there is a cafe on-site that they use. The small numbers of responses and the diversity within the answers makes it difficult to draw too many conclusions from this feedback.

The question of who pays for attendance at the day opportunities was next, and 30 people answered. Figure 12 shows the results for the 5 statements below:

Figure 12: Who pays for attendance at Day Opportunities.

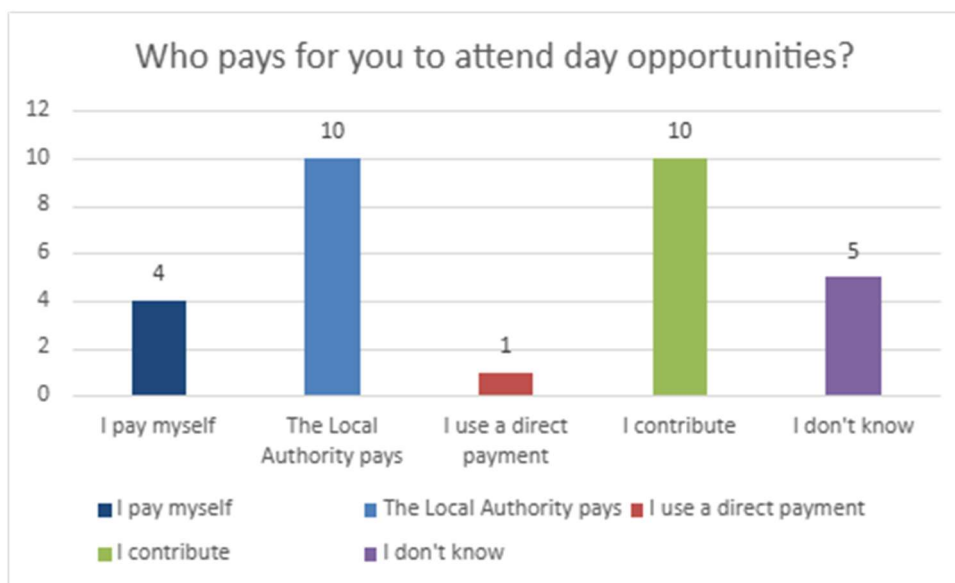


Figure 12 shows that it is split equally between the Local Authority and service users contributing; 33%, 17% are unsure of who pays, 13% pay themselves and 3% use a direct payment.

Those that draw on the services were then asked about the cost, and whether it is reasonable or too much. 30 people answered the 4 pre-generated statements, and the answers were again split equally between 'about right' and 'I don't know'; 33% each respectively. This could be seen to agree with the previous question, those that contribute are not paying the full amount and might therefore, think it is about right, and those that selected that the Local Authority pay might not know the cost. No one chose 'too little' and 13% or 4 responses answered that the cost was 'too much'. This result for 'too much' might align with the 4 respondents to 'I pay myself', if they shoulder the entire cost themselves.

Question 28 explored how the day opportunities help those that draw on the services and gave 8 statements for people to choose from. They could choose as many as applied. Again, 31 people supplied answers and Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7 : How Day Opportunities help those that draw on the services.

Answer choices	Responses	%
Making friends	29	94%
Becoming more independent (such as learning to cook and clean)	23	74%
Learning new skills	27	87%
Volunteering	4	13%
Finding paid work	1	3%
Spending more time in the community	18	58%
Being healthier	22	71%
Being more active	24	77%

There appears to be high levels of satisfaction among people which shows they feel they are being helped in social aspects such as making friends and being involved in the community. There is also a positive result for people feeling they are supported to learn independent living skills and regarding their health. In contrast, few survey respondents feel that day opportunities help with employment and work-related skills. These results align with the responses given to the activities people take part in; preparation for employment had 3 responses and could present an area for improvement.

The next question asked how the staff make those that draw on the services feel and there were 6 categories to choose from, though they could select all or any that applied.

Figure 13: Statement about how staff make people feel.

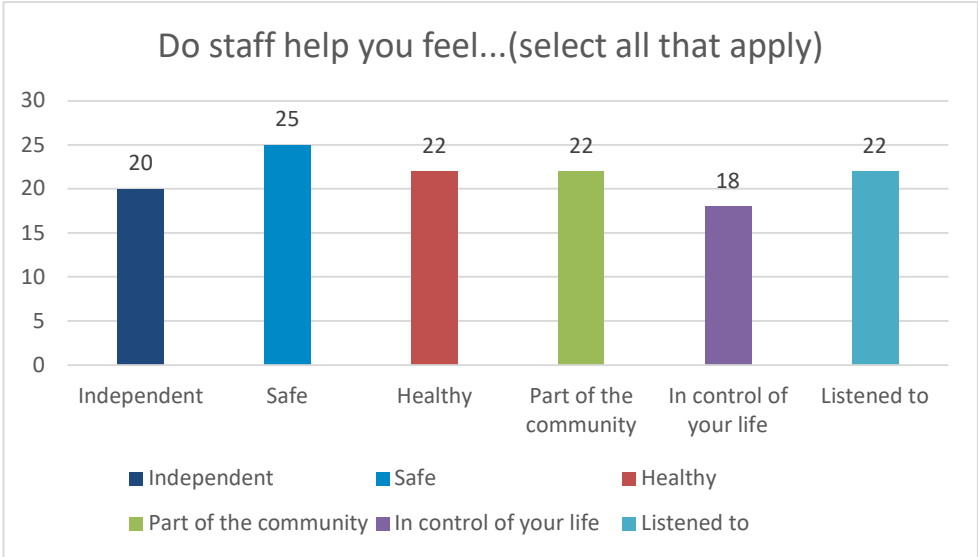


Figure 13 shows a positive response to all the statements; showing that most respondents agreed with all the statements though there is less agreement with the statement ‘in control of your life’.

The next question allowed people to comment with their own opinions on what they like best about the day opportunities and 29 people answered. The comments are all below:

- *It's wonderful, like home, having fun, art, creative writing, belly dancing.*
- *Being part of a group, writing, Crazy Golf.*
- *Cooking, Bowling, Yoga, Belly Dancing, Film, Shopping in Shrewsbury.*
- *Like being outdoors in the fresh air and in nature.*
- *Nothing much.*
- *I'm able to be with people similar to myself.*
- *It gives my son a purpose and enable him to make new friends and socialise.*
- *It gives me purpose and I have the opportunity to make new friends and socialise.*
- *Cooking. Film Day. Yoga. Puzzle/game day.*
- *I like cooking. It gives me confidence.*
- *All of it. The people and the staff.*
- *All my friends and the staff. It is very local. Being part of the community.*

- *Get to take part in my special interest of dance and performing arts in a safe, inclusive environment that provides so many opportunities to develop my confidence and independence.*
- *Time to meet others and do different things.*
- *Routine, staff, activities, gardening, animals.*
- *Getting out of the house.*
- *I am not currently aware of the day opportunities.*
- *It is a very familiar and safe place with great staff and opportunities.*
- *Learning new skills, meeting friends.*
- *The places we visit.*
- *All the friends I have made there. I feel safe, very well supported, and understood there are lots of activities to get involved in.*
- *Routine, friends, staff, planned days, animals, gardening.*
- *Feeling valued and like I am achieving goals.*
- *I like blossom farm because it is a healthy day centre where you can be active and not be sitting around all day long.*
- *Being with people who don't judge me by my disabilities, but who accepts me as I am.*
- *Supported to take part to individual capacity, give meaning to life, part of a supportive community, sense of purpose and belonging.*
- *Blossom Barns gives my daughter the opportunity to learn and extend her independence and living skills in a friendly environment.*

The themes that are apparent from these comments are that people like day opportunities because they can socialise, have a purpose, and learn new skills; which gives them confidence.

The service users were then asked if there was anything they didn't like about the service, 18 people answered, 9 of which answered no, nothing or not applicable, and the remainder commented:

- *Litter picking.*
- *Fund all my own access to dance, choir and musical theater classes as well as day provision and cannot sustain this for more than 3 months then will have to stop.*
- *I don't like having my stuff locked away as this doesn't feel like we are treated like adults.*
- *I am not currently aware of the day opportunities.*
- *When other service users are upset and cry or scream..*
- *No I like having ago at everything that is available to me.*
- *Not valued and seem as a form of supported volunteering as should be.*

This is a positive result with the majority suggesting there is nothing they don't like. The other comments are concerned with some of the activities available, funding concerns, not feeling like an adult, and the noise. Generally, people are happy with the service.

The next question asked if there is anything the service can do to make things better in

the future, which gained 28 responses. The comments are shown in full here:

- *Help eat more healthily.*
- *See shows.*
- *More Outings.*
- *More places for different people as we are all different and all disabilities are not visible, should be open to all.*
- *I feel that the service users work extremely hard and get nothing in return, they could be paid a small wage. Also having to pay when the service users don't attend is wrong, their not using transport or attending their day service, yet they still have to pay.*
- *Not sure (3)*
- *No (2)*
- *Social care assessment and help to move into accommodation in town closer to my activities which is registered as social supported living so I can access the correct benefit to support my rent costs, reduce my fuel cost to travel to activities and assessment for funding to support access to the new day or any day provision so I can continue to attend and build my skills towards life and work.*
- *Have more places with younger co- horts and places available to me closer.*
- *When a day service has a vehicle, it should be wheelchair accessible to be inclusive.*
- *Yes maybe look into things better as I was told that I was ready for my independence but I applied for a flat of my own and it fell through due to not knowing that there was no support for me with the rent etc and not having saved anything towards this I then could not afford to move out of my mums home.*
- *YES! Start asking existing Carers what their cared for [service users] in the future so you can start planning for it!!!! We have been asking the Council to address this for years and years and years*
- *Offer these services to those in need.*
- *The potential opportunity for supported living.*
- *Make sure parents / carers know about all the opportunities that are available.*
- *More outside fun activities and less crafting etc (at Mark Taylor is perfect balance)*
- *I can't think of any ways in which it could be improved currently.*
- *Each service should have a wheelchair accessible vehicle; my son misses out on trips taken during the day which everyone else can go on.*
- *Yes, it would be lovely to have care overnight.*
- *I also use Barleyfields from time to time it would be good if they could take us out more.*
- *Ensure that services e.g we are champions, have the support to continue providing excellent care and opportunities so that consistency is maintained to be able to socialise with a well-established peer group.*
- *More variety/ options, seen as supported volunteering.*
- *Continue the great work at Blossom Barns where they are continually looking at new ways to support adults.*

There are several comments with no suggestions which are encouraging to see as this suggests that the service is performing well for its users, and that they recognize that.

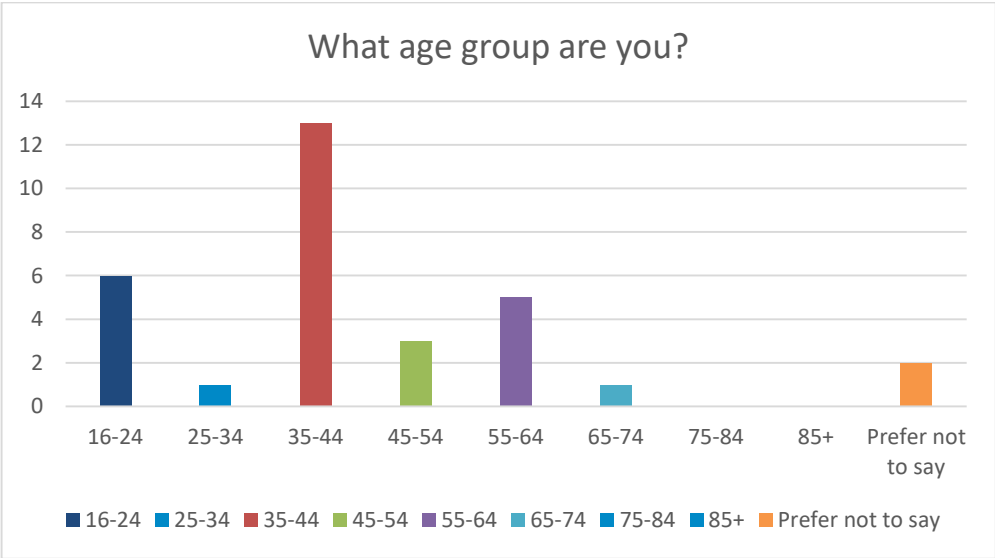
The other comments focus on more activities being available, wheelchair accessibility and potential for supported living.

The following questions now focus on more information about the people who draw on the services, which helps the service gather a better picture of their clients. Service users were asked whether they would like to answer further questions and out of the 37 that answered the question, 31 answered yes.

In terms of whether people are female, male or other, 45% (14 respondents) were female, 48% (15 respondents) were male and 7% (2 responses) preferred not to say.

The age groups are seen in Figure 14 below, and most people who draw on the service are between 35-44.

Figure 14: What age are the people who draw on the services.



The nature of disability was asked next, which 39% (12 responses) stated they have learning disability, 13% (4) have autism, 29% (9) have learning disabilities and autism, and 19% (6) were not applicable, as they were responding as a carer, family member or friend. Nobody declined to comment on the question. If the response was by an associated person, they commented with the following:

- *Associated mental health difficulties and OCD.*
- *Daughter has learning disabilities and autism.*
- *Cerebral Palsy.*
- *Complex medical condition.*
- *Non verbal.*
- *Wheelchair user.*

Table 8 will show the results of the question ‘Do you need extra help with any of these things?’.

Table 8: Do those that draw on the services need extra help with any of these

statements.

Answer choices	Responses	%
Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)	1	4%
Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)	3	11%
Mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs)	6	21%
Dexterity (e.g. lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)	6	21%
Learning or understanding or concentrating	22	79%
Memory	10	36%
Mental health	12	43%
Stamina or breathing or fatigue	2	7%
Socially or behaviorally	15	54%
Prefer not to say	2	7%
Total	79	100%

When asked if they regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone, 25% (7 responses) answered yes, 61% (17 responses) answered no and 14% (4 responses) answered prefer not to say. When asked about their ethnic origin 90% (26 responses) answered white of British, Irish and Welsh descent; 7% (2 respondents) answered other white background e.g. Bulgarian, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, White South African etc, and 4% (1 response) answered mixed (White and Asian, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, and any other mixed background).

Those that draw on the service were asked about their religious beliefs and 43% (13 responses) answered no religion, 37% (11 responses) said Christian and 20% (6) preferred not to say. They were also asked their postcodes as a final question, which due to the small number of responses we have not included in this report.

Section Summary

The survey received **97 responses** from adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, as well as from carers responding on their behalf. Respondents engaged with both **supported living** and **day opportunities** questions, providing rich insight into their experiences across these two key service areas.

Supported Living

Feedback on supported living was mixed but informative. Only **10 respondents** named their supported living provider, with **Fairmont, Pethryn and Dimensions** most frequently mentioned. Satisfaction levels varied: around **50%** of respondents reported being happy or very happy with their home, while **30%** expressed unhappiness and **20%** were unsure. Positive feedback highlighted clean, well-kept homes, sufficient space and furnishings, and supportive staff. However, concerns were raised about being placed far from home communities, inconsistent staff understanding of individual needs, and limited involvement in developing Personal Support Plans. Those that draw on the services also expressed a desire for more personalised support, better communication, and improved assistance when exploring a potential move.

Day Opportunities

Engagement with **day opportunities** was stronger, with respondents attending a wide range of services including Blossom Barns, 44B's, Willow Lodge and various community-based programmes. Attendance patterns varied, but many individuals had accessed day opportunities for several years. There is diverse activities to take part in such as arts and crafts, community visits, independent living skills, gardening, and exercise. These were widely valued for helping people **make friends, build independence, learn new skills, and feel part of the community**. A small number of users reported difficulties accessing services, often due to **transport issues, distance, or finding suitable provision**. While satisfaction with activities and staff support was generally high, respondents suggested expanding opportunities tailored to younger adults, increasing variety, and improving accessibility.

Overall Insight

Across both supported living and day opportunities, those that draw on the services highlighted the importance of **independence, community connection, routine, and having supportive staff**. Positive experiences were common, yet there is a clear need for improvements in areas such as transport, consistency of support, personalisation, and awareness of available services. Though many are broadly satisfied with the support they receive, there is a clear need for greater consistency in staff practice, improved involvement in support planning, and stronger attention to personal preference and location to ensure that supported living provision is responsive, personalised, and effective. Together, the feedback provides a strong foundation for shaping future service development to better meet the diverse needs of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism in Shropshire.



3 Service providers

The research into Supported Living and Day Opportunities included a survey designed for Day Opportunities service providers in addition to the survey for those using services. Shropshire Council was keen to obtain feedback from a range of stakeholders regarding Day Opportunities, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the elements of service working well and anything that needs to be improved or considered in the future. The survey for professionals was answered by 13 respondents. When asked which service they work for, 10 answered with the following:

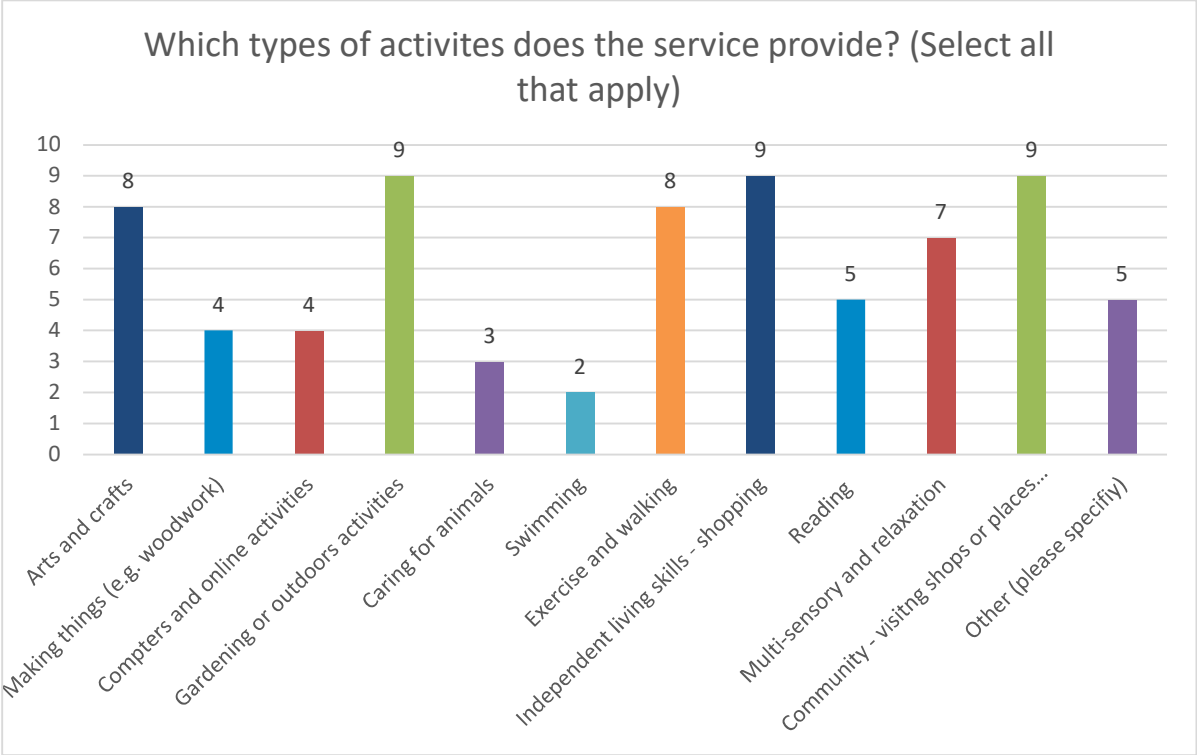
Table 9: Where service providers are based.

Answer Choice	Response
44b's	1
Innage Lane	1
Our Space	1
The Windfall Project	1
Freda's Day Service	0
Blossom Barns	1
Fordhall Farm	1
Cherry Lodge	2
Willow Lodge	2
Nineveh Ridge Care Farm	0
Working Together Ludlow	1
Broseley Life Skills	0
Condover Day Opportunities	2
Crows Mill Craft Centre	0
We Are Champions	0
Crossbar Alt Provision	0
Erlas Victorian Walled Garden	0
Prefer not to say	0
Other (please specify)	1

From Table 9, we can see a good mix of responses from across the county, with the most responses from Condover Day Opportunities, Willow Lodge and Cherry Lodge.

The care providers were then asked about the types of activities the service providers are involved in delivering (in a similar way the service users who were asked which activities they take part in). The results are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: What type of activities does the service provide.



There were 5 ‘Other’ responses and the comments are:

- *Music Therapy, Laughter Yoga, Rebound Therapy, Work Experience, physiotherapy, communication skills.*
- *Animal care, horticulture, social enterprises.*
- *Educational/project visits. Visits to and from other Day Services and groups. Shared activities with other day services. Access to Mayfair facilities, the wider community, work opportunities within the centre. Support to appointments. Support to maintain personal hygiene and good health. Weekly cook their own lunch. Support for family carers. Enabling the service user to support their home environment, particularly where there are elderly carers, by household shopping, prescription collecting etc. Access to all the wider facilities that Mayfair offer, such as exercise classes, meals, events, support groups, etc.*
- *Making Jams and Chutneys.*
- *Performing arts: singing, dancing and acting.*

The next question focused on the referral process and how effective it is. Figure 2 will show that overall, 60% of service providers consider the referral process effective. Collectively 70% of service providers agree (effective and very effective) and 30% are neutral or disagree. There are no providers who consider the process very ineffective, which is encouraging.

Figure 16: Effectiveness of referrals.



When asked ‘where do the majority of the referrals come from?’ 78% answered ‘Family members and individuals seeking support’; 67% answered Shropshire Council; 22% ‘GPs, NHS, etc.’ and 11% ‘Voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups and organisations’. There were 3 comments:

- ‘Get referrals from NHS Learning and Disabilities team but not GPs’.
- ‘Word of mouth’.
- ‘Students already from my dance business’.

The next question asked whether the organisation was experiencing any workforce challenges currently, and the respondents could select all that apply. 6 service providers answered and 7 skipped. Table 10 shows the results:

Table 10: Challenges the organization might be experiencing.

Answer choices	Responses	%
Staff shortages/difficulties recruiting	1	17%
High Turnover	0	0%
Low pay	0	0%
Lack of career progression/access to training	0	0%
High ratio caseloads e.g. too few staff to service users	0	0%
High expectations from families/carers	0	0%
Low staff morale/challenges of the role	0	0%
Other (please specify)	6	100%

The ‘other’ comments are:

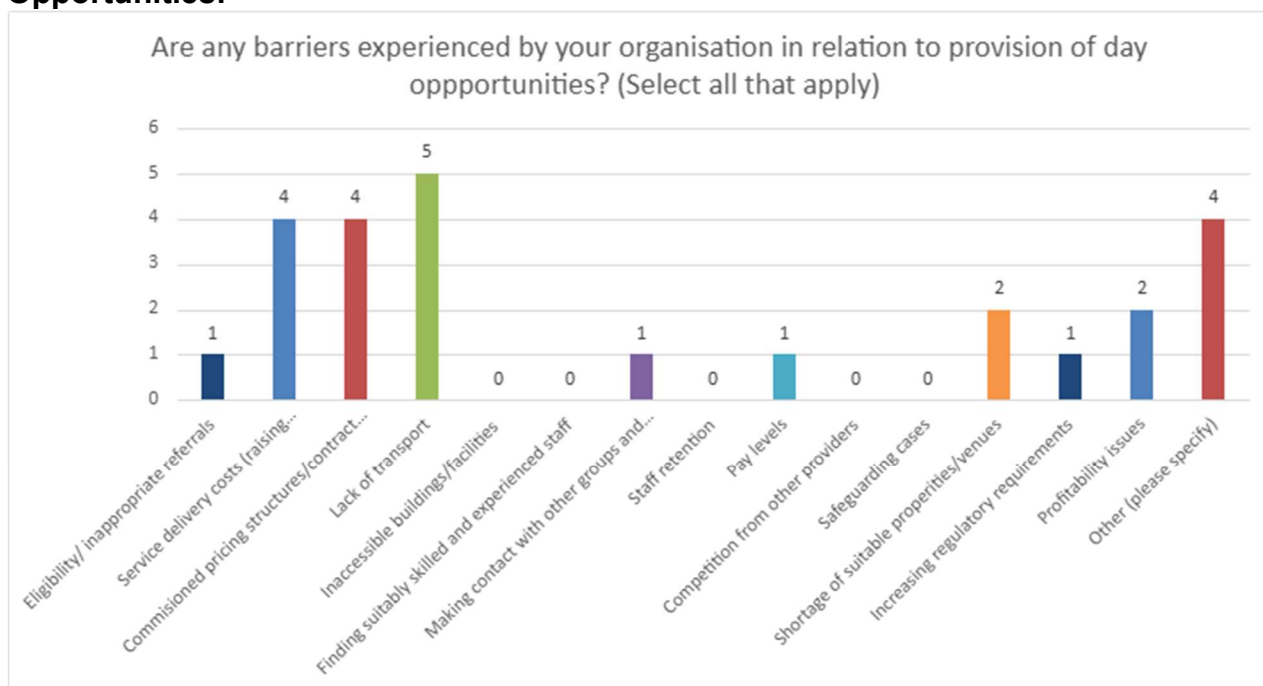
- *We are currently advertising for senior posts and have limited applications on this role.*

- *We are not experiencing workforce challenges however we have had difficulty recruiting relief posts only, but it has not affected the service as we have a wider social care team to fall back on in exceptional circumstances. But we are conscious that they are only paid just over minimum wage, which may have an impact. Some staff feel undervalued by the pay rate of £12.76.*
- *Currently fully staffed but have experienced staff shortages in past and have significantly increased pay rates to attract staff.*
- *Transport.*
- *The challenge of minimum wage increasing regularly. It isn't a staff shortage but to keep our costs reasonable we don't have extra staff to cover for things like training.*
- *Transport. No minibus so having to access a lot of public transport. Which sometimes works but often would be a lot better if we had our own minibus to access the community.*

The comments suggest that low pay, recruitment and transport are the main problems.

The next question asked, Are any barriers experienced by your organisation in relation to provision of day opportunities? Again, 9 people answered and they could select all that apply. Figure 17 shows the results in full:

Figure 17: Barriers that organisations may experience in their provision of Day Opportunities.



The comments are:

- *Cost of transport (to rural locations) can mean that SW decide not to place.*
- *While other providers are around, we offer such a unique service based in the community, so we don't see competition as a challenge. We share resources and run joint activities with other centres rather than compete with them, For example we fund a monthly yoga session and invite other centres to bring their individuals to join in. We have individuals coming to use our free services who require staff support, and this takes a lot of our time, which is a drain on our resources and is*

not sustainable. The concern is that in future people will be referred to these free services instead of to paid support. For example, someone who lives in supported living comes alone to our community craft group. Each week this individual needs to talk to a member of staff one to one for some support, and this takes at least 30 mins of staff time unfunded. Concern long term over numbers of people attending and long-term finances.

- *New centre being opened next year.*
- *The council auditing process being so far behind. It takes a lot of work on our part to check it and also the payment of any money we might owe is tricky as often as it is from 5 years ago.*

The key messages from service providers include lack of transport, service delivery costs, and commissioned pricing structures, as barriers. The comments suggest that lack of transport is a barrier and competition from free services which the services collaborate with.

Question 7 allowed for more exploration of service providers' opinions on particular barriers, and the comments are below:

- *None*
- *We are a charity; we do not make a profit but decreasing contract values make it increasingly harder for us with much tighter margins to operate services with.*
- *We have experienced issues with external support workers, attending our service arranged by the council and external services. We've found there has been an increase in support workers being very hands-off and not providing adequate support to our participants. We have tried to address this verbally, and in a written form – by asking all new support workers to read and sign a document of our expected behaviour/support whilst here, as well as providing the layout of our service days. It seems more often now that support workers play on their phones and try to ignore their clients – favouring that our staff with the issues their clients face.*
- *Short notice cancellations mean that plans have to change. We are flexible to manage this but it can lead to disappointment from the group. Communication with home (supported living). Finances are tight in all areas as it has only been a year since we moved from block contract to spot contract. We have gained and lost service users during that time. Salary and utility costs continue to rise. Whilst on balance, we have recouped what we expected; we still require charitable funds to sustain the service and in the current financial climate. It is increasingly more challenging. As a charity that does a wide range of things for our community, we have significant costs. We fundraise a lot but have had to use reserves for the last few years to cover our costs.*
- *Multi-site at present but will have new site next year which will cope with all current day learners at the same site.*
- *The nature of referrals we are receiving has become more complex. This requires additional space and increased staffing ratios*
- *The council's requirements of us are often onerous. There often doesn't feel like the finance/contract staff understand that we are tiny organisations without admin support. Having said that the last member of staff we dealt with, was very supportive and patient with us.*
- *Transport. No transport so always accessing public transport which often works but it would be great to have no barriers and be able to get in our minibus especially when staff have a minibus license.*

- *Funding and transport.*

The key themes in these comments are financial concerns, external contracted staff not delivering the service to a high enough standard, more resources are needed, and as service users have increasingly complex needs, they need more specialised support.

Question 8 also allowed for expansion of opinions, as the service providers are asked 'what is working well?'. There were 10 comments, though one was several letters in random order and offered no insight and is not relevant. It will not be presented in this report.

- *We are building a new purpose-built activity centre to accommodate our day service and this is due to open in 2026.*
- *Service delivery is working very well and we are happy with the range of services/activities that we are able to offer and the support we are able to provide to our members, families and carers.*
- *Families are very supportive and work with us. They are happy to get involved in projects and support open days and coffee mornings. Investing in our own site at Blossom Barns has given us more freedom and autonomy to offer more flexible services and a more diverse range of activities as we are no longer constrained by the lease. We also have the support of the community, in particular at Our Space where they are keen to get involved and support events. We also find the creativity of our staff inspiring.*
- *Our participants love tending to the garden and contributing to the upkeep of the wider Fordhall green areas – this established a pride of place with us. We started a garden stall, in which the individuals can sell plants they have grown, to the public, with all funds going to a pot of them to spend on their garden space – which has built independence and a sense of accomplishment for them.*
- *Because we have such a unique community offer, we work very well with other organisations and groups to get the best for our service users. Enabling individuals to be part of their community. Mutual peer support involving them in the whole community centre. Being able to attend exercise classes etc with minimal support. Engagement with the wider staff and volunteers. Excellent facilities including disabled access kitchen, big spaces and small quiet rooms. Access to Ring and Ride transport – very cost effective. Ability to be independent on the premises. Facilities to build independence skills both in the centre and in the wider community. Relationships are very good with external professionals, including the learning disabilities team, and the social workers. We work very well with other professionals around behavioural and psychological, with good results.*
- *We have good relationships with the LA, other providers, families and the people we deliver services to. The introduction of a structured, goals based outcome structure for everyone we provide support to services to, has been well received, we are seeing continued development of new skills and are able to evidence this through our monitoring system.*
- *The people who use our service seem to really enjoy coming. We are based in the community and the people who come, enjoy being part of the community. What we do has a purpose, which is really important to many of the individuals who come. Seeing a process from start to finish, whether that is in growing or making something is really fulfilling. Working in small group is really important to many of the people who come. We see people grow in many different ways, through learning new skill; working in small groups with other people; being outside and in*

lots of other ways. We have time to get to know people's strengths, as well as the things they struggle with. There is time to chat and talk through things that they are facing. We are good at listening and emotional support.

- *Continuous opportunities due to having a strong connection with Shropshire businesses/organisations. Trips developing independent living skills. Continuous development of performing arts, singing, dancing and acting. Currently full and now have a waiting list.*
- *Being able to provide a difference to our clients.*

The key messages in the above comments show that service providers consider service delivery; making a difference to their clients, and having good collaborative relationships with the Council, families and community, are the things that are working well.

The next question asks the service providers how effectively they feel they are able to deliver certain outcomes. The service providers were asked about the following categories:

- Assessment of needs and support planning.
- Overcoming communication barriers.
- Emotional support, time to listen and undertake reviews.
- Focus on teaching independence.
- Finding opportunities for volunteering.
- Arranging help for skills development/paid work.
- Arranging time in the community.
- Health promotion activities.

Overall, the service providers answered that they were able to deliver on the categories either effectively or very effectively. There were some that said 'neither effectively or ineffectively' but there were no answers for the ineffective or very ineffective. Figure 18 will show the results in full.

Figure 18: How effective service providers feel they are able to deliver outcomes.



The next question asked whether there were any needs not being met and 5 answered:

- *Difficulty in getting funding for health for therapies which have caused distress and issues for families.*
- *Occasionally we may not be able to support someone with more complex needs as there isn't always the funding for requisite additional staff.*
- *We evolve our services on an ongoing basis according to how the needs of the individuals change. We are currently working with outside partners to look at sexual health and relationships. When we reduced the opening days of our service, 2 of our service users took many months to have their alternative services arranged and one of them still hasn't got transport provided.*
- *We have the ability to offer more physiotherapy and hydrotherapy but require health funding in order to be able to offer it.*
- *I think there are probably needs not being met. However, we see people once a week to do a very specific activity. While they are happy and mostly fulfilled, we feel we are providing a good service. They go to other centres to do other activities on other days, so across their week I hope all of their needs are being met. We struggle with the review process to make it meaningful and relevant.*

The consensus in these comments is that alternate therapies (physiotherapy, hydrotherapy) or supporting people with complex needs, are difficult to get funding for.

Question 11 asked 'Do you have any comments for commissioners relating to the way services are purchased/commissioned? (e.g. methodology, block contracts, spot purchasing, frameworks etc.). 8 service providers answered and the comments are below:

- *We do experience difficulties with split funding packages between Health and Adult Social care.*
- *Having regular access to purchase orders (on brokerage) would be really helpful for identifying any incorrect payments. Having a regular/designated contact to help with incorrect payment issues would be helpful too. Yearly uplifts aren't currently added automatically, and, again, a designated point of contact (named persons) would help us to resolve any payment issues as and when they arise please.*
- *Block contracts for Day Ops gives us much needed stability and security and the opportunity to plan longer term, strategize and invest more in our provision and staffing.*
- *The whole process seems to lack clarity. Purchase orders – some don't come in, and many are incorrect. Cancellations/changes to contracts are not actioned.*
- *Having lost the block contract there is a continual anxiety about numbers and attendance. The short notice cancellation policy at least covers some of our costs when someone does not attend. The length of time it takes from an initial enquiry to someone starting the service can be months due to assessments, transport and funding delays. This meant we have lost service users in the past who couldn't wait. The lack of uplift for us last year was a concern and didn't reflect the national minimum wage increase of 6.7% and the NI increase and inflation. If this trend continues then the service will be less and less financially viable. A block contract can be more flexible and responsive for service users in that we can start people immediately. It can be more cost effective for commissioners and it is more sustainable for providers. As a community centre we are aware of people who are signposted to us for unpaid support. We are very inclusive and support people well but some individuals would be more appropriate for Day Opportunities and we*

could increase their independence skills if they attended, but these people aren't necessarily being referred. This is a sustainability issue for us because we cannot keep providing one to one support for these people without suitable resources. We are concerned that the financial pressures of the council might impact on Day Opportunities places if people are assessed differently. This would have a significant impact on the service users and their families.

- *Having funded caps is discriminatory against those individuals with the highest needs and will eventually lead to packages being handed back.*
- *We would like to work more collaboratively with commissioning so we can understand upcoming need and be ready to provide for Shropshire people.*
- *The variety of costs within the Spot provider market and day services seems to vary massively. It would be good to have some shared resources that all the small providers could use e.g. invoicing templates, advice about risk assessments, best practice in holding reviews.*

The consensus is that commissioned services are useful but need to be more collaborative, available, and standardized processes, so best practices can be shared by all.

The care providers were then asked 'what future aspirations do you have for improving day opportunities provision? Please add any suggestions or ideas.' There were 10 responses, which is helpful to see a solid range of answers.

- *We are building our new day activity centre and outdoor space which will provide more gardening and outdoor activities, to develop more opportunities.*
- *Negotiations continue with Shropshire Council for a long-term lease for our space at Rockspring. This would enable us to develop our facilities into the best possible Working Together members, now and into the future. We are also currently investigating options for the introduction of electronic support and care management software.*
- *Funding opportunities for all day ops to offer more activities/projects to expand our offer. Developing a different kind of service for those with lower support needs but require social interaction (our Space) 3-5 year plan to develop Blossom Barns and improve what we offer at the site.*
- *Next year we will be offering more cross department work for our participants, allowing them to build further confidence and independence through activities such as helping in the Fordhall cafe. We will also invite them to attend and help out more at Fordhall's annual events, following a great result from the participants attending our annual supporters BBQ, helping with garden tours for the public etc.*
- *We have a plan in place for voluntary placements in a local community bookshop. We already run some activities that outside individuals are able to attend at no charge, but we are looking to extend this to a wider audience for a small charge. With the right available resources we are also looking at developing wider volunteer programmes within the centre. Enable have work placements individuals here frequently, so we understand the support that is required to go into this.*
- *New centre opening in Bings Heath early summer 2026, which should give increased capacity if required.*
- *We are constantly striving to improve our services. We are currently looking at delivering our own transport as this is a challenge to those coming to Willow Lodge and Cherry Lodge. Some wishing to come to us cannot because of either not having transport or it being preventatively expensive. Those with taxi transport routinely experience issues such as changes in driver, taxis more arriving and*

drivers refusing to transport people who are presenting with distress. We have a current planning application to expand our provision at Cherry Lodge, to give space for a sensory room, creative arts space and other flexible use rooms.

- I would like to have aspirations but there is very little time to aspire.*
- Opportunity for more days as only run one day a week but currently full as have 17 students.*
- Building more sites, providing our own transport.*

The general feedback is that increased facilities, e.g. new centres, collaboration between services and more transport options, would best serve the provision of external day opportunities.

The next question asked for any further comments about current and future delivery of day opportunities in Shropshire. 7 people answered with further comments which are below:

- It would be great to see more representation from Shropshire at our Open Day's and for Social Workers to attend more reviews as this has been difficult.*
- We value regular contact with both the Contracts and Commissioning teams and Social Workers team, and would still be interested in regular county wide Day Opportunities provider meetings.*
- We feel that Day Opportunities offer great value for money for Shropshire Council in terms of the opportunities, people learn new skills including social skills and teamwork, and people can feel involved and part of something bigger. Our Day Opportunities work closely with local community and utilise their support but they also give a lot back to the communities where they operate.*
- Day Opportunities is so important for individuals to develop their own skills but also provides essential, wider support for families and carers. It is a preventative service which is very good value compared to 1-to-1 support and maintains or increases daily living skills, reducing the need for care at home or residential care. We feel it is essential that people have the benefits of a peer support network in meeting their assessed needs, rather than just individual support which leaves people more isolated and without necessary social skills.*
- New centre will offer 4 separate groups in order to better meet the differing types of needs of different learners.*
- It would be great to see Council day service providers being more inventive and creative.*
- We have only just become a provider in September but in a short amount of time our learners are not only developing performing arts skills but more greater skills such as: accessing the community, money handling, planning trips, performing workshops at local schools/colleges and great relationships with local communities.*

The respondents value Day Opportunities for what they give back to their service users and there is a call for more provision.

The service providers were then asked about themselves. 54% (7 out of 13) answered that they would like to tell more about themselves. 80% (4 respondents) are female and 20% (1 respondent) are male. Of the 5 that answered the age question, 60% are in the 45-54 age group, 20% in the 25-34 group and 20% in 65-74 group.

They were then asked if they regularly supply unpaid care for someone, 60% (3)

answered no and 40% answered yes. When asked their ethnic origin, all 5 respondents answered they were White of British, Irish or Welsh descent. 60% (3) are Christian, 20% (1) answered no religion and 20% (1) preferred not to say.

When asked about their postcode, 90% (9 respondents) answered with a SY postcode and 10% (1 person) answered with a TF postcode.

Feedback from service providers highlights a mixed but overall constructive picture of day opportunity provision across Shropshire. Providers report strong commitment to delivering meaningful, community-focused activities and emphasise positive relationships with service users, families, and local partners. Many feel confident in their ability to support independence, skill-building, and emotional wellbeing.

However, they also identify clear pressures, including financial constraints, transport limitations, recruitment challenges, and increasing complexity of need among service users. Providers express a desire for more consistent commissioning processes, improved communication, and opportunities for greater collaboration with the Council. Overall, the responses demonstrate both dedication within the sector and a need for targeted support to ensure sustainable, high-quality services in the future.

4. Workforce responses

A third survey was carried out as part of Shropshire Council's research into external day opportunities and supported living. The survey complemented those for service users/their carers and professionals delivering day opportunities and was designed for those working within the social care workforce. This survey aimed to better understand feedback from social workers and others involved in referring and/or supporting those who receive support. The survey was responded to by 11 people.

Of the 10 people who answered the survey's first question of which organisation they worked within, 90% answered that they worked for Shropshire Council – ASC and 10% answered a voluntary and community sector (VCS) group or organisation.

They were next asked to rate the overall quality of day opportunities services for adults with learning disabilities in Shropshire; 11 people answered, and it was rated 2.5 stars out of 5.

When asked to rate how well these services support individuals to achieve personal goals e.g. independence, social inclusion, wellbeing, 11 answered and 4 people chose 1 star, 3 chose 2 stars and 4 chose 3 stars, resulting in a 2 star average.

The next rated questions asked the workforce to rate how well the services support individuals to lead a healthy lifestyle. The average of 2.6 stars was made up of 1 person choosing 1 star, 2 choosing 2 stars, 6 choosing 3 stars, and 1 choosing 4 stars.

The workforce was then asked to choose which aspects of the current services they feel work particularly well. 10 people answered and Table 11 shows the responses below:

Table 11: What aspects of the service is going well.

Answer Choices	Responses	%
Range of activities	6	60
Staff skills and approach	4	40
Accessibility and transport	1	10
Flexibility of provision	1	10
Community integration	4	40
Building social networks	6	60
Ability to build skills and knowledge	1	10
Contribution towards a healthy lifestyle	2	20
Total	10 respondents	

There were also some comments:

- *Some of these vary across the service.*
- *I wouldn't personally say that any of these aspects apply consistently across day services as a whole. Particularly within internal services.*

The consensus is that range of activities, building social networks, community integration and staff skills and approach are those aspects of the service that work well, though the comments acknowledge that the aspects can vary within, and between, the services.

The next question asked about the main challenges or limitations that the workforce has observed in the services. 11 people answered and Table 12 shows the results in full. The respondents were asked to select a maximum of 3 choices.

Table 12: Challenges the workforce might encounter.

Answer choices	Responses	%
Limited availability or choice	4	36%
Cost barriers	3	27%
Lack of person-centred planning	4	36%
Lack of motivation	7	64%
Ability to evidence impact	1	9%
Poor communication with families/ carers	0	0%
Poor communication with the social care workforce	0	0%
Inadequate staffing	6	55%
Inadequate training	0	0%
Lack of transport	6	55%
Lack of understanding about what services deliver	0	0%
Lack of record keeping and ability to evidence impact	1	9%
Total	11 respondents	

There were 3 comments:

- *Lack of opportunity to be creative with transport and job prospect/move on – need to introduce travel training and supported internships.*
- *I actually ticked all the of the above, but it wouldn't let me submit more than 3 options. Limited staffing levels to accommodate more complex individuals. Very limited to no evidence at to what is offered e.g. what skills are developed. How are people encouraged to develop independence/skills and move on rather than just attending 5 days a week for 30 years. No transport is offered, therefore costs for transport can often exceed the costs of the day centres. What else is offered regarding ongoing training or education? Often it appears that individuals sit around doing crafts all day rather than achieving anything meaningful. Staff recruited but not given adequate training to manage more complex individuals. Lack of innovation. Lack of person centred planning. Often activities are arranged as a group, by the staff without the input of individuals and particularly not on an individual level. Limited availability or choice, particularly in areas such as the North. Limited variety – significant number of farms-based day opportunities due to the rurality in the North, but this does not serve those who aren't interested in working with animals or on a farm.*

Table 12 shows that the top 3 choices of limitations are: lack of innovation (64%), inadequate staffing and lack of transport (55% respectively), and limited availability or choice and lack of person-centred planning (36% both).

When asked if there were any groups who are under-served or excluded from current day opportunities services, 64% answered yes and 36% answered no. All 11 people answered. As part of the question, if they answered yes, they were asked to describe the groups. All 7 people who answered yes, also commented:

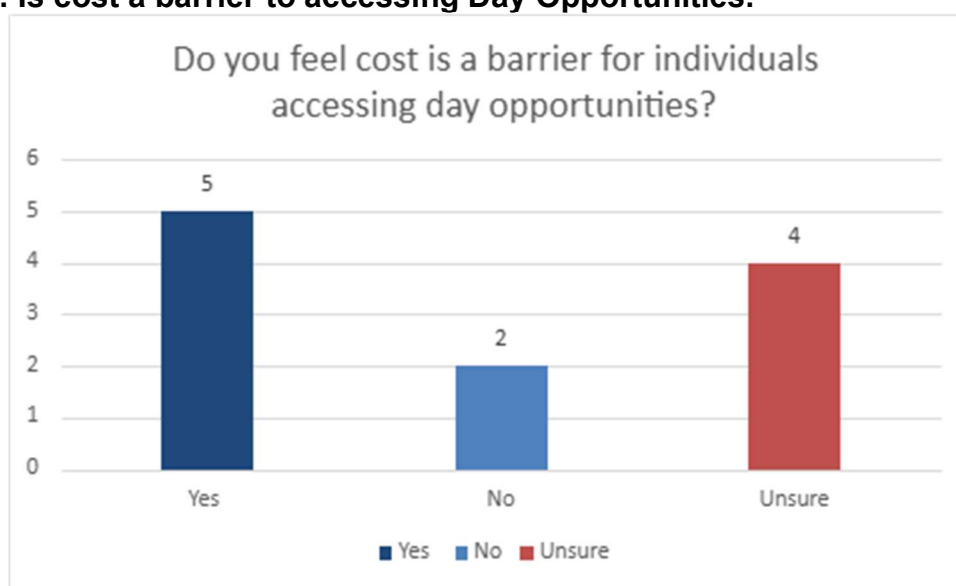
- *People with complex moving and handling needs or 1-1 support needs are less able to participate due to low staffing levels in our day services.*

- *Individuals with complex needs/ challenging behaviours.*
- *Those with autism only and no learning disability.*
- *Especially those individuals who are older, have handicaps with their mobility or sight.*
- *Younger adults, the provision feels more suited to older LD. [Learning difficulties] Not the same opportunities that other external day ops provide.*
- *More complex individuals, particularly PMLD or those with more challenging behaviour. Often due to staffing levels/training or not having the correct knowledge/ expertise in the team. This is where external more costly services such as Condoover or We Are Champions are used because they are much better equipped with more complex individuals.*
- *Limited opportunities for those with behaviours that challenge.*

People with complex needs are mentioned as the most underserved groups, as well as younger people and older people.

The next questions asked the workforce to rate the value for money of the current services. 10 people answered, made up of 1 person choosing 1 star, 4 choosing 2 stars, 4 choosing 3 stars and 1 person choosing 4 stars; which resulted in an average of 2.5 stars. They were then asked whether they felt cost is a barrier for individuals accessing day opportunities; figure 19 shows the results in full.

Figure 19: Is cost a barrier to accessing Day Opportunities.



11 people answered the question and 46% felt cost is a barrier, 18% answered no and 36% were unsure.

The next question asked what improvements or innovations would the workforce like to see in day opportunities services. 10 people answered and the comments are below:

- *Transport provided by the day service that enables the people supported to attend more regularly and participate in trips in their wider communities.*
- *Adequately train staff to be able to manage complex needs, more opportunities, different opportunities.*
- *Modern day opportunities upgraded facilities, better transport with better times, rather than school times which would help with transport. More independent living*

skills in place.

- *As above – travel training to provide independence and supported internship and supported employment provision.*
- *An all-round provision for all ages - younger and those who are ageing which are all person centred.*
- *There is a massive transport shortage and query on cost responsibility.*
- *It is crucial to remember that people diagnosed with ASD can only concentrate well on one thing at a time. Also, reaching better those individuals who have other handicaps, do not necessarily benefit from using today's standards in software development. Especially older people prefer using terminal based software instead of GUI-based software as their first introduction in computers happened between 1970's and 1990's. Also, other individuals having ASD are more capable using a software if it is designed for an environment that can run only one process at a time, like MS-DOS. It is also needed to be noted that terminals can be used through modern operating systems as well. Though 16-bit application is preferred, if we are going to make more sustainable, faster and less bandwidth-demanding software solutions. We should only use 64-bit environment, if the target software needs to incorporate photorealistic 3D graphics. Single process interface has many benefits over multi process interface: – It does not distract it's user: it helps him/her to stay focused. – Dark background and large font size helps people to see and navigate through interface better. – Some people are more comfortable using keyboard controls over touch screen or mouse interface, e.g. people with both ASD and Parkinson's disease. – Terminal applications use less power, memory and bandwidth than GUI applications, which allows them to be used on much older hardware, keeps server workloads smaller and carbon footprints at minimum.*
- *More opportunities for development of life skills, flexibility, attractive to younger adults, varied opportunities, and demand for weekends with one of the external providers! (not sure about the level of interest).*
- *I would like to see a lot more evidence of skills development / independence. More evidence of progression, further training and more ability to manage more complex individuals in house day services.*
- *More opportunities for outdoor pursuits, we have lots of centres that are predominantly outdoors but mainly just offer horticulture or animal care. Opportunity's to be able to continue developing skills such as Makaton, Numeracy, independence skills this often stops once education ends.*

Overall, the workforce would like to see improvements in facilities and resources, including the internet, transport, further training of staff, and an increase of life skills to promote independence.

Question 11 asked 'do you have any comments for commissioners relating to the way services are purchased/commissioned (e.g. methodology, spot purchasing, frameworks etc.) ? This is a very similar question to the one asked within the questionnaire for the service providers. 5 people answered, which is disappointing, as comparisons between the two might have allowed for themes to appear. The responses are below:

- *I feel that having Day Services provided through Shropshire Council is a good resource for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism. While we are moving towards more independent supported living it provides opportunities for people to develop wider social networks and friendships and to be less isolated at home. However staffing is an issue at some of our day opportunities. Higher staffing*

levels are required for people with complex needs.

- *Need to involve experts in the process more, need to hold providers to account more regarding outcomes: payment by results would be great, but I know this is really difficult in the current climate*
- *Look at those that are working well and provide good outcomes for individuals based on their needs and not price.*
- *It is important to note, that along with web services, many people might want to buy their software in cash, especially older users.*
- *It's my understanding that there is no consistent pricing regards external day ops which can often be extremely expensive compared to in-house day ops. Provisions need to be encouraged to offer their own transport provisions to get to and from services. The transport costs often well exceed the actual day rate of a service, which can limit what services people can attend due to the rurality of Shropshire. There is limited awareness within teams about community opportunities / groups in addition to the usual paid services. There used to be community connectors but I don't know if they still exist. More engagement across ASC as a whole would be of benefit if they still exist.*

These comments show that staffing levels are a concern, especially for people with complex needs, and that pricing is inconsistent. There are suggestions that care providers need to be more focused more on standardizing practices and the services being more collaborative. This might be seen to align to the differences of the jobs these two groups do; care providers might be concerned with running the business efficiently, and the workforce might be more concerned with needs of those using the services and commissioning needs.

The next question asked 'what future aspirations do you have for improving day opportunities provision? Please add any suggestions and ideas.' 8 people answered with their comments below:

- *If the day services had their own transport, this would hopefully reduce the cost of individually transporting lots of people into the services. If staffing at day services were to increase this would hopefully reduce the costs of supporting people at home who rely on 1-1 (of higher) support and would enable people to develop wider social networks and friendships. Day services also need to show how they are helping people to develop independence skills and to document the progress that is being made with this. Would it be possible to demonstrate Assistive Technology to people who are supported in Day services, to encourage the use of this in their own homes maybe?*
- *A selection of opportunities where the individual has choice day opps which allow more complex individuals rather than independent individuals only.*
- *Modernize buildings more staff flexible hours rather than 9 - 3 better transport more areas besides Shrewsbury healthy living.*
- *It would be great to see the day opportunities for many as a short-term intervention- a move on provision that provides life and vocational skills for move on into paid employment (I know this is not possible for all). Where possible day services such as Green Acres to be linked to local businesses to offer joint apprenticeships, supported intern rotations and paid employment move on.*
- *For services to provide meaningful activities promoting independence and not dependency on services.*
- *For individuals to actually leave education and attend services that are going to continue to progress their skills and independence as opposed to stunting their*

development or regressing due to it being easier for others to do everything for them. Improving access to services by addressing the transport disparities and putting more ownership onto the providers to deliver their own transport to reduce costs.

- *More variety across the county.*

The workforce would like better transport options, more specialised care for those with complex needs, more opportunities for developing independence, and better facilities. The care providers' comments are aligned with better facilities and transport.

When asked to comment further on the current and future delivery of day opportunities in Shropshire, 5 people answered, which are below:

- *Current provisions are outdated in decor and activities. Transport to Shrewsbury from rural areas is very expensive and times coincide with school so not ideal. Need more staff.*
- *Day Opportunities are important for the individual and equally important for family carers who rely on these services for respite provision.*
- *Generally feel the external providers offer a wider variety of opportunities are definitely more person-centred and willing to work in different ways. The external providers also have a better understanding and acceptance of behaviour that challenges however the locations, cost and transport often make them unfeasible.*

One comment was a full stop, and another was 'as mentioned above', both of which do not bear relevance to this question and do not feature. The workforce commented on transport being an issue and that external providers have more opportunities for service users but acknowledging that day opportunities are important.

In the 'About you' section, when asked if they would like to answer more questions about themselves, all 11 answered, with 73% answering no and 27% answered yes. Regarding their gender, only 3 people answered; 2 of which answered female and 1, male.

Of the 3 who answered the age group question, 2 are in the 35-44 group, and 1 in the 55-64 group. 2 out of the 3 answered that they did not regularly provide unpaid support care for someone, and 1 person preferred not to say.

The question about ethnic origins was answered by 3 people, 2 are White or British, Irish and Welsh descent, and 1 is White of other background e.g. Bulgarian, Polish etc. and all 3 people are Christians.

The postcode question was answered by 10 people and 60% live in a SY postcode area, 20% in a TF area, 10% in a WV postcode, and 10% can be described as 'Other'.

The demographics questions are included to check responses are representative. The low number of responses makes this information less useful for this survey, but it should be noted that in future engagement more work may be required to engage people and increase response rates to obtain a more representative dataset.

Section Summary

The workforce survey received 11 responses, mostly from staff within Shropshire Council Adult Social Care. Overall, the workforce rated current day opportunities moderately, giving an average of 2.5 stars for service quality and 2 stars for support with personal

goals. They identified strengths in the range of activities, staff skills, community integration, and opportunities to build social networks.

The main challenges highlighted were lack of innovation, inadequate staffing, transport issues, limited availability and choice, and insufficient person-centred planning. Staff also noted that individuals with complex needs, younger adults, and older adults are often underserved.

Cost was seen as a barrier to accessing services by many respondents. Suggested improvements included better transport provision, more specialist support for complex needs, improved independence-building opportunities, and more modern, flexible facilities. Several respondents emphasised the need for clearer commissioning processes, more collaboration, and consistent pricing and practice across providers.

Overall, the workforce values day opportunities but feels that modernisation, better resourcing, and more person-centred, developmental approaches are needed.



5. Recommendations

Recommendations are based on the analysis of all feedback presented throughout this report. The recommendations are based on the feedback from those that draw on the service, care providers and the workforce analysed and presented within this report. It is acknowledged that there will be budget and staffing constraints and other limiting factors that may prevent these recommendations from being taken forward and implemented. The recommendations are presented as an ambition for the future. Readers are asked to recognise the council's budget situation (similar to local authorities across the UK) and the financial emergency announced in September 2025, do not form the economic conditions necessary for significant service investment. Despite this the recommendations can form ambitions should funding and other resources increase in future.

1. Strengthen Transport Options

- Invest in or commission dedicated transport to reduce reliance on expensive or unreliable taxis, which workforce, service providers, and service users all identified as a significant barrier.
- Consider developing a shared transport model across providers to increase efficiency and accessibility.

2. Enhance Support for Individuals With Complex Needs

- Increase staffing levels and specialist training so that people with complex behaviours, high support needs, or mobility challenges are not excluded or underserved.
- Explore partnerships or funding pathways for physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and therapeutic interventions, which providers reported were often inaccessible.

3. Improve Person-Centred Planning and Involvement

- Strengthen processes to ensure those that draw on the services are actively involved in writing and reviewing Personal Support Plans, as many reported limited involvement.
- Use these plans to identify individual goals around independence, community access, skills, and future housing.

4. Expand Range, Quality and Innovation of Activities

Increase opportunities beyond traditional craft-based or farm-based activities, supporting:

- Life-skills development (cooking, travel training, money management).
- Employment pathways, including volunteering, supported internships and partnerships with local businesses.
- Younger-adult-friendly options and activities tailored to diverse interests.
- Encourage providers to adopt innovative models that reduce dependency and increase progression.

5. Improve Consistency and Quality Across Providers

- Develop clearer quality standards, focusing on independence, community inclusion, and measurable outcomes.
- Facilitate training and development for staff across the sector, particularly around communication, supporting complex needs, and consistency in practice.

6. Increase Collaboration With Families, Carers and Professionals

- Address feedback about gaps in communication by improving regular contact between providers, social workers, and families.
- Reintroduce or strengthen community connector-type roles to improve awareness of local activities and services.

7. Review Funding Models and Commissioning Processes

Streamline commissioning processes, ensuring:

- Quicker referrals.
- Clearer purchase orders and payment processes.
- Fair and consistent pricing across services.
- Consider reinstating or expanding block contracts where appropriate to support sustainability and prevent instability caused by spot-purchase arrangements.

8. Increase Capacity and Accessibility Through New Facilities

- Support investment in new or expanded centres, sensory rooms, creative spaces and multi-purpose facilities as planned by several providers.
- Ensure new buildings incorporate full accessibility, including wheelchair-friendly design and adjustable activity spaces.

9. Improve Communication About Available Services

Many service users reported being unaware of day opportunities. Improve visibility through:

- Clear online directories.
- Information distributed via social workers, schools and community groups.
- Regular updates to carers and families.

The next, and last, section of this report pulls together some key findings to form a conclusion.

6. Conclusion

The findings across those that draw on the service, service providers and the workforce present a consistent picture: day opportunities and supported living services in Shropshire offer meaningful value to many individuals, but the system faces persistent structural challenges that work to prevent maximum effectiveness from being achieved. Service users highlight positive experiences around community, routine, independence and supportive staff, yet they also report barriers linked to location, inconsistent staff understanding of needs, limited involvement in support planning and gaps in transport and accessibility. Providers and workforce respondents echo these themes, identifying pressures such as financial constraints, recruitment difficulties, transport limitations, increasing complexity of need, and inconsistent commissioning processes.

Despite these challenges, there is strong commitment across all groups to improving outcomes for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism. Providers demonstrate creativity, community engagement and passion for developing independence, while the workforce recognises the essential role of day opportunities in reducing isolation, supporting carers and building life skills. Those that draw on the services, also, express a clear desire for greater independence, more varied opportunities, and stronger links with their home communities.

Overall, the evidence illustrates a sector that delivers significant social value but requires targeted investment, modernisation and improved coordination. Strengthening transport, enhancing person-centred planning, ensuring equitable access for those with complex needs, and supporting providers through clearer commissioning and sustainable funding will be key to creating a more responsive, inclusive and future-focused service. By addressing these issues, Shropshire Council can build on existing strengths and ensure day opportunities and supported living remain effective, meaningful and empowering for all who rely on them.

Analysis and reporting were conducted by the Feedback and Insight Team at Shropshire Council.

Many thanks are extended to the 121 service users, care providers and workforce respondents who participated in the online surveys for their thorough and well-considered responses.



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