

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 24 JUNE 2020

ITEM	Speakers Name	Question and Response
6	David Tooley	<p>Question: <i>In relation to item 6 on the agenda could the public health team say where the "high risk places, locations and communities" are in Milton Keynes, as outlined in section 5 of Appendix A?</i></p> <p>Response: We are looking to ensure preventive and reactive processes are agreed to minimise the risk of outbreaks in those places where they are more likely or people are at higher risk of adverse outcomes. Examples of these include locations and workplaces where social distancing is difficult, communities where people's work exposes them to greater risk, and communities where overcrowded or multi-generational households may make it more difficult for people with symptoms to isolate from others. We are taking advice from Public Health England and also working with local partners to identify where our focus in MK needs to be.</p> <p>Supplementary Question: <i>Does the council believe that it is in the public interest to be more specific about actual locations and communities so that the public can be alerted now to take necessary action to mitigate risks?</i></p> <p>Response: It is important we all do everything we can to be as alert as possibly particularly with lockdown being relaxed. We need a strong focus across Milton Keynes as to how we work together to keep people safe and healthy to minimise the risk of Covid-19. We know from national evidence what some of the more vulnerable people and spaces are for example care homes and we need targeted measures in these places. Milton Keynes Council has a responsibility to develop a local outbreak plan. That plan and outbreak prevention group will be key to make sure we are doing as much as we can to prevent outbreaks and respond to hotspots.</p>

ITEM	Speakers Name	Question and Response
8	Anne Dudley	<p>Question:</p> <p><i>I am a tutor who has taught adults with learning disabilities for many years. I appreciate how much the lives of these learners are enriched when they are provided with opportunities which enable them to become enthusiastic and sociable learners within a welcoming, encouraging and professional environment.</i></p> <p><i>If such day services are not provided for adults with learning disabilities, how will you ensure that these learners will have access to these valuable opportunities and avoid social isolation and a loss of inspiration?</i></p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The Council recognises that the current loss of day opportunities to people with a learning disability is being felt by many people. These impacts can include boredom, isolation and depression. Council officers are in regular contact with people to check that they are okay and if they need additional support. Most providers are also in contact with people and providing activities that can be done at home e.g. art and craft materials and online activities. Some people are being supported inside and outside of their home e.g. going for a walk, where this has been identified as a priority. We are acutely aware of the additional pressure on families and the increase in social isolation for people with a learning disability, but we must not bring people together in groups if this can be avoided.</p>

ITEM	Speakers Name	Question and Response
8	C. A Hibberd	<p>Question:</p> <p><i>As funding for Day Service providers has not been agreed by MK Council beyond 30th June 2020 and, in view of any decision being made at this meeting to cease funding for Day Services for vulnerable, mentally and physically disabled young people beyond this date :- what provision will be made for their care and support from 1 July 2020 onwards, as they will be seriously affected by a decision to cease funding and why have parents and carers not yet been informed of this possibility, which may occur in only 6 days' time?</i></p> <p>Response:</p> <p>MKC have advised providers that blanket payments for services not being provided need to be reviewed and other source of government funding utilised. We will continue to work with</p>

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		<p>providers to consider any financial support required. Milton Keynes needs all of its day service provision which offers a selection of engaging and enjoyable activities for disabled people. However, providers are not able to provide the level of service that they could before Covid-19, therefore the council is paying for a service its citizens are not receiving. Milton Keynes' council officers has meeting with day service providers and continue to do so. Council officers have just written to all people with a learning disability and their carers regarding day services. Social care staff have been in regular contact with families to monitor any concerns and offer help. The Council has not been in a position and is still not in a position to provide a clear plan regarding how all people that were accessing day services prior to Covid-19 will be able to in the future.</p>

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8	Tasha Mcsporrان	<p>Question: <i>Why is the reopening of day services so uncertain but there is no uncertainty of reopening of disability schools?</i></p> <p>Response: MKC is following the advice set out by Central Government regarding opening of services. In light of the current circumstances, guidelines and alert levels, we are not anticipating that services will be able to safely re-open on the basis that they were prior to Covid 19. The country is currently at threat level 3 with continued community spread of Coronavirus. The opening of schools has been directed by specific Government guidance, there is no corresponding guidance for the opening of day centres. Schools are only able to open nursery, reception and years 1 and 6 and only on a first come basis. The council is working with providers to open day services paying particular attention to how this can be done safely. The complexities regarding day services are different to children attending school. Current research suggests that children are at a lower risk of infection from Covid 19 than adults. Children attend one school; however, many people with a learning disability attend a variety of services over a week, making the development of support bubbles used in schools</p>

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		more difficult to arrange. Officers will continue to work with providers, people with learning disabilities and their carers to develop safe options as soon as possible.

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8	Teresa Harvey	<p>Question: <i>Do the council think it's fulfilled its duty of care during this pandemic? what have they been doing for the past 13 weeks to prepare their vital day centres to re-open their services to the vulnerable young people whom they have a responsibility for? As from the 4th of July my young person could if he was able to, access virtually any activity within the borough i.e. bowling, Cinema, shopping, pubs, restaurants, barbers, but he can't access his Day Centre? his safe place? the council have refused to engage with parent/carers as to what the future plans are and insist they are following government guidelines? People with learning disabilities are being treated unfairly and the council are not fulfilling their duties! Parent/carers are being left to just get on with it. Can the council please explain itself!</i></p> <p>Response: The Council understands that it is extremely difficult for carers and people who use services that are currently closed. Closing the services was not undertaken lightly but in line with government guidance due to the requirements of lock down to keep people as safe as possible during the Covid19 pandemic. Our actions have been in line with providers across the country. The Council would like to assure you we are planning future service provision and what that might look like given the requirements around social distancing and the risks to service users. We will be contacting families shortly to discuss what the service going forward could look like.</p> <p>Supplementary Question: <i>Can the Council give parents and carers some indication of how much longer it needs to plan for service provision given it has already had 13 weeks to prepare.</i></p> <p>Response: Day Centres are not community centres and they support some of the most vulnerable residents of Milton Keynes. Alert levels remain at Level 3 which indicates community spread</p>

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		<p>and we must ensure the services are safe for those who both use the service and the staff that provide them. The decision to close these services was not taken lightly and we have written to all parents and carers informing them of the work we are doing with providers to plan for a safe reopening. This is quite a complex process for example some buildings will need to be adapted to maintain social distancing and a reduction in capacity. The Council are keen to work with all parties to look at how we can open services safely and will continue to keep in touch with everyone. It is our wish to provide these services safely and as soon as we can.</p>

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8	Liz Gifford	<p>Question: <i>With the current restrictions many shops, schools, organisations in the cultural sector and businesses are coming up with ways of operating and sharing ideas within the current restrictions. In terms of re-opening day services in a safe manner what plans are there to work with providers to find answers?</i></p> <p>Response: The Council is working closely with day services providers to plan future service provision and what that might look like given the requirements around social distancing and the risks to service users.</p>

ITEM	Speakers Name	Question and Response
8	Paul Ridley	<p>Question: <i>Will the Council consider having an review of everything that has happened & the Health & Adult Social Care department so that if there was a 2nd wave, things would already be in place so that mistakes would not happen again & could the review include working alongside carers like me who would be willing to help? I think that we could all agree we all want the best for everyone in the end & we certainly don't want anyone to go through what we have been through.</i></p>

ITEM	Speakers Name	Question and Response
		<p>Response: At the Council’s Scrutiny Management Committee on Tuesday 9 June, the Committee resolved to instigate a Task a Finish Group to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Council responded to the Covid-19 crises; • What were the strengths and weaknesses of the response; • How the Council’s response compares with that of other local authorities; and • What lessons can be learnt / plans put in place to cope with future spikes/outbreaks and future pandemics <p>As part of their evidence gathering the Task and Finish Group will be calling for witness statements from a variety of interested parties. I’m sure the group would welcome your input alongside those stakeholders and other parties who have been directly impacted by the pandemic.</p> <p>Supplementary Question: <i>Carers feel like they are not getting answers and nobody understands how they feel unless they are in this situation. Carers need answers and a timeline so they can plan.</i></p> <p>Response: We are very aware this has been difficult for parents and carers of those who use day centre services and what has been able to be offered is not as good due to the change of routine and support. This has been an unprecedented time and response has been in line with government guidance and as this has changed frequently it has made planning difficult. We are actively planning on what support will be offered for those with greatest need. We are working with our internal and external providers as to what that offer will look like. We apologise that a timeline for this is still uncertain. Our priority remains making sure what is offered to people is safe so that we do not open and then have to close again due to an outbreak. There are still very real risks and we have to remain mindful of these risks.</p>

ITEM	Speakers Name	Written Statement
8	Angela Novell, CEO MK SNAP	<p>Day services provide a vibrant and stimulating environment for adults with LD to be able to thrive and take control of their lives through a range of interventions that include social enterprise & work training. As a local independent charity we contribute around £250k every year through charitable giving to support people in our locality community with LD.</p> <p>We have been working throughout the lockdown to maintain contact and support with over 150 adults with learning disabilities and complex needs. We have been gathering evidence of the impact that social isolation and loss has had on our service users during this time. Our evidence suggests that: A significant number (nearly half of those living at home with parents/carers are experiencing low motivation as a result of the lack of structure and stimulation of not attending day services. A number of parents of service users feel that their loved one is struggling with mental health as a result of isolation. We are aware that the lack of routine is, in a small number of cases, resulting in service users becoming frustrated and presenting with challenging behaviour. This has been particularly difficult for parents and carers some of whom are themselves elderly or shielded and need additional support. We want to work with MKC to find solutions to get people back to services safely.</p> <p>MK SNAP have over 60 people that we support who have a learning disability and <i>no underlying health conditions</i> that wish to return to attending sessions at the centre in a structured and safe manner. Those that have a learning disability and fall into a group that make them more vulnerable can be supported in a variety of remote ways and supported until government restrictions are eased at the beginning of August. We want to do this in partnership with MKC in a safe and measured way.</p> <p>At MK SNAP we have a democratically elected Learner Council that meets regularly and helps us shape our services. Being Inclusive is one of our values. It is vital that the voices of those that we serve are heard in these discussions about the future of day services. We would like to urge the council to be fully inclusion in the process for doing this and to put local people with LD at the heart of these discussions; with support to ensure that they are able to make their own decisions about what is best for them. We want to help MKC to do this in an inclusive and positive way.</p>

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		<p>In a world where partnership and open communication is paramount; the current uncertainty with regard to the ongoing commissioning/funding of services is unhelpful in progressing positive solutions for those in the community who have already been disproportionately affected by the impact of this virus. I would urge MKC to take decisive steps to secure vital services for the future of people with disabilities in MK.</p>