

Report on Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities



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Summary

Healthwatch Lancashire has a legal power under the *Health and Social Care Act (2008)* to visit health and social care services and see them in action, this allows for us to identify what is working well with services and as to whether recommendations for improvement can be made based on observations and feedback provided. Healthwatch Lancashire does not inspect care plans and other documentation, rather it is about listening to the quality of the experience from people using the services, their relatives (where appropriate), service/practice managers/owners and staff so that a full picture of the services can be formulated.

An Enter and View project was undertaken focusing on Lancashire day services for adults with learning disabilities and other neurological disorders, in order to provide the experiences and views of those using day services funded by Lancashire County Council.

Between June 21st 2022 and September 7th 2022 eleven day services were visited across Lancashire, and individual surveys were carried out with people using the services, their relatives, and staff, as well external staff/agencies and volunteers. Surveys focused on choice, activities, communication, food, raising concerns/safeguarding, staffing levels and the buildings/facilities. There was also the opportunity to make any other comments and/or suggest ways the services could improve. Observations were carried out by Healthwatch Lancashire representatives during the visits focusing on staff and client interactions, choice and inclusion, atmosphere, building and facilities, and health and safety.

In total 250 people were engaged with and overall there was a high satisfaction rate for day services. There were several general themes identified across the services as needing some improvement, although none of these required any immediate action. Three relatives who were surveyed were unable to answer some questions due to their loved ones limited ability to recall/discuss their day.

Areas identified as needing some improvement included more personal choices, further activities, better communication with relatives, more space to allow for services to expand, the occasional need for quiet spaces, as well as other ideas those surveyed had for continual quality improvement.

Introduction

Lancashire County Council is in the process of assessing day centres within Lancashire, looking at activities provided, standards of service etcetera. Healthwatch Lancashire were elected to independently conduct Enter and Views across a section of day centres running in Lancashire to support Lancashire County Council, looking at what services are currently on offer and how these are meeting the needs of those using them.

Day services visited offered a wide range of activities from animal care and horticulture, drama and music, art and crafts to cooking, baking, aerobics and musical bingo. People using the services have chosen the service they attend based on their interests and abilities.

Methodology

Lancashire County Council provided Healthwatch Lancashire with a full list of funded day services, and visits were arranged from this by random selection across Lancashire to ensure a non-biased Enter and View of day services was achieved.

All participants involved in the Enter and View visits gave consent to being approached by Healthwatch Lancashire. Several weeks' notice was given wherever possible prior to the visit to allow for all who would like to be heard to be present and engage with Healthwatch Lancashire representatives.

In order to ensure appropriate/suitable questions were asked a focus group was held on June 16th, 2022 at Plunginton Community Centre, Brook Street, Preston with adults with learning disabilities, arranged through People First Advocacy Services. The group discussed what they felt would be relevant; and a

discussion was held on their past experiences that impacted on their choice/attendance of day services.

Prior to the visit a poster was sent to the service provider for them to display and/or post on their social media to announce the visit to all concerned with proposed date and time.

During the visits surveys were undertaken with people using the services, staff, external supporting staff, volunteers and any other external person(s) who was involved in the activities at the time of the visits.

People using the services were given the opportunity to talk individually or as part of a group discussion. Some people engaged with were non-verbal and visual happy/sad face cards were used, as well as a thumbs up/down method, to enable them to express their views. For those unable to communicate there was an attempt to understand facial expressions and/or body language; one to one support staff assisted with this as they had more in-depth understanding of the person they were supporting. Those who did not wish to engage with Healthwatch Lancashire representatives had their choice respected.

Several people using the services took ownership of the surveys and carried them out with each other or by themselves.

Relatives also had the option to complete the survey electronically if unable to be present during the visit or complete a paper copy.

Staff were offered the option to talk confidentially in the event they may wish to raise a safeguarding concern or any other issue/concern, however, no staff required this and no safeguarding concerns were raised by staff during the visits.

Focus was maintained that the visit should be a positive experience and that Healthwatch Lancashire was merely a conduit for all involved to be able to express their opinions in a non-judgmental impartial environment.

Following the visit all surveys undertaken were collated, analysed and used to create a report which included recommendations for improvement if/where necessary.

Drafted reports with proposed recommendations for improvement were forwarded to the day centres for service providers to check all facts were correct such as number of people attending, contact information etcetera, as well as having the opportunity to provide a response to the recommendations for improvement which was incorporated into the final plan. Reports were consequently published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website, and a copy of each forwarded to Lancashire County Council for their information.

Each visit was carried out in stages by means of surveys and observations:

Stage one: A pre-visit questionnaire was carried out via telephone with the service manager, looking at what activities are provided, operating times, and level of support provided. Service managers were also given the option for their own question(s) to be incorporated into the surveys in the event they would like some feedback around a specific topic, however, there were no requests for this from service managers.

Stage two: surveys undertaken with:

- people using the services, focusing on:
 - Choice
 - Likes/dislikes of the services
 - Food (where applicable)
 - The building and facilities

- relatives of people using the services, focusing on:
 - Choice
 - Communication from the services around their loved ones support
 - The services in general

- Staff, focusing on:
 - Training
 - Staffing levels
 - Activities/choice
 - Any safeguarding concerns

Stage three: Healthwatch Lancashire representatives observations, focusing on:

- Engagement between staff and people using the services
- Needs/requirements are identified and met
- Dignity and respect
- Buildings and facilities
- Choice
- Health and safety

Stage four: report containing feedback gathered and observations which were analysed and from which recommendations for improvement were proposed. Service providers response to the recommendations was also gathered and included in the final report.

Day services visited

Day Service	Location
4Ever Unique	Morecambe
Adams Activity Ark	Blackburn
Age UK Day Club	Lancaster
Age UK Day Club	Ormskirk
Age UK Day Club	Nelson
Bridge Centre North West	Accrington
Domino Partnership Ltd	Burscough
Enable U	Colne
Freshfields Enterprises	Burnley
Highfield Scheme Ltd	Great Harwood
Motiv8 Lancs	Accrington

Number of people engaged with who provided feedback

Role	Number
People using services	106
Relatives	61
Staff	56
External staff/agencies	10
Service Managers	9
Managers	3
Service Owners	2
Volunteers	2
External Community Worker	1

It is proposed that further visits to some of the services discussed will be undertaken in a four to six month time period to ascertain if service providers have actively looked at carrying out any improvements identified during the visits. Findings from these visits will be documented and published by Healthwatch Lancashire to enable transparency for all concerned.

Pre-visit questionnaire

Day service managers were contacted by telephone where Healthwatch Lancashire representatives introduced themselves and explained the role of Healthwatch and the purpose of the visit.

The majority of service managers were welcoming of the visit to showcase their services as well as having the opportunity to identify how they can improve. A few service managers were more wary of the visit seeing it as an unwarranted inspection, although once there was an understanding of the nature and reason for the visits they were more accommodating.



Highfield Scheme Ltd (05/07/2022)

Service managers were seen to be transparent about their services and any current issues they may be facing. It was explained by many that services had adapted during the pandemic and some activities had not yet returned to full capacity due to people using the service being vulnerable. Many of the services had remained open during the pandemic and had put in place measures to maintain health and safety, and these have led to a change in the way their services are currently running.

Many service managers spoke about their future plans and how they saw their work towards quality improvement as a continual factor.

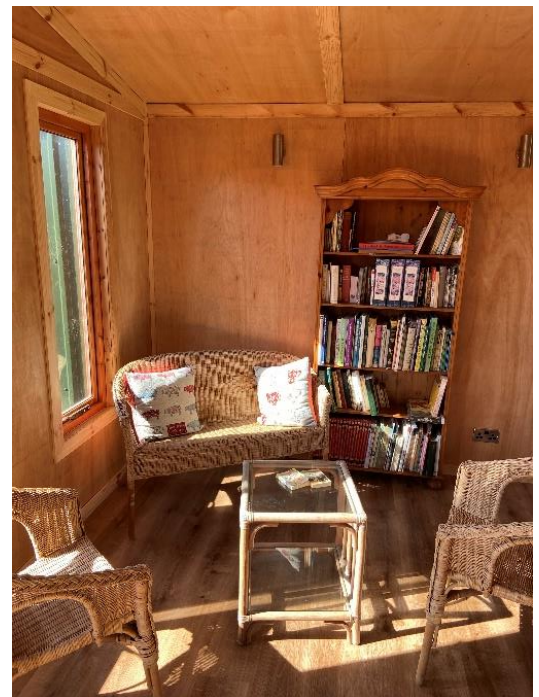
There was a general agreement by service managers that there needs to be measurable standards in place to ensure day services across Lancashire are to a high standard which can be inspected/rated as is the case with supported/assisted living.

Feedback from people using the services

General Feedback

Feedback from people using the services was mainly positive with activities, staff and meeting friends being the most commented on. Many of the people spoken to had been using the services for long periods of time, with attendance varying from a few hours a week to several days a week.

When asked if there was anything they disliked at the services they were attending there were no negative comments about the services and all stated that they like the services and what they do. A few people using the services provided comments on how they felt the services could improve to further enhance their experience.



Adams Activity Ark (21/06/2022)

The surveys carried out did not ask around travel to and from the day services as this does not fall under their remit; however, some people using the services talked about their journeys to and from the centre with several stating that they use public transport which could be problematic, especially when buses were not on time/cancelled or there are changes in route due to roadworks etcetera, and how this can cause anxiety.

All people using the services who were able to communicate were able to name someone they could talk to if they had a suggestion, concern or issue.



Comments included:

"I love it, it's lovely" (Age UK Day Club Lancaster)

"The people here are so lovely and friendly, if I didn't come I would miss it" (Age UK Day Club Lancaster)

"I have been coming here for seven years – I love it!" (Adams Activity Ark)

"I love it here, they help you with everything, it has really turned my life around, the staff have a very positive work ethic which makes me happy and positive" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"Love everything about the centre, everything is perfect" (Domino Partnership Ltd)

"This place has made me a better person; they have been a tower of strength to me over the years" (Freshfields Enterprises)

"I am here forever now, there's no getting rid of it" (Enable U)

"We are like one big family it changes your life; it really does." (Motiv8 Lancs)

"Staff very understanding of individual needs" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)

"I like it here because all the staff make activities accessible for me" (Bridge Centre North West)



Choice

Out of 106 people using the services surveyed 105 felt that they had choice; three said they would like further choice in activities. It must be noted that on some occasions the services would be unable to provide some of the requested activities that were discussed during the visits due to the restrictions of the facilities and other impacting factors.

Staff were frequently observed offering alternative activities to anyone not wishing to participate in the one occurring at the time; and most centres were offering a wide variety of activities occurring at the same time enabling people to choose what they would like to do on the day.



Freshfields Enterprises (11/07/2022)



Comments included:

"I choose what I want when I want" (Enable U)

"We get lots of choice, the staff are very open to ideas" (Freshfield Enterprises)

"I'd like more options but I haven't been asked" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"I like that we get choices for topics, if we mention something the staff are happy to do it." (Motiv8 Lancs)

"Yes we decide and have a council" (4Ever Unique)



Activities

All 106 people using the services said that the activities on offer was the main reason for attending specific day services, and that they are happy with the activities they undertake.

Day Services Project

People using the services were highly engaged when it came to talking about what they enjoy doing whether that was going for a walk or gardening, all appeared to have clear understanding of what the activities entailed.

All services had clearly tailored activities to the levels of abilities of those attending, with some having several levels of participation to ensure the engagement of all people using the service.



Motiv8 Lancs (30/06/2022)



Comments included:

"I like feeding the animals, especially bottle feeding the lambs". (Adams Activity Ark)

"People come in and give us a talk" (Age UK Day Club, Lancaster)

"I went on a Makaton course with [staff] so that I can communicate with my friends in the centre better." (Motiv8 Lancs)

"I do all sorts here" (4Ever Unique)

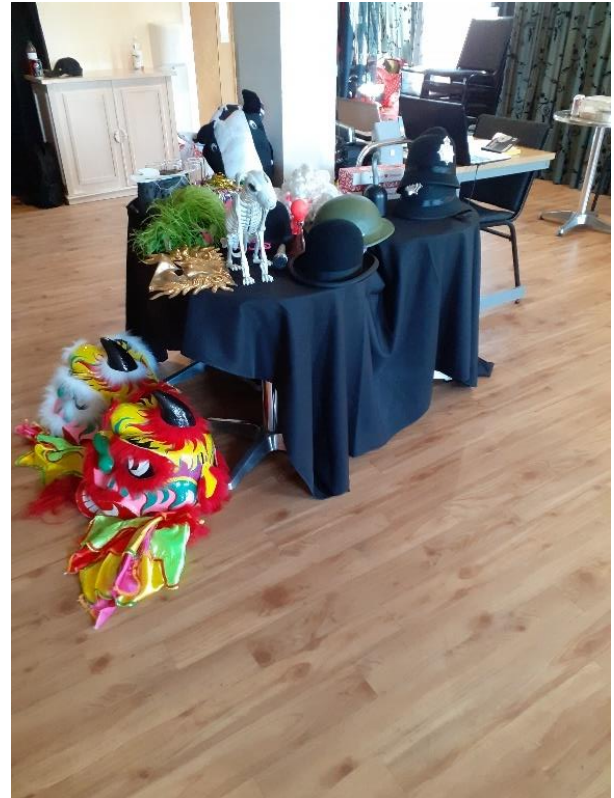
"We are never short of things to do, we have plenty of drinks and I like doing my chair exercises to head, shoulders, knees and toes and also the Hokey Cokey" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"I love recycling, it gives me something to do and I enjoy doing it" (Freshfield Enterprises)





Adams Activity Ark (21/06/2022)



Domino Partnerships Ltd (10/08/2022)

Food

Some services did not provide a lunch whereas others did. All provided hot and cold drinks and were seen to give people choice on what they would prefer. Some that provided lunch had kitchen staff who prepared meals whereas a few enabled people using the services to cook and bake for the group as part of their activities.

Where food was provided all people using the services were happy with the quality of the meals served, although a few stated that they would like to be more involved in meal preparation and menu planning.



Enable U (27/06/2022)



Age UK Day Centre Nelson (20/06/2022)



Comments included:

"I love the food; it is so good" (Bridge Centre North West)

"I love the food, plenty of variety and we can choose what we eat, if we don't like it, they will make us something different" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"I can't wait for dinner time, it's always so good" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"We just get what is served but that's okay, it's a very nice lunch" (Age UK Day Club Lancaster)



Buildings & Facilities

Out of 106 people using the services 104 were happy with the buildings the services were provided in and the facilities available. Two people using the services had a few minor issues mainly around space.

Some services were undergoing building/facilities improvements and this was taken into account during the visits. Where future developments were being

considered the buildings and facilities were assessed in their existing condition as the Enter and View visits could not anticipate potential future developments.

Some issues around limited space were raised, although all services were seen to be utilising space effectively. Most of the services were at capacity for the number of people they can support, and due to the varying levels of abilities and preferences it was clear that there was a degree of adapting and developing over time in an attempt to meet everyone's needs. Some services have opted to only support those more able either due to the nature/location of the activities or limited space. Many of the services visited had rearranged/reorganised their spaces to account for the pandemic in order to maintain health and safety whilst being able to continue providing services.

All services had disabled access and were clear from clutter allowing for free and easy movement. Two of the services visited were unsuitable for wheelchair users, one due to the nature of the activities which were undertaken in a farm environment (although they were in the process of planning hard landscaped pathways to enable this) and one due to the building being unsuitable for a lift to access the main area which is on the second floor.

All services had toilets and where appropriate/required areas to change pads etcetera; all had refreshment facilities and somewhere to eat lunch. All outdoor service providers had a warm space for alternative activities during adverse weather conditions.



Highfield Scheme Ltd (05/07/2022)



Comments included:

"I like the building it is easy to get to and easy to access" (Bridge Centre North West)

"The bathrooms are not the best" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)



Adams Activity Ark (21/06/2022)



Age UK Day Centre Lancaster (25/07/2022)

Feedback from relatives

General Feedback

All feedback from 61 relatives was positive, with activities and staff mentioned the most. Communication from the centres about their relatives progress was raised as the area requiring the most improvement by a few, although this was seen as excellent for others.

Some relatives fed back that the services allow for respite time and is essential to the health and well-being of both the person using the services and the relative who is the primary carer.

Some relatives expressed that they would like to see services extended by way of further activities and/or space.



Age UK Day Centre Ormskirk (28/07/2022)



Comments included:

"The facility is friendly and has a wonderful atmosphere. All those that attend form great friendships and you get that relaxed, homely secure feeling when you are there. This way I know my relative is happy and safe" (4Ever Unique)

"Would be lost without this brilliant service, my [person using the services] absolutely loves it, every day is different and the staff can't do enough" (4Ever Unique)

"It is essential that 4Ever receives maximum support from Lancashire County Council" (4Ever Unique)

"Excellent, all [person using the services] needs are met in a way [they] can understand" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"I think the people of Ormskirk are very lucky to have a centre like this one with such caring thoughtful staff" Age UK Day Centre Ormskirk)

"A lifeline for the carers and often the only time they have to relax" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)



Choice

Out of 61 relatives who provided feedback 58 felt that their loved ones had choice around their day, the other three stated they were unable to answer the question confidently due to their loved ones neurological conditions impacting on their ability to recall their day.



Motiv8 (30/06/2022)



4Ever Unique (07/09/2022)



Comments included:

"Because of COVID activities have been changed with more home-based and indoor activities all excellent" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"Definitely, if the activity is not appropriate alternatives can be made" (Bridge Centre North West)

"Yes plenty of choices and alternatives are offered if they don't want to join in" (Age UK Day Centre Nelson)

"The list on offer is constantly being updated and offers a wide choice. Any wishes of my [person using the services] are always taken into account" (4Ever Unique)

"Yes everybody gets to choose what they would like to do" (Domino Partnership Ltd)



Communication

Communication methods varied widely between services from text and phone calls to WhatsApp groups and Facebook. Most services appeared to have tailored communication methods to the person using the services and their relatives, with some more proactive than others.

59 out of 61 relatives stated that they felt very well informed; two relatives said they would like to see some improvement in communication from the services.



Highfield Scheme Ltd (05/07/2022)



Age UK Day Centre Ormskirk (28/07/2022)



Comments included:

"I have a communication book and I am often sent photos. I am also invited in to discuss my relative and my relative takes part too. I am also given a verbal handover when I collect my relative" (4Ever Unique)

"Staff can be asked any question, and if they don't know they will find out" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"I am kept informed about them and love receiving photos of them" (Age UK Day Club Lancaster)

"I think communication could still be improved a little between carer and service providers" (Freshfield Enterprises)

"When we ask they will comment but we are not kept informed" (Adams Activity Ark)

"I think that a care plan/report could be sent home to let us know how our relatives are getting on" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

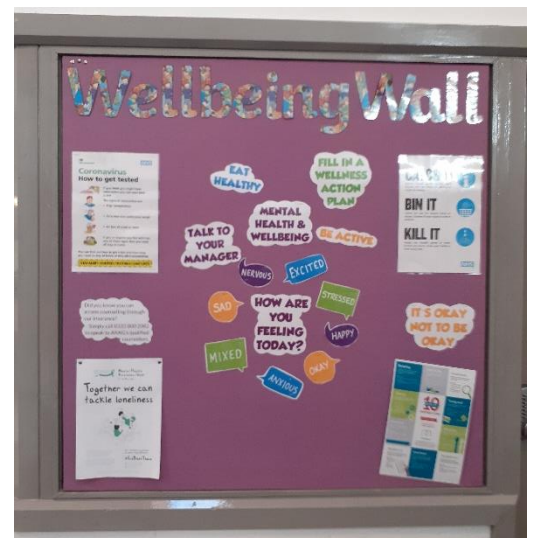


Feedback from Staff

General Feedback

Feedback from all 83 staff was on the whole positive with the majority of staff appearing to enjoy their role. It was apparent that most staff enjoyed supporting people using the services and the variety of activities on offer.

Some staff expressed their thoughts on how their services could be improved through various methods from improving wheelchair access to further activities; and there was a clear understanding of the people using the services and their desires/needs.



4Ever Unique (07/09/2022)

Observations carried out during the visits showed there was good person centred support at all the centres, and staff were seen to have in-depth knowledge of the individuals needs and preferences throughout.

All staff were able to state how to raise a safeguarding concern; and no safeguarding concerns/issues were raised by staff during the visits.

**Comments included:**

"...so much fun it's actually the best day of the week. Fully inclusive, everyone enjoys the day" (Domino Partnerships Ltd)

"It's a pleasure to come here, it's a pleasant atmosphere and everyone seems happy" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"We are one big family and love to have fun, we all work to the best of our abilities to ensure the experience at Freshfields is the best as possible" (Freshfields Enterprises)

"The staff work great as a team and it always runs smoothly, the [people using the services] are always happy and safe" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"What I like most about the centre is watching the [people using the services] grow in confidence and independence" (Bridge Centre North West)

"Areas and activities more accessible to wheelchair users would be a good improvement" (Freshfield Enterprises)

"it would be better if we had safe, secure outdoor space" (Enable U)

**Staffing levels and Support**

Out of 83 staff spoken with all felt well supported by their employers. There were varying responses around staffing levels with 81 feeling their services were generally fully staffed; no staff felt that their services were understaffed long term but two staff stated that there are occasional occurrences such as cover for sick leave.

All staff felt they had sufficient training to be able to undertake their role and several discussed how they can request further training if they felt it would be beneficial.



Comments included:

"Some days no, other days just enough" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)

"It can depend on the day i.e. sickness, COVID, but if needed the management will step in" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"I believe we have an excellent number of staff and most staff are flexible to make up numbers if needed" (Freshfields Enterprises)

"There are always more than enough staff members to give the members 100% attention" (Bridge Centre North West)

"We have regular training, mostly based on our client's needs, we have regular staff meetings also" (Motiv8 Lancs)

"We have a fantastic team of staff" (Enable U)



Choices for people using the services

All staff felt people using the services had choices around their day and that activities offered meet the needs/desires of those using the services.



Comments included:

"We put a lot of effort into offering different activities and are always led by the [people using the services]" (4Ever Unique)

"The [people using the services] choose their own activities, and ideas are taken on board and are put in place to happen" (Freshfield Enterprises)

"[People using the services] are asked on a daily basis if they would like to change any activities" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)

"I base activities on suggestions made and what the group appear to have enjoyed" (Domino Partnership Ltd.)



Environment

All staff were happy with the environment in which their services are provided.

Limited space was raised by two staff who would like to see their services expand. One staff member stated they would like to see more sensory equipment to utilise the space more.



Adams Activity Ark (21/06/2022)



Age UK Day Centre Nelson (20/06/2022)



Comments included:

"...would benefit from more equipment, like a swing/more stuff to play with, sensory equipment as we expand" (4Ever Unique)

"Just about right for the numbers attending but more could be done if the building was larger" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)

"I love the building, having two separate rooms is beneficial and gives plenty of room for the [people using the services]" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"Local, large open space and outside area (quiet space) light and easy to access" (Highfield Scheme Ltd)

"I think as the service continues to grow then the premises should grow or move to bigger also" (Enable U)

"It is a lovely place to work and is also accessible for all [people using the services]"
(Motiv8 Lancs)



Would you recommend the services

Staff were asked if they would recommend their services to a close relative; all 83 staff spoken with said they would recommend the services.



Comments included:

"Yes definitely, we go above and beyond our duties to help people, making it a staff and happy environment" (Age UK Day Club Ormskirk)

"100% I have even booked myself on the service after I am 50 years old" (Age UK Day Club Nelson)

"Absolutely. This is a really good service that I've recommended several times"
(Domino Partnership Ltd)

"Absolutely, I already have done, extremely impressed" (Freshfields Enterprises)

"Yes 100% I would recommend to a family member or friend, it's an excellent place to be" (Bridge Centre North West)



Summary of findings

- Overall people using day services are satisfied with their activities, choices and facilities
- Overall relatives are satisfied with the services their loved ones are receiving
- Overall staff are satisfied with their role and the services provided
- There are some restrictions to higher levels of needs such as around wheelchair access with some services; however these are either currently being addressed or the service provider has opted to provide services primarily for those with higher levels of mobility and/or ability
- There were some requests for further activities which have been fed back to the specific services to allow for these to be considered by the service providers
- Several services are still working under some lower level of Covid safety measures, and activities/centres have been adapted to ensure the continuation of services. This has also resulted in more creative ways of delivering services which is having a positive impact on those using the services
- Staffing levels are generally within acceptable levels overall, although some centres may struggle to have sufficient/appropriate cover at all times such as during sickness/leave
- Transport to and from the services is an issue for some people using the services, with several people travelling by public transport which can cause issues and anxiety when not running as scheduled or when travelling a distance to access services
- More space to allow for services to expand and increase their capacity was identified by both staff and relatives as something

which would create the opportunity to increase capacity and enable further activities and services

- Day services offer relatives respite time and thus helps work towards better mental health and well-being, enabling them to continue in their caring role
- No safeguarding issues/concerns were identified or raised

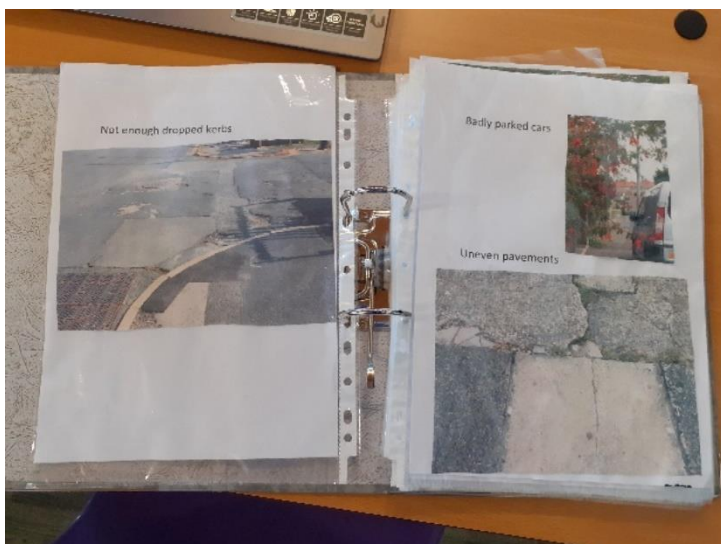
Photographs taken during visits



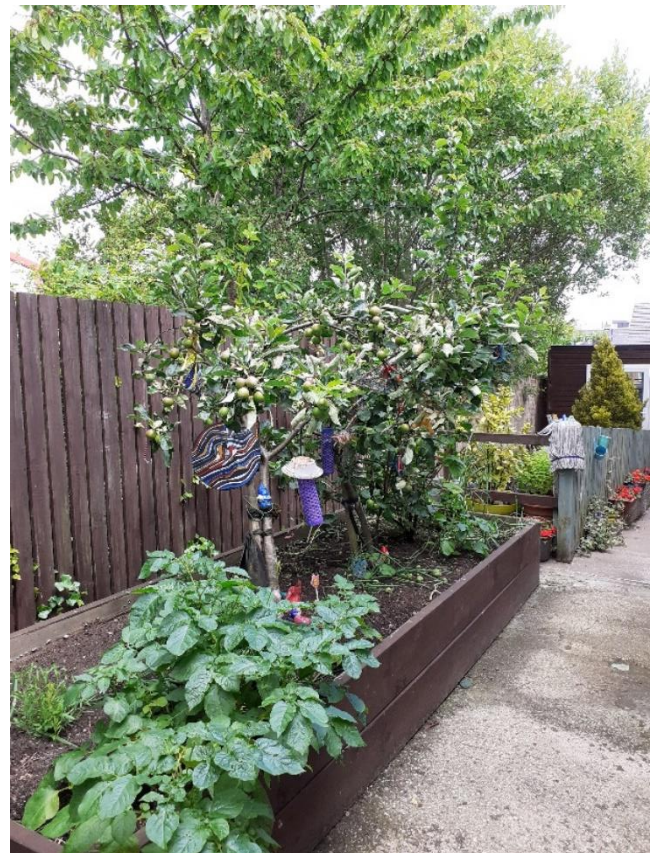
Age UK Day Centre Ormskirk (28/07/2022)



Bridge Centre North West (05/07/2022)



4Ever Unique (07/09/2022)



Highfield Scheme Ltd (05/07/2022)

Day Services Project



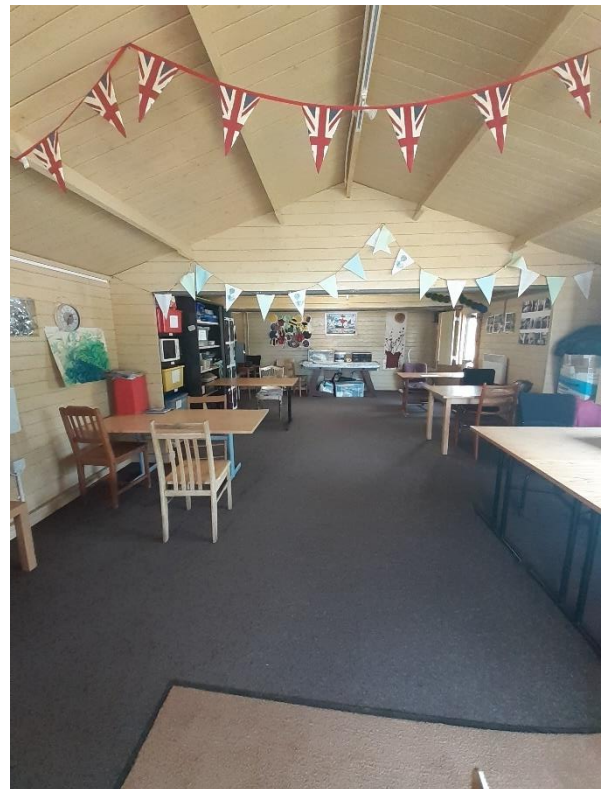
Bridge Centre North West (05/07/2022)



Motiv8 Lancs (30/06/2022)



Freshfields Enterprises (11/07/2022)



Freshfields Enterprises (11/07/2022)

Day Services Project



Enable U (27/06/2022)



Bridge Centre North West (05/07/2022)



Freshfields Enterprises (11/07/2022)





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