# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Day Opportunities Review Report** |
| **DATE**  | **04 March 2024** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services** |

The impact of the pandemic has been felt across our communities and by all those who rely on support from social care services. In 2021, as restrictions eased, there was shared concern about the pace of recovery in day opportunities and a snap-shot review found considerable variation across regions. Following the completion of this initial review, as services recovered from the impact of the pandemic, I again commissioned the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru to undertake a detailed analysis of day opportunities, which included exploring stakeholder’s views about how such services should be developed in the future.

[The review is being published today on the ADSSC website](https://www.adss.cymru/en/blog/post/review-of-day-opportunities-and-respite-short-break-services-report).

It makes seven recommendations. In these very tough financial times, it is vital we explore all avenues to build support networks, working with people who access services. We also need to take full advantage of digital improvements to connect people.

At a strategic level, to improve service commissioning through our Rebalancing Care and Support programme, we are establishing a National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support, which will strengthen regional partnership arrangements, and create a national care and support office to oversee and support the implementation and management of the framework.

To drive collaborative working and improvement, I am bringing together a working group of all partners involved in planning and delivering day opportunities and people with lived experience, to agree a plan to make the best use of existing services, promote innovation and to share good practice.

We will continue to work closely with the Welsh Local Government Association and local authorities to promote good practice in co-production and to ensure that day opportunities are meeting the needs identified by those individuals who use and rely on them.

The Ministerial Advisory Group on Learning Disability considered the recommendations of the report in detail at its meeting on 12 December and will continue to advise on how to effectively adopt and implement these recommendations through a fully co-produced, multi-agency approach in partnership with stakeholders from across the Welsh public sector.

I am encouraged that many who access day opportunities are benefitting from new models of support, which have been tailored to individual preferences, and as a result, many want to continue this more flexible approach. Many older people, parents and unpaid carers value place-based support, such as day centres, which offer a welcoming environment for families, create a shared community, and can provide much needed support to help them continue in their caring roles.

We must make more use of established support services to support economically inactive people to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support. This can include projects promoting the importance of work to help people to live healthier and more independent lives, alongside building their future financial resilience and wellbeing. Careers Wales will continue to provide a key signposting service to help people understand what employability opportunities are available across Wales.

In line with our commitment to create an age-friendly Wales, we are supporting local authorities to work in partnership with older people and third sector partners to develop and protect community services. The funding supports local authorities, through the operation of their dedicated local officers, to develop robust, locally appropriate, mechanisms to engage with older people. It also allows local authorities to broker new relationships with citizens and drive a cultural shift towards a more co productive way of designing and delivering services.

We are also updating our mental health and wellbeing strategy, which will restate our commitment to a joint health and social care approach to mental health, that is person-centred so that it makes no difference who is providing individual services.

Many people with learning disabilities and their families rely on access to day opportunities. Last autumn we held a series of engagement events with people with lived experience to mark the 40th anniversary of the closure of long-stay hospitals in Wales. It is clear that support services have come along way – people attending the events welcomed more choice and person-centered planning, which can lead to better integration and involvement in their own local communities.