



Learning Disability and Autism Day Services Report

February 2022

healthwatch
Kingston upon Hull

healthwatch
East Riding of Yorkshire

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1. Introduction

About Healthwatch

Healthwatch are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

Healthwatch has the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services since the introduction of the Health and Social Care Act (2012). As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary, Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care.

Why this subject

In March 2020, as a result of the coronavirus 'COVID-19' pandemic, the United Kingdom went into its first national lockdown. This lockdown lasted three months until June 2020 and during this time members of the public were told to stay at home and all non-essential services were closed; including some health and social care services, for example, learning disability and autism day services (hereafter referred to as day services).

From June 2020, non-essential services were allowed to open and the 'stay at home' restrictions were eased for the majority of people; however, this was not so for individuals who were identified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' (CEV) and subsequently, a large number of individuals who attended day services and those who supporting their care needs were directly affected.

The government issued further lockdowns and restrictions between June 2020 and January 2022, including local lockdowns when Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire (ERY) residents were placed in tiers three and four, and a further two national lockdowns followed.

In November 2020, the government recognised that people with a learning disability were at least six times more likely to die as a result of COVID-19 than the rest of the population. At this time, the government also recognised that the difficulty for people with a learning disability to follow the infection control measures that would keep them safe.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/people-with-learning-disabilities-had-higher-death-rate-from-covid-19>

Individuals with disabilities such as Down's syndrome are also more susceptible to respiratory tract infections; thus more likely to be affected by COVID-19. This led to the government during the COVID-19 pandemic to advise such individuals to shield during lockdowns.

Furthermore, during the lockdowns and restrictions, day services in Hull and the ERY found they didn't receive clear guidance initially on what services and support they could provide due to the changing restrictions in place.

The restrictions could have been any (or a combination) of the following:

- A reduction in contact and routine; days and times attendees had to access day services or alternative provisions.
- Reduced access to indoor venues, sessions, and facilities.
- Reduced working with familiar staff and seeing peers.
- Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Parent and carer forums identified to Healthwatch, that when government guidance changed and day services were faced with fewer restrictions, there was not the same level of provision between Hull and ERY.

Initially, the day services in Hull were able to open and see attendees face-to-face, and much later, the ERY opened their venues. Additionally, Healthwatch was told that cross-boundary day services presented challenges, including access to personalised support and differences in the commitments to support individuals between local authorities.

In 2020, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull conducted engagement regarding the Coronavirus Act 2020 and Adult Social Care, where we spoke to individuals and their carers to highlight what impact possible easements to the care they would receive would have on their wellbeing.

Some of the responses Healthwatch received attributed to our rationale to conduct further targeted work around day services as they highlighted to Healthwatch what impact restrictions on day services were having on attendees and their parents/guardians, families, or carers (hereafter referred to as 'carers').

“They help me with all tasks of daily living but cannot do this all the time as both mum and dad have health problems and this is putting a strain on them and affecting their wellbeing. I need to go back to the day service so they can support me again and my parents get time to meet their own needs.”

Additionally, Healthwatch also received intelligence from March 2020, which highlighted the impact restrictions were having on day service attendees. Healthwatch intelligence identified attendees’ not having contact with their friends and staff at day services was resulting in behavioural changes, some becoming more challenging and difficult to manage by carers of attendees.

“Our daughter has had to change her routine by not attending the day service and it is really starting to affect her wellbeing and mental health, she is agitated by not being there.”

Below is a summary of our findings from engaging with carers of attendees of the day services:

- Carers have seen changes in their ability to communicate and in some cases, some individuals have become very insular and communication skills have been seriously impacted.
- Attendees have shown behavioural changes and in some cases, they have become increasingly challenging due to their inability to understand the issues with COVID-19 and why (due to the restrictions in place) they cannot see their friends and family.
- Carers are demonstrating challenges and in some cases, feel unable to cope to the point they are considering admitting their cared-for individual to a care home.
- Carers are giving up on returning to a semblance of normal and are very worried that services will change.
- Carers are terrified to send their cared-for back to day services in case they get COVID-19 and feel that hospitals are limited when nursing COVID-19 patients with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Following this engagement, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY decided to launch a cross-boundary project to explore the impact of day service closures on learning disability and autism day service attendees.

Project aims:

- To understand how the changes between March 2020 and January 2022 have impacted the health and wellbeing of attendees unable to attend a day service.
- To understand the effect of changes to service provision affected the attendee's carers.

- To learn what alternative support was offered to attendees and how effectively did this support met their needs.
- To identify the issues staff experienced and to learn for future reoccurrences of restrictions what potential issues may arise upon returning to full day service provision.
- To present findings to the local authorities', local collaborative partnerships and others to support impact across Hull and ERY.

2. Methodology

To meet the above aims; Healthwatch devised three separate surveys; including an Easy-Read version to capture the views and experiences from three perspectives.

Surveys

The surveys Healthwatch developed focused on:

- Attendees of day services; to understand how the restrictions have impacted what type of support they've received and their wellbeing overall.
- Carers of attendees; to understand how the changes have affected the attendees throughout the pandemic and their wellbeing.
- Staff at day services; to understand how they have found implementing the changes required for the day service to be COVID-19 guidance compliant throughout the pandemic and to learn how support has been implemented for attendees.

Consultation

Healthwatch consulted with Matthew's Hub, a support service for autistic people without a learning disability aged 13 and over, living in Hull or the ERY to enable Healthwatch to develop the surveys, communications for posters, leaflets, and social media posts in-line with their recommendations.

Accessibility

The surveys were available both online and in a physical format; and in addition to this, Healthwatch encouraged further assistance when completing a survey by telephone; on their behalf.

The communications developed were specifically designed to target the above audiences and provided the different ways to complete the survey, along with details of how to contact Healthwatch should individuals want more information or request a physical copy or support in completing the survey.

Throughout the project, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and ERY promoted the survey 2 – 3 times per week through social media channels and in monthly newsletters.

Reach

Healthwatch contacted Hull City Council (HCC) and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) to obtain information about local service providers. Healthwatch contacted these service providers directly by telephone, social media, and email within the Hull and ERY area to identify a 'point of contact'

at local services, and the project was promoted further by contacting local leaders (Councillors and Members of Parliament), voluntary and community organisations, and public and private business sector groups to ask for their support in sharing information and to maximise the Healthwatch potential reach.

In total, Healthwatch contacted a total of 143 services, organisations and groups to promote the project and to ask for information to be shared across their websites, newsletters and social media accounts.

Day Service

The 'point of contact' at local services was supported by regular follow-up communications from Healthwatch throughout the project to make sure the resources were available to attendees and carers, and to assist survey engagement.

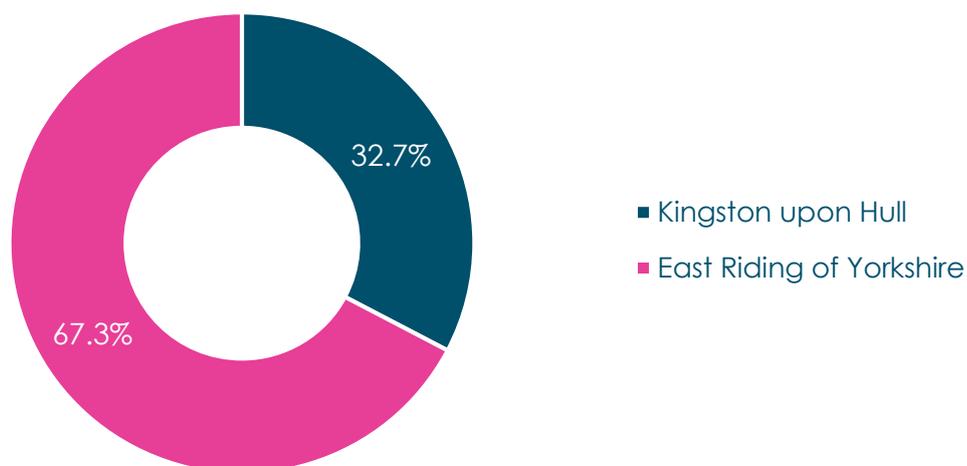
Healthwatch printed leaflets, posters, and surveys for seven day services to ensure access was provided to each audience and where needed support could also be offered to attendees who were receiving alternative day service support via activity packs.

Engagement

Through the engagement of the project, Healthwatch found from the responses received that 32.7% related to day services in Hull and 67.3% in the ERY, respectively.

The findings for the three surveys are presented in section 3 (attendees), section 4 (carers) and, section 5 (staff), before emerging themes and recommendations are presented in sections 6 and 7, respectively.

Responses Received Breakdown



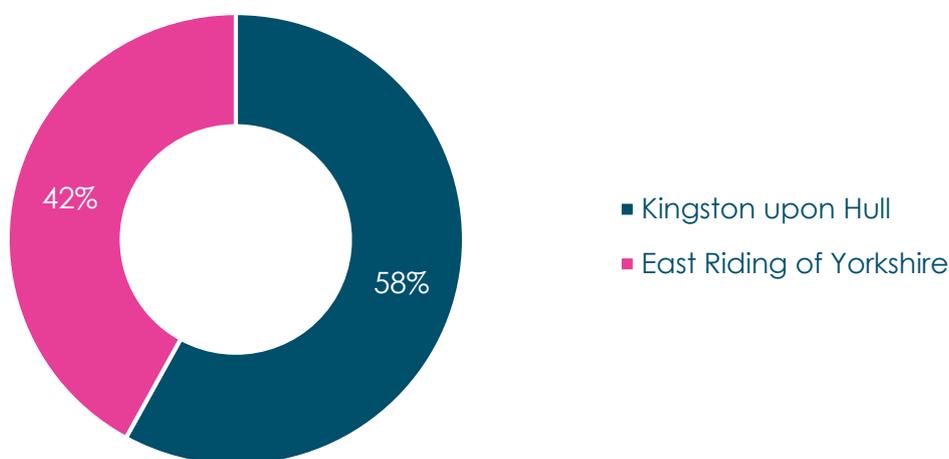
3. Findings: Attendees

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY contacted 26 day services across the local areas, respectively, to promote the project engagement and provide information between June and August 2021.

Healthwatch visited a total of seven day services (four in Hull and three in the ERY) to provide information (leaflets, posters, and surveys) and where COVID-19 restrictions and guidance permitted, to speak to attendees face-to-face.

Healthwatch found 63% of all attendee responses were completed by the attendee with the support of a carer and responses highlighted 58% and 42% of attendees were attending day services in Hull and the ERY, respectively.

Responses Received (Attendees)



Understanding pre-pandemic attendance

When engaging with attendees, Healthwatch wanted to understand how often attendees visited their day service before the pandemic; whether they noticed any changes to provision during the pandemic, and if there was any impact on their wellbeing, due to the changes to service provision.

Before the pandemic, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull identified:

- 57.1% of attendees visited their day service multiple times weekly
- 28.6% of attendees visited daily

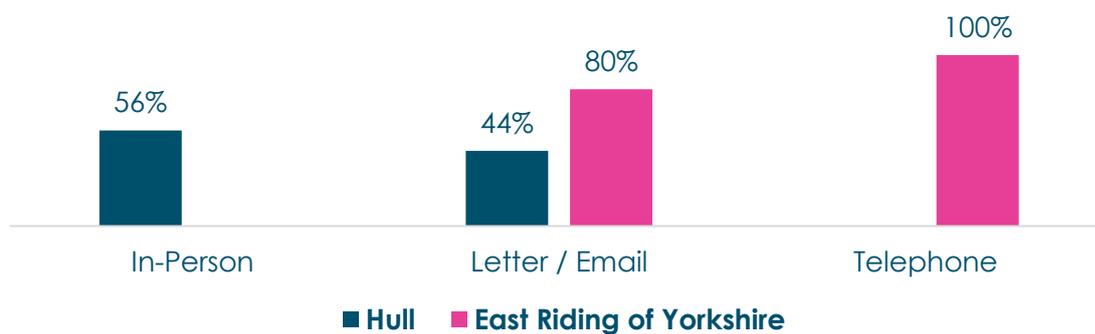
Before the pandemic, Healthwatch ERY identified:

- 80% of attendees visited their day service multiple times weekly
- 20% of attendees visited daily

Day service changes

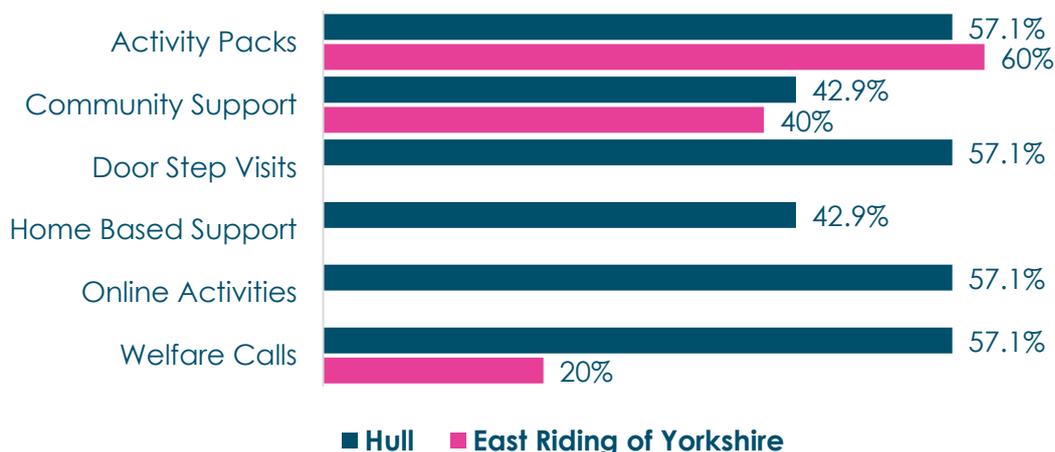
Since the pandemic started, Healthwatch was told attendees were more likely to be kept updated in-person (56%), followed by letter/email (44%) and a third of attendees (33%) reported they were informed by a combination of in-person and letter/email in Hull. Whereas in the ERY, Healthwatch was told all attendees (100%) were informed by telephone and in addition to this, 80% also received information through letter/email.

How Attendees Were Informed of Changes



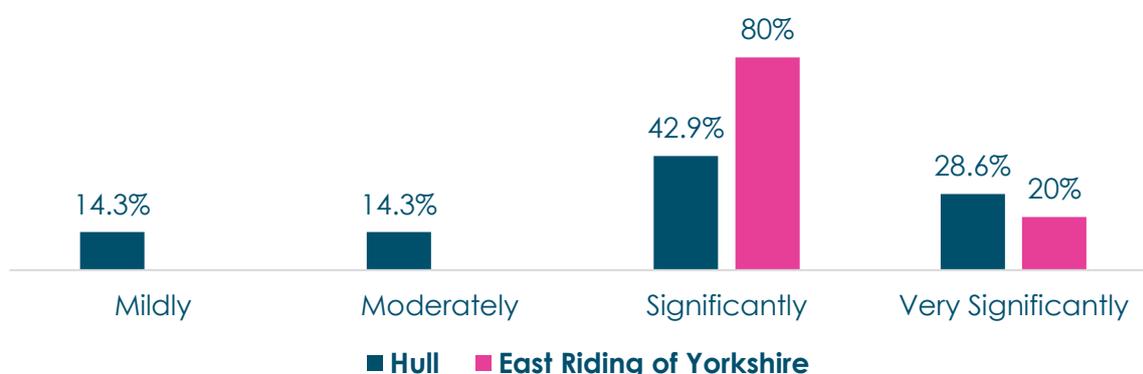
Following the initial communication methods, the type of support and services received by attendees varied between the Hull and ERY.

Type of Changes Noticed



When Healthwatch teams asked further about how the changes affected attendees, respondents reported feeling mentally and emotionally affected by not being able to attend services as they normally would and engage with staff and friends (other attendees) at day services.

How Much Did Changes Affect Attendees



Individual experiences

Healthwatch collected individual experiences of attendees to highlight the stories of the pandemic further, from a person with a learning disability and/or an autism diagnosis. This is highlighted below for both Hull and ERY attendees:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some attendees provided similar experiences.

Attendees and Carers Experiences - Hull

"It has made me very sad. It has also affected my mental health. I felt very isolated as I couldn't go to my service provider and I couldn't see my friends at the service."

"It has caused distress and anxiety low mood as I am not able to socialise without support from my day services. I enjoyed the centre as I was familiar with the building and the staff and of other service users."

"I have stayed at home with my mum missed staff and friends."

"I am worried every day that the service will close again. I was very anxious and sometimes my mum struggled with my behaviour when I couldn't come to the centre."

"I was very anxious which affected my behaviour which impacted on my mum and dad and their health. I now worry most days in case I cannot go to the centre again as this made me very unhappy."

Attendees and Carers Experiences - East Riding of Yorkshire

"I miss friendship and activities."

"They have been affected when there was no services available. Part of her body has been affected."

"Loss of routine. Bored at home."

"My son has been getting frustrated that he can't go in the buildings still and that Hessle is still not open. He feels very isolated."

"He has become more anxious, obsessed with reassurance, self-harms more."

Additionally, Healthwatch found attendees (Hull and ERY) stated they had not made any new connections during the pandemic. One attendee in Hull told Healthwatch:

"No, I was too scared to go out and I still am, I only go to the day service, I do not want to go in public places."

Furthermore, attendees of day services in Hull and ERY also felt they would be receiving the right support when day services reopened fully, so Healthwatch asked attendees what type of support they would want when services reopened. Healthwatch found attendees more often than not wanted to return to their routine rather than receive other support. Both Hull and ERY attendee comments are highlighted below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some attendees provided similar experiences.

Support Desired - Hull

"I like doing activities in the community. I also like going out and about. I also enjoy cooking and playing games."

"The same service I had before the pandemic (five days)"

"Just my day service. I am happy there."

Support Desired - East Riding of Yorkshire

"Every day at the service instead of one day a week."

"I would like another day at the service."

"The same as we had before the lockdown."

"His normal day service."

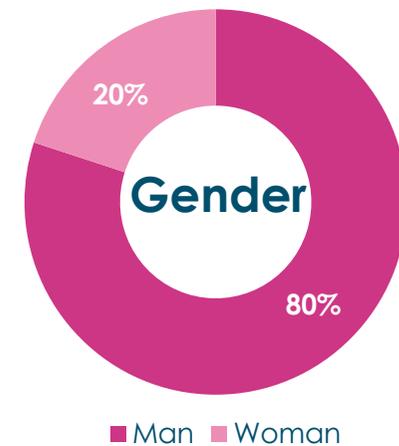
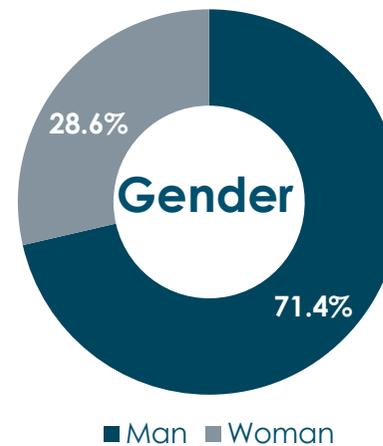
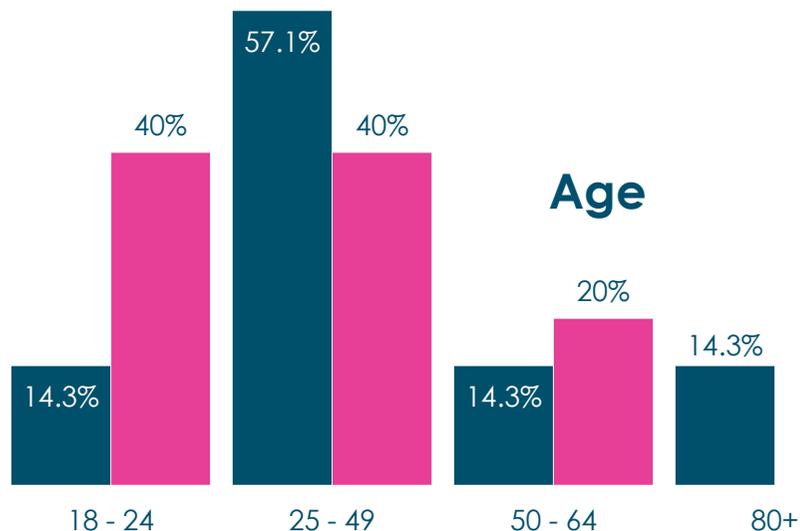
Attendee Demographics

Collecting demographic data helps Healthwatch to understand how people's characteristics affect their experience of health and social care services; both at a local and national level.

Please note:

As providing demographic data is optional, some attendees advised Healthwatch that they did not want to answer some or all questions relating their demographics.

Ethnic Background

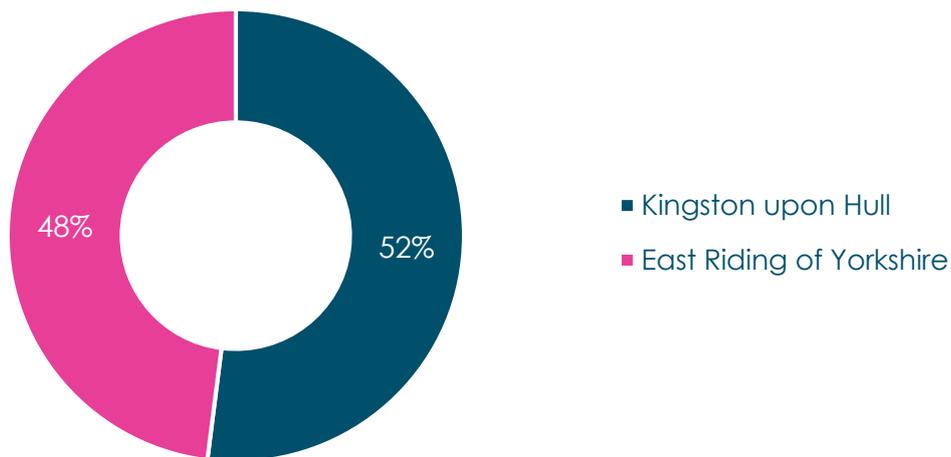


4. Findings: Carers

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY contacted 26-day services across the local areas between June and August 2021.

Overall, from the responses Healthwatch received, Healthwatch can identify that 52% and 48% of carer's responses came from Hull and the ERY, respectively.

Responses Received (Carers)



Understanding pre-pandemic attendance

To understand the impact of changes to day service provision, Healthwatch asked carers how often attendees received support from their services before the COVID-19 pandemic. Carers reported that attendees in Hull received support from day services more frequently per week before the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull identified:

- 41.7% of carers stated attendees visited day services daily.
- 50% of carers stated attendees visited multiple times per week.
- 8.3% of carers stated attendees visited once a week.

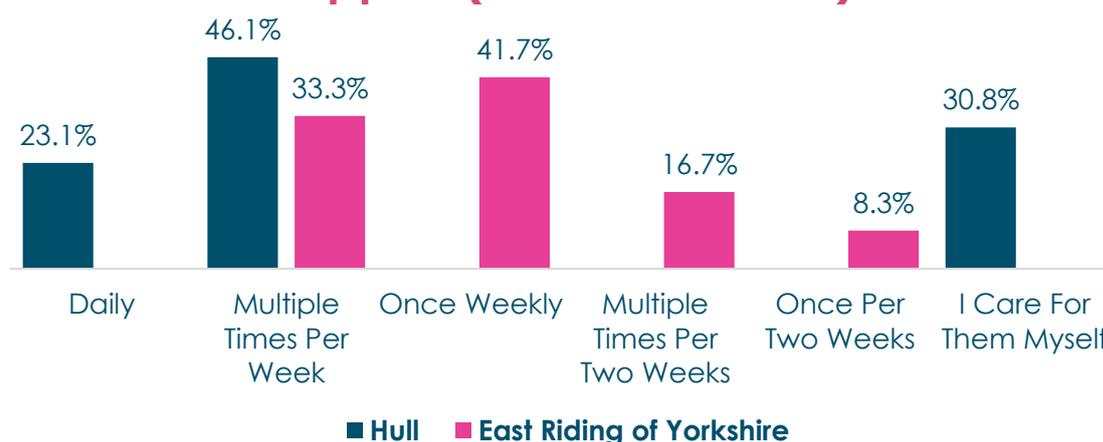
Before the pandemic, Healthwatch ERY identified:

- 8.3% of carers stated attendees visited day services daily.
- 33.3% of carers stated attendees visited multiple times per week.
- 41.7% of carers stated attendees visited once a week.

Day service changes

When carers were asked about day service changes following the lockdown and national restrictions; carers highlighted that whilst availability of support in the ERY did not change significantly for attendees, in Hull day service availability declined significantly.

How Often Day Services Provided Support (Post-Pandemic)

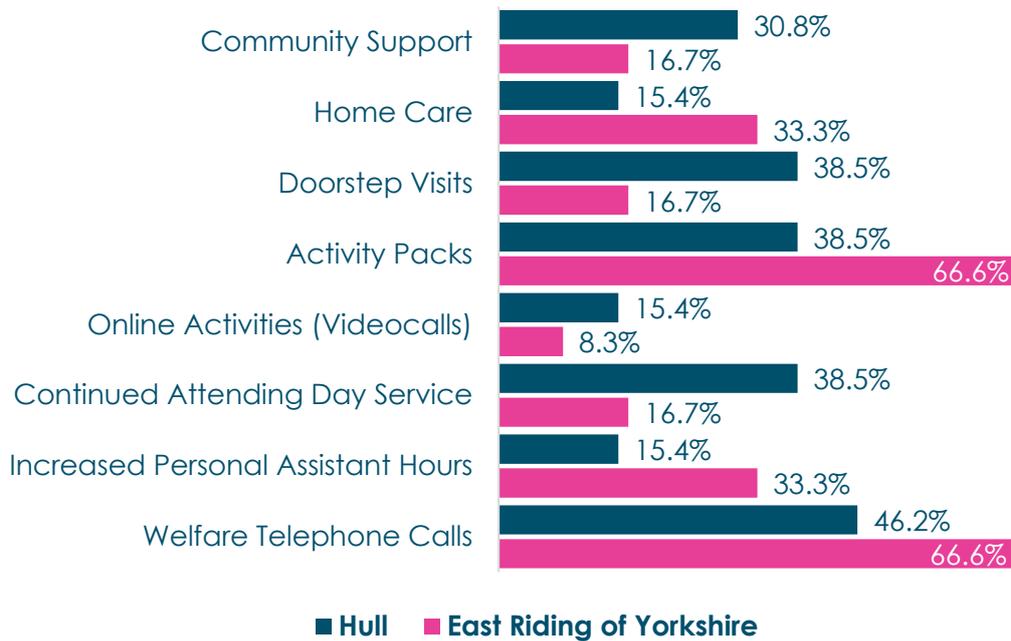


Secondly, carers in the ERY highlighted that alternative services offered were primarily activity packs and welfare calls. In Hull this same support was also provided but taken up to a lesser degree due to alternative support offered which included doorstep visits, community support and the continuation of attending day services.

Thirdly, Healthwatch wanted to understand how carers were kept updated about changes to the provision of day services. 92.3% of carers in Hull told us they were kept informed. In the ERY, whilst all carers were kept informed, they reported that information was not provided consistently.

Healthwatch identified some carers received information from multiple services, but across both areas they were predominantly kept updated by day service providers (Hull – 76.9% and ERY – 66.7%) and in Hull carers were more likely to be informed by telephone (58%), whereas, in the ERY carers were more likely to receive information via letter (45%).

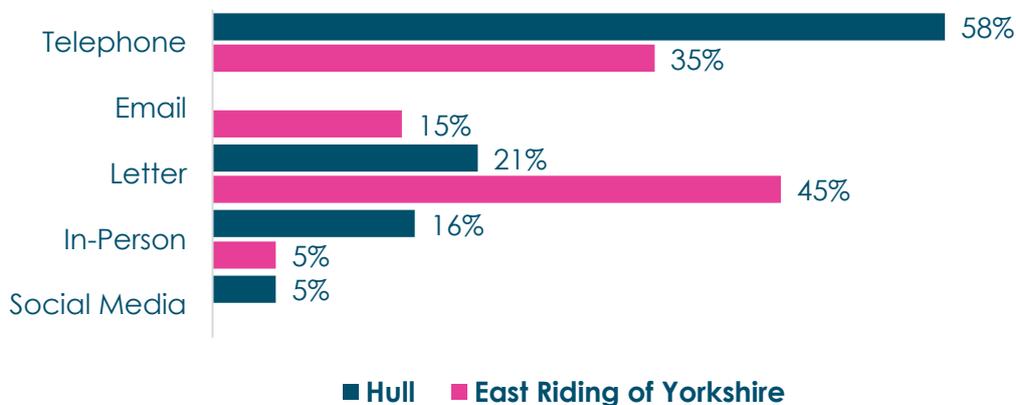
Service Provision Changes



Who Informed Carers of Changes



How Carers Were Informed



Healthwatch enquired further with carers to explore if they felt the contact they received was maintained throughout the pandemic and one respondent from the ERY stated:

“I received one contact from the services saying they’re closed and a generic letter saying the services aren’t starting again anytime soon but still pay the contribution.”

However, Healthwatch found that 84.6% of carers in Hull and similarly, 83.3% of carers in the ERY highlighted contact was maintained by various methods effectively and the majority of carers felt the contact was very valuable for their needs when the pandemic was presenting challenging times. Below are some quotes that were made across Hull and the ERY.

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some carers provided similar experiences.

Value of Contact (Day Services) - Hull

“Once a week welfare calls have been received and have found these helpful and have built up a rapport with the individual- activity packs have been well received.”

“Yes. It helped immensely as my daughter has missed going to the service. It gave her a focus and let her know that there was someone to talk to.”

“It has helped with supporting us at home and for our mental wellbeing. Without the day services support, we would have been unable to cope.”

“We had no contact with the council or social services. Most definitely, without the day services, we would have really struggled to cope.”

“It’s been reassuring to talk to staff and to feel we have not been abandoned.”

“No, not really.”

“They reduced services from 5 days to 3 days but so grateful for the offer to give us a break.”

“Yes, you can talk to them and they do listen to you - they’re more like friends. The partnership board I feel doesn’t really understand, whereas the day-care centre staff do. I really appreciate their help.”

Value of Contact (Day Services) - East Riding of Yorkshire

"More a gesture of kindness rather than value."

"It was good support at first, but as pandemic went on I asked for less calls from them due to it upsetting my son."

"Yes - updated us on dates for return, etc. Been on end of phone if needed."

"We really don't know how we would have got by. They have been excellent and really help with all our needs. No help that means unable to get out of wheelchair all day."

"Yes. The service phoned weekly to check if we were all okay and if we needed any kind of support."

"Contact was random at first which caused difficulties, we had to request they stuck to a scheduled phone call."

"No, how can a phone call asking if the boys are ok every week help them. When clearly they are not coping. They need to return to the day services especially when some of their friends are attending the service. It's not fair on them. It's discriminatory!

They have carers but it's not the same as the service, just the mere sense of achievement working is invaluable to them. Going out with carers shopping to the gym, shopping walks shopping now cinema shopping is not enough for two young men. They need more stimulation!"

"Yes but had to stop before Christmas as it could happen outdoors - they weren't allowed to enter premises or our home. The welfare calls from the service have also been sporadic. Calls from the service were weekly until our son started to attend for several hours."

"Not really because there was nothing they could do or say to make things better."

"Activity packs gave the 'outside' carer a structure to work with after personal care/physiotherapy programme. The 'cared for' enjoyed them very much."

Additionally, to understand the impact of the changes to day service provision, Healthwatch asked carers from their perspective what impact closures had on their wellbeing. Overall, Healthwatch found that carers felt the closures had significant impact on them and attendees. Below are some quotes that were made across Hull and the ERY.

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some carers provided similar experiences.

Impact of Day Service Closures - Hull

"Although I feel my daughter has missed the provision, I have felt more comfortable her not going due to the pandemic as she is very 'touchy feely'. However, the PA has taken more on board for no return."

"Basically my daughter was at home with me all day, and got really down so obviously it got my mental health down with seeing her so upset and I wasn't getting a break from her."

"It has caused us so much stress and anxiety and also a lot of financial worry as I could not work as I had to look after my son. Now the day service is open we are finally rebuilding our lives."

"When the day service closed it affected both me and mum emotionally and had a negative impact on our health needs, We were given very little support from the council or social services. We had to rely completely on the support from the day service."

"Take them out two days a week for an hour or two - not enough for a carer looking after 2 severely disabled sons. Ideally, it would help more if they resumed the daily day care service as at the moment she's finding it really difficult to do daily tasks such as shopping and appointments - having to rely on neighbours for things like this. It's not good for her mental health, she's finding she can't be bothered to do anything and it's really affecting her.

The weekend respite used to run every weekend, however for one of her sons the respite has stopped completely - this has stopped for over 2 years now and you're still waiting to be allocated to another respite service. Her other son attends respite every other weekend, but before the pandemic, it was every weekend. It's also affecting both her sons and their daily routine is now a negative one."

My daughter has had no day service for 16 months. I have looked after her 24/7 for the past 8 months after her PA went on maternity leave. My daughter and I are both finding it hard."

"My son's days have been cut as affected me dramatically emotionally and health-wise feeling drained and struggling to cope at times with him been home more stress and anxiety been a big part here."

"When the service partially reopened and started a limited number of clients it was a great relief to me, I was able to recharge my batteries."

"The reduction in days attending the day centre has been really hard - the days that are available are so helpful for both myself and my brother. Since March 2020 until May 2021 he wasn't allowed to attend the day-care centre, however, as a result of me pushing and persisting with my social worker, I managed to get my brother back into the day centre. However if I hadn't done this, I think we would still be caring for him full time without any help."

Impact of Day Service Closures - East Riding of Yorkshire

“Devastating completely. Nothing for a full year then 2 outings a week for 3 hours.”

“My son has got used to a new routine and enjoys being at home. I'm able to work from home which helps.”

“All are provided by us now. Long term would be too much pressure- will need sore socializing with others.”

“Massive impact, missed all friends and the social interaction on a daily basis since March 2020. The day service we had been getting before March 2020 was excellent, we really need to be back.”

“During the pandemic, it was extremely stressful. My son went from attending a day service daily to nothing. It was extremely hard.”

“Totally disappointed, more could have been done to get service users back to attending the service. Having visits at home is not a break for carers and service user has become nervous.”

“My daughter has suffered both mentally and physically.”

“The fact that the boys can't attend the day services is very upsetting. To watch two young men regress when they have both done so well with their behaviour work ethic and communication, it's sad!”

“Our son is more withdrawn since not being able to go out and meet his friends.”

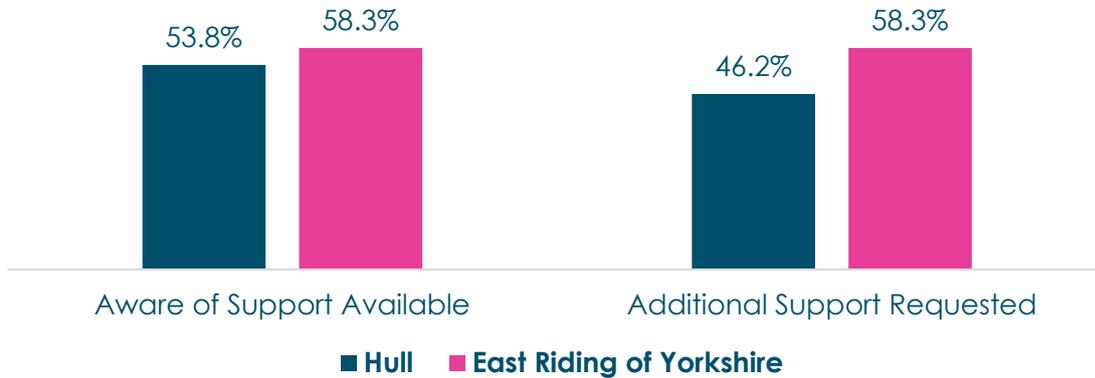
“Made me feel alone as no one was interested in us and our situation and struggles, my life has had to stop to look after my son full time and with no help.”

“Lack of 'privacy' never had 'carers' in the house before. Different levels of support on weekly basis, often short notice caused problems with completion of household routines, especially for shopping for food, PPE, equipment, etc.”

“Lost and fearful for the future.”

Furthermore, Healthwatch asked carers whether they were aware of any additional support. 53.8% of carers in Hull and 58.3% in the ERY stated 'yes' they were aware of additional support. 46.2% of carers in Hull and 58.3% in ERY also told Healthwatch they had requested additional support from their day services.

Additional Support and Assistance



Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some carers provided similar experiences.

Future Support Desired - Hull

“Keeping the centre open as she loves going and she socialises with the staff and other service users.”

“One-to-one support in school.”

“She would like the service to resume to how it was before the pandemic, daily day care service visits, and weekly weekend attendance.”

“Day-care at least twice a week.”

“Full-time day services like before as he really enjoys being there.”

“5 days at the service as a PA service will not work for our daughter and also us. We would have concerns if the PA did not turn up or if she went out in all weathers in her wheelchair, we would also not like this option for us sat in a wheelchair in all weathers.”

“Just getting the day centre back to normal and the regular attendance resuming, so my brother can get back to visiting to 4 days a week. It relaxes both him and I and helps us mentally.”

Future Support Desired - East Riding of Yorkshire

“Back to normality for the sake of both our mental health.”

“Activities i.e. outings and sports badminton/golf. Socialising with others. Trips out.”

“Monday to Friday 9-3, with 1-1 plus the support as before lockdown 2020. Excellent services loved and really missing everyone had a great time hopefully we will get back soon.”

“Respite to resume.”

“Day centre days.”

“Exactly the same as to what was offered before.”

“What was agreed in the past, transport, 1-2-1 support, access to day centre, Monday to Friday - 9 AM to 3 PM.”

“More choice especially in our area.”

The final question of the survey, presented carers with an opportunity for any additional comments, if they wished to share any more information with Healthwatch.

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Additional Comments - Hull

“The centres are a big help for carers like me and a vital lifeline for service users like my daughter. It helps me keep my mental health good.”

“This (closing the centre) has caused us as a family mental and emotional turmoil! If the centre were to close again I do not know how we would cope!”

“The service has been very good in supporting us. It's a shame that all the council decision making, no communication was given in meeting individual needs and the needs of the families.”

“Both of their sons' behaviour has changed so much in a negative way - frustrated and unhappy, with lack of stimulation at home. Both of them in wheelchairs, it's impossible for their carer to take them out - she doesn't drive so finds it hard to create activities for them. It's negatively affecting their carer too, she would like a break from the almost constant care she has to give them. She feels she hasn't got the energy or motivation, when her sons attended the day-care service 5 days a week, they were so much happier and therefore able to manage and look after a lot easier. Her sons did lots of activities and spent time with friends who also attended the centre which really helped with their interaction and behaviour.”

“Cutting the hour of our day services isn't good for the clients that depend on them and get so much out of them like my son does. Nor for us parents it's unfair to all involved the benefits my son get out of this day service paramount to him and me as a parent of a severely disabled young adult as there is nothing else out there for them and to take day services or hours away from family that rely on this. Out in the community doesn't help that much either a few hours can be a bit of a hindrance if you need to be out shopping or doctors for parents that is. We need our day services back up

and running full time for the sanity of us parents and for the clients that use them.”

“The 3 of us get a very short time apart but we are very grateful for what we all get, as long as we can do a trolley dash as 2.30 comes around too quickly.”

“The service is a LIFESAVER for me and my wife.”

“If my brother comes home unhappy, I ring the day-care centre to double-check what's happened. The day centre used to do my shopping for me which really helped, however, this has now been postponed because of the pandemic. They also provided food packages during the first lockdown. I currently have to bath and dress my brother (I do everything) and I'm currently under the hospital with back and rib pain, so the day-care centre support really is vital for me.”

Additional Comments - East Riding of Yorkshire

“I see the restrictions are pointless when I can take my daughter to the shop with lots and lots of people but day services is only allowing 1 day a week in centre.”

“We get by with help from the service. Upsetting that we wasn't made aware help could be offered in the home until I asked in June 2021. Struggled in home had to rely massively on family and friends. Really felt like we were just forgot about.”

“The learning difficulties community have been seriously affected by the lack of day services. More should have and more importantly could have been done. I feel extremely let down.”

“I have complained to the local ombudsman regarding the treatment of my daughter. They have treated her as an afterthought, and have increased her service provision only because of complaints.”

“The lack of availability of day services is & has been detrimental to the health & wellbeing to two wonderful young men. It's disappointing that vulnerable adults can be treated this way. It's as if they don't matter to anyone.”

“Initially timely and appropriate support from care company at council but ours is now on long term sick so no one identified to support our son - trying to get to speak to someone to get answers is impossible. Also as council are saying our son currently can only access 1 day service his respite service is unavailable. We love our son dearly but we'd love a break as we're sure he does.”

“Life through the pandemic has been so tough, not only having my son home full time my wife was going through breast cancer and we couldn't get help from anyone, we contacted everyone who we could to get help as we had hit rock bottom but still no one wanted to know saying there was

nothing they could do so we had to struggle alone. It's disgusting how we were just pushed aside and forgotten about."

"The COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse should not be used to reduce the services previously agreed with carers. Equally, the 'cared for' previous life style needs to be considered. It is in their 'best interest' if access to the wide variety of social activities and friendship groups and enriched activities that the 'cared for' experience by being off day-care services are refused."

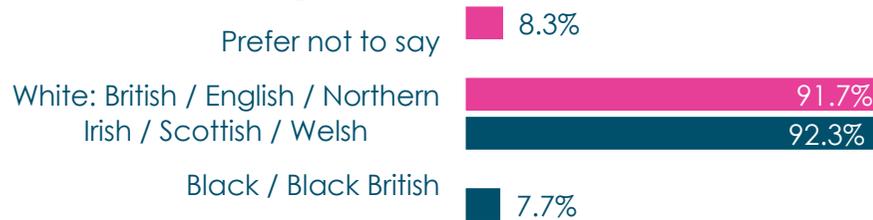
Carer Demographics

Collecting demographic data helps Healthwatch to understand how people's characteristics affect their experience of health and social care services; both at a local and national level.

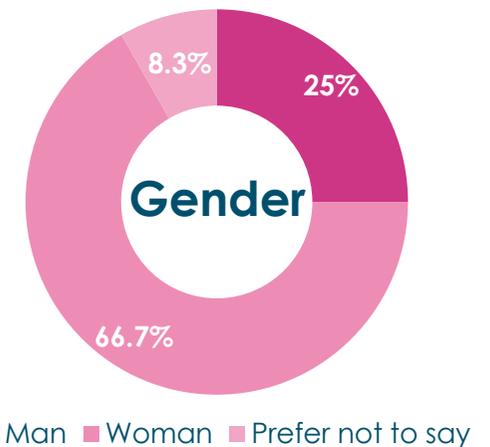
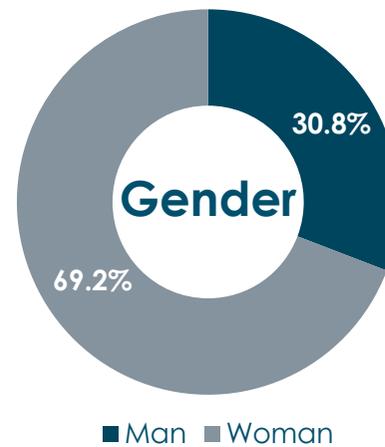
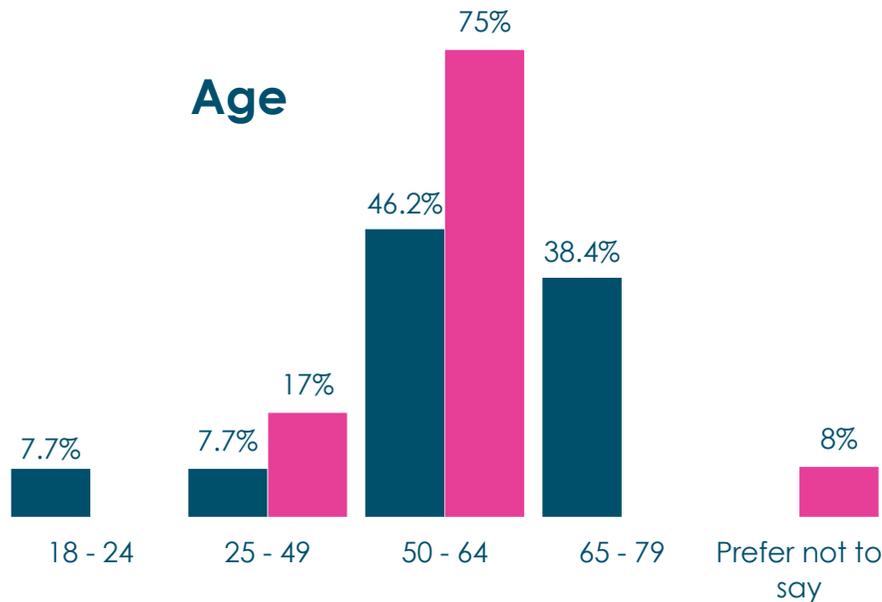
Please note:

As providing demographic data is optional, some carers advised Healthwatch that they did not want to answer some or all questions relating their demographics.

Ethnic Background



Age

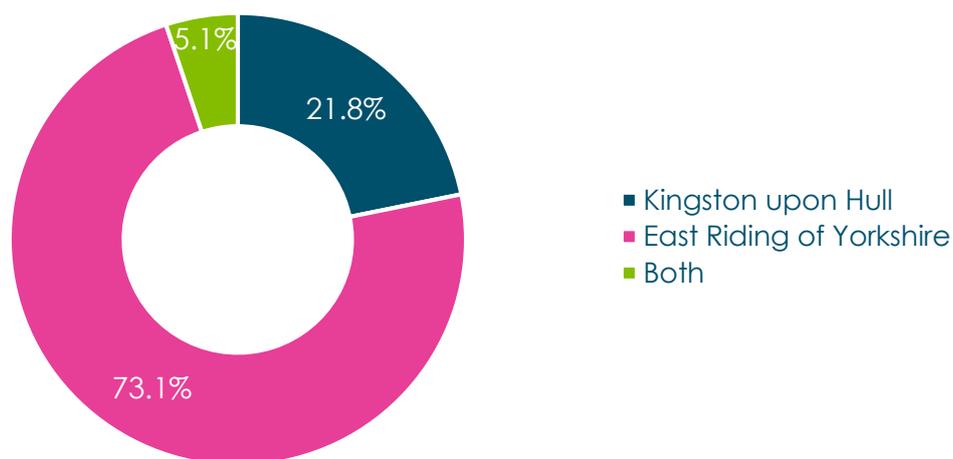


5. Findings: Staff

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY contacted 26-day services across the local areas, respectively, to promote the project engagement and provide information between June and August 2021.

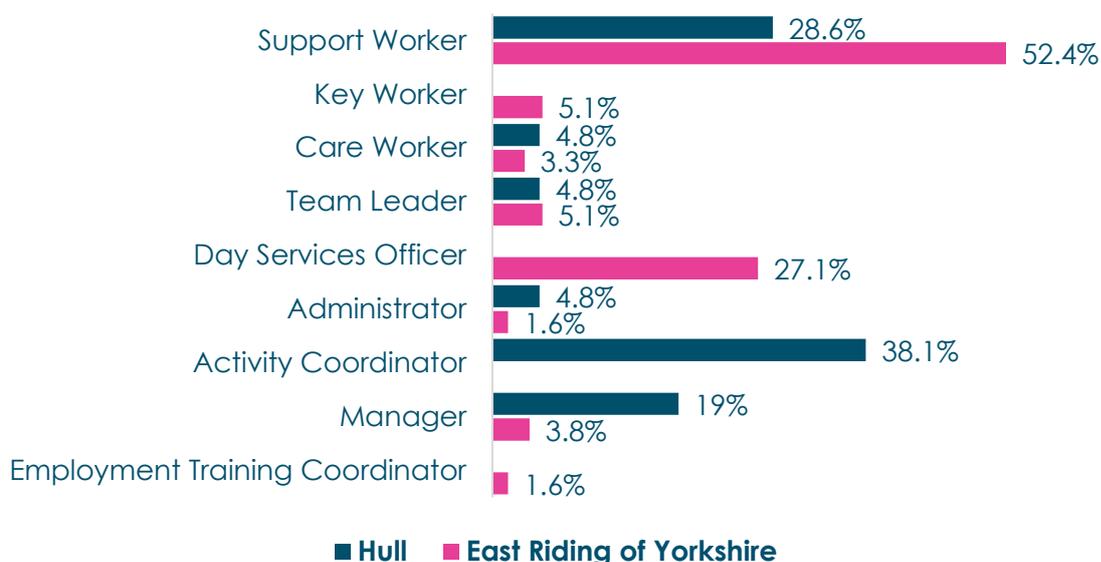
From the Healthwatch engagement, 21.8% of staff were based in Hull, 73.1% were based in the ERY, and 5.1% worked between both areas.

Location of Day Service (Staff)



Healthwatch spoke to a variety of staff roles, enabling a broader reflection of the impact of changes to service provision. In Hull, Healthwatch found that 'Activity Coordinator' (38.1%) and 'Support Worker' (28.6%) roles were the most often engaged with, whereas in the ERY, Healthwatch engaged most often with 'Support Worker' (51.4%) and 'Day Services Officer' (27.1%) roles.

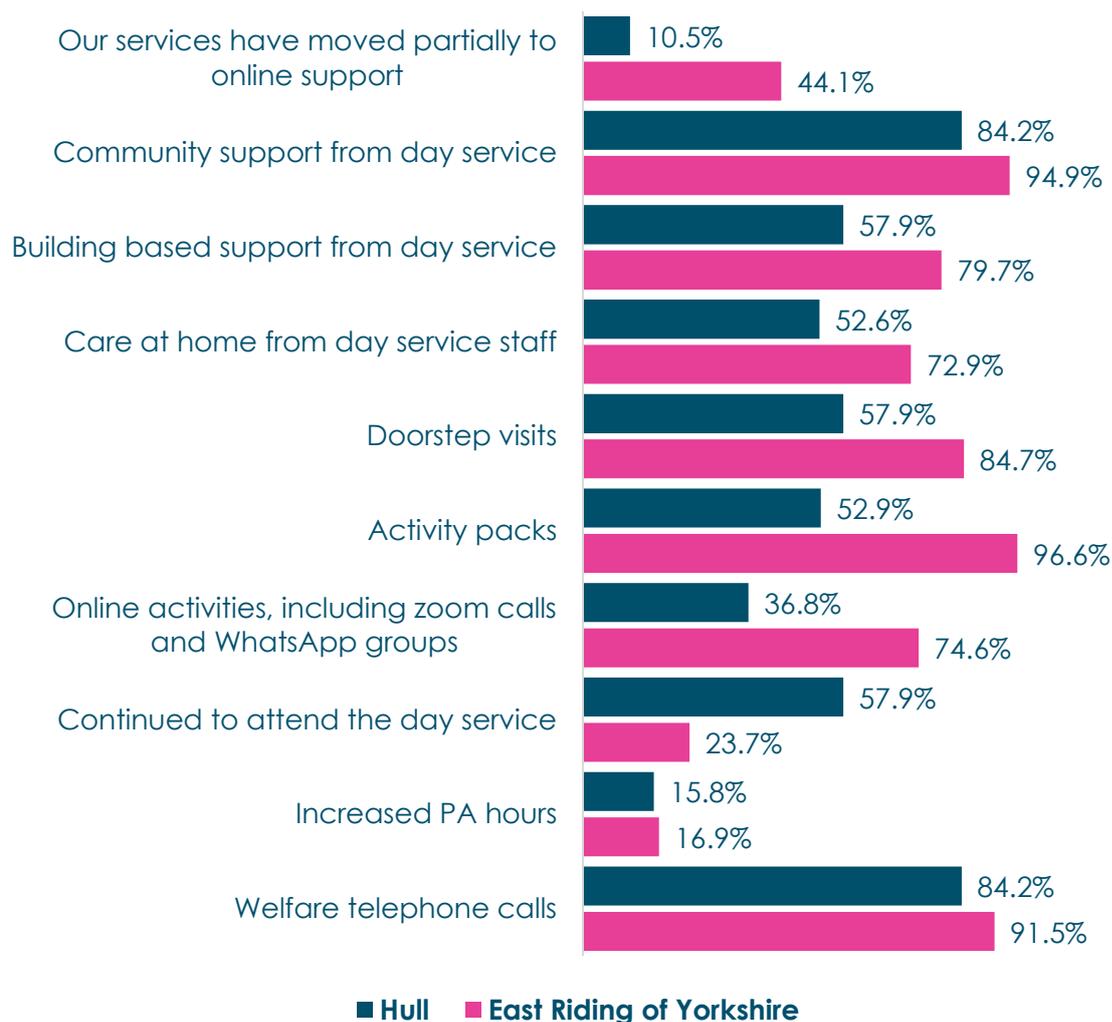
Day Service Staff Roles



Understanding pre-pandemic attendance

Since the pandemic, staff has reported having had to undertake a variety of tasks to support attendees whilst day services were either closed or had restrictions to the service they worked at. In Hull, the most common changes were welfare telephone calls and community-based support (84.2%), whilst in the ERY the most common changes were activity packs (96.6%) and community-based support (94.9%).

Support Provided to Attendees



Staff provided Healthwatch with direct examples of how the services have adapted to support attendees outside of their normal day service provisions, highlighted below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Changes to Service Delivery - Hull

“We began community-based support sessions offering a range of activities and places to visit. Unfortunately due to shortage of transport (buses and drivers) and some places still not being open to the public due to COVID-19 we are limited and managing the best way we can, this means staff is dropped off at customers' house at times and organise activity from there e.g. a local walk to park, etc.”

“When the service closed we supported people in their home and the community, we provided activity packs, went shopping, helped in the home, and spoke online.”

“During the pandemic, we went out on welfare/morale calls to the homes to our client group. we also went out to clients who were finding it difficult with the increase in personal care needs as home care could not fit the amount of calls in due to the extra calls during the pandemic as our clients were at home for longer hours due to the lockdown we have also done shopping and meds calls for our customers and their families. Since November my job role has changed to ringing people up on a monthly basis to see if they require PPE.”

“We have had red-rated clients in base and some community support as time has worn on. We have been unable to give the desired five-day support to clients who have been in desperate need of it.”

“We have adapted the services as only taking critical need customers and remained in bubbles no bigger than six on a day-to-day basis.”

Changes to Service Delivery - East Riding of Yorkshire

“We have been offering regular telephone support, some one-to-one support, and small bubbles for groups.”

“We have provided one-to-one service in people's homes and out in the community. I have done welfare calls to everyone that attended day service previously.”

“Our service has provided an outreach service to services users who required support, this was for personal care or activities.”

“Created bubbles to work safely plus all the PPE. Red-rated customers returned to the centre due to crisis at home, by them not being able to attend the centre. These days were reduced from their original packages due to safe working and bubbles.”

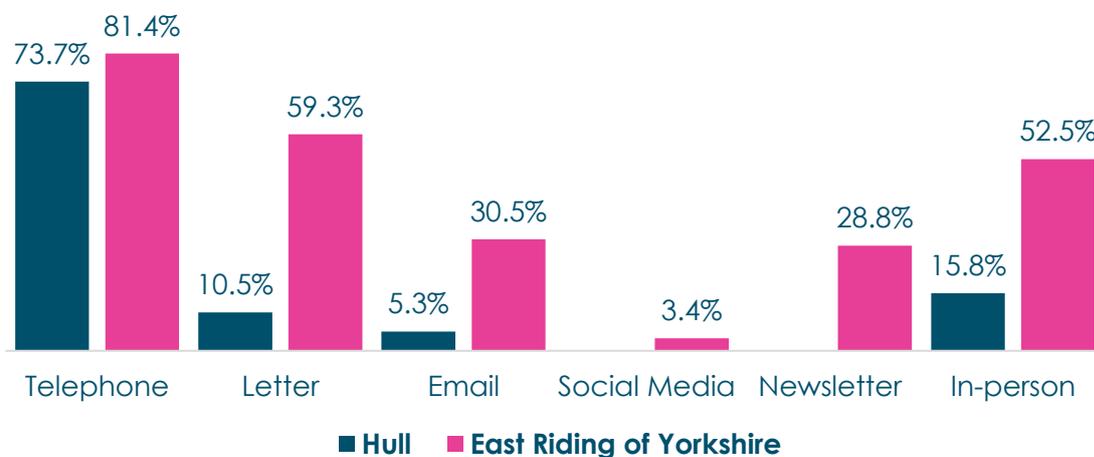
“We are now using staff cars to travel to service users' houses to take them out for the day. We have had to stay in outdoor-only activities.”

“Adapted approach to service users’ needs, regular contact giving support where required, community calls, shopping, wellbeing checks, bespoke activity packs.”

Day service changes

Healthwatch wanted to understand how changes to day service provision were communicated with attendees and carers. In both Hull and the ERY staff said attendees and carers were more often contacted via phone (Hull – 73.7% and ERY – 81.4%), but the ERY reported offering alternative contact to attendees by letter (59.3%), email (30.5%), newsletter (28.8%) and in-person (52.5%).

Support Provided to Attendees



Additionally, to learn about the challenges faced, Healthwatch asked staff about any difficulties when transitioning from the support provided before the pandemic with indoor service provision and adapting to the alternative methods available.

Healthwatch found staff faced a range of challenges, including adapting communications, interactions, transportation issues, and carers and attendees wanting more support than could be offered. The challenges faced by staff are presented below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Challenges Faced - Hull

“We are doing more care but not as many activities with the clients.”

“Losing customers due to not having the funding to come back.”

“Limited transport that is available on the day plays a big part in my day-to-day duties. Also, I don't always feel comfortable going to customer's house

with a possibility of staying in their home if the weather is bad or the customer decides he/she doesn't want to go out."

"Due to the needs of our clients, a lot of them found the changes very hard which affected their behaviour and mental health. It was also hard encouraging parents to comply with the new rules."

"The main challenge that I have faced during the pandemic has been lack of support from higher management. At the start of the pandemic, staff was ill-informed of the changes what was happening on a weekly basis i.e. change of roles, assisting other teams within the council. The other factor in this has been moved to different departments and having to fit in with new staff teams and new working procedures."

"When it came to community support it has become a stressful environment as families are wanting more than we can offer them and we are unable to meet the needs of the individual too.

Families were not happy that they had been told they would no longer be entitled to a five-day service or that they would have to be re-assessed for anything that they would get and many lost out on time and support because of it.

We did doorstep visits and dropped off activity packs for those who wanted it and did welfare calls to all service users weekly and found they was trying to continue but was often struggling and all asked when we would be opening again as if we would just be able to carry on as we had pre-pandemic and that wasn't an option."

"The challenges we face is that it doesn't work at all with the customer needs and behaviours we have in the service each day is different and community support doesn't always work with transport, staffing and customers not always wanting to go out."

"Other customers not red-rated e.g. green, heard that customers had returned. They could not understand why they couldn't come back also. Staffing was essentially split to account for two sets of bubbles."

"Transport issues, geographical location of customers, traveling times, some customers unable to work with others due to behaviours. Limited external venues that were suitable, weather, changing facilities, and suitable places to eat out in the community. Isolation of customers from peers."

"Additional costs (PPE, staff mileage), lack of incoming payments due to reduced service capacity."

"A lot harder to adapt, confusion with staff members and a lot more pressure in regards to PPE."

"During the time the day centre was not open, we would do community activities but nothing much was there to entertain. Some members need to be outside and have only access to toilets, not ideal in bad weather."

“Remote working. Less contact time with people due to staff ratios changing to 1-1.”

Challenges Faced - East Riding of Yorkshire

“Behaviours increased including hard-to-help behaviours, service users forgot staff or because staff left they struggled to interact with new staff as they didn't know them or have long enough time to get to know them. When the bubbles were introduced some struggled with seeing their friends but not being able to interact with them as they were in separate bubbles.”

“Trying to explain to service users why we were remaining closed. Issues with having enough technology.”

“It has been a challenge to not be able to offer a full service to the service users and having to explain the situation to them on a regular basis, we have tried to support them and offer as much as we can with activity packs, etc. during this time.”

“The challenges have been talking to individuals in their preferred communication method. A lot of service users and families have been and still are very anxious about the pandemic.

We have experienced some difficulties with technology not always working as it should. Supporting staff and families and service users in using technology in their own homes. Training staff in using new technology and systems, and being adaptive in the needs of the service. Supporting staff and enabling them to look after their physical and mental wellbeing.”

“As we were adhering to government guidelines it was challenging to explain the reasons why we weren't opening our service yet and will be providing craft/activity packs. Make sure that the packs were person-centred to each service user as much as possible. Having to work for home and collect the information and then collaborate with other staff to make the crafts and send them out was challenging.”

“Some families/carers might not want to ask for help, for their own reasons. Clients might not have to communicate/resources to discuss how they're feeling. Adapting to a new role. Working with no services users did affect my wellbeing as I felt I could've done more to help these people, especially because a lot of the clients thrive on face-to-face support.

Trying to get people back into day services safely has and continues to be a challenge. Working in the community and having to do social support calls has been challenging with regard to wear and tear on my car. The 45/50p per mile no way takes into account the amount of repairs I have had to make.”

“Having to use new (to me) technology and systems such as Teams etc. I found it difficult to hear some of the issues individuals were facing but by that score, it was also rewarding when we found solutions. The speed of the

changes to information happened initially was very frustrating but the same for everyone.”

“A lot of hard work especially the digital side of things, we are lucky we have a staff team who are clued up on digital communication. Building families’ confidence in parts of the pandemic was challenging as winter when cases rising and deaths.”

“During winter when we had to stay outdoors we were finding we were spending 7+ hours in the car which didn’t really benefit our service users.”

“Internet usage as many did not have or needed to support to access.”

“It was a difficult time for all concerned. People wanted reassurances as to how long the day service would be closed and no advice could be given regarding this. We all strive to do the best we possibly can for the people we support and demonstrated our ability as a service to implement such changes and support individuals and their families/carers throughout the pandemic.”

“Not knowing the time frame involved, staff redeployment, the real risk of bringing the virus to service users, especially the vulnerable, listening to fearful/emotional carers and service users whose world had changed with limited services to offer them at the beginning.”

“Some service users especially the elderly do not have access to communication via Wi-Fi, electronic. Service users were challenged by COVID-19 restrictions, as they did not have an understanding, this particularly increased stress due to not having consistency or routine.”

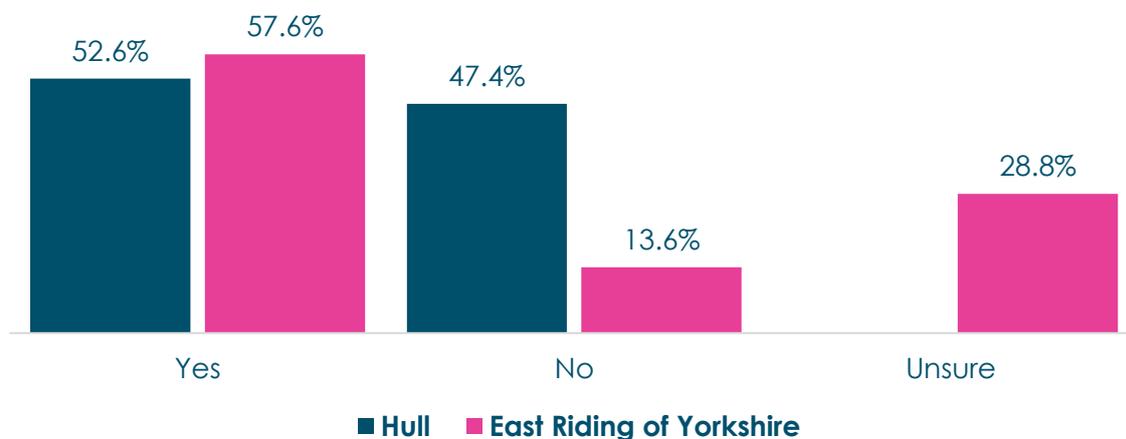
“It was not always possible to talk to the service users and it was not always clear if it was the service users’ wishes or the parents/carers needs that had priority. There has been a lot of frustration at the slow speed of increasing support from a small number of parents and carers, which lead to staff having to deal with angry phone calls and emails.”

“Difficulties around mixing service users from Hull with those from the East Riding.”

Furthermore, Healthwatch asked staff from their perspective, “do staff feel attendees received the care and support they needed throughout the pandemic?”

Healthwatch found 52.6% and 57.6% of staff in Hull and the ERY, respectively said ‘yes’. Almost half (47.4%) of staff in Hull reported ‘no’ they did not feel like attendees had received the care and support needed; whereas in the ERY over a quarter (28.8%) said they were ‘unsure’ and 13.6% reported ‘no’ they did not feel like attendees had received the care and support needed.

Support Provided to Attendees



Next, Healthwatch wanted to learn where day service staff felt support could have been better for attendees. Healthwatch found that staff in both Hull and the ERY felt the returning of services would improve the overall wellbeing of attendees, in addition to some other suggestions. The staff responses to where support could be improved for attendees are highlighted below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Where Support Could Be Improved (Attendees) - Hull

“A lot of the client's individual needs were not met which caused them a lot of distress. All clients should have remained in the day service, one impact of COVID is that it has left a lot of our clients anxious and worried.”

“It would be more beneficial to the families if all services involved were working together, instead of working insolation, as this leads to conflicting information for the families and causes confusion.”

“A return to a five day in base service as was offered pre-COVID as we could still access the community on a daily basis without demanding it of a client who may not wish to be out in the community at that time which infringes on their rights an individuals.”

“When it is safe to do so (clear of COVID-19 or all vaccinated etc.) allow customers to return to the centres. Community sessions not working with our customers. They are too impractical, some customers cannot be placed on the same activity as each other, yet these customers are coming from the panel just for community sessions on set days. Huge behavioural issues are more difficult to work within the community. Carers need the safe knowledge that our customers can be picked up to attend the centre for the full day. Community activities have always been available whilst

attending the centre. These are well planned and risk assessed for the customers that can be safely taken out together.”

“Increase day services when safe to do so. Community sessions not working for our client group. Parents still struggling with having customers at home. Many need 5 days due to behaviour. Insufficient facilities out in the community for personal care etc.”

“Regular testing of staff and support groups for service users’ mental health.”

Where Support Could Be Improved (Attendees) - East Riding of Yorkshire

“There was too much pressure on our small management team to update and write risk assessment after risk assessment and focus on the clients that the staff had no contact regarding wellbeing.”

“Council are expecting us to drive for 7+ hours a day with no support or extra benefits for doing this. We signed up for a building-based day service not this!”

“Initially sent to work from home with no laptop or work mobile to complete duties.”

“No risk assessment for myself, anxiety levels were high. Too many staff in the building at once, my manager didn’t support me.”

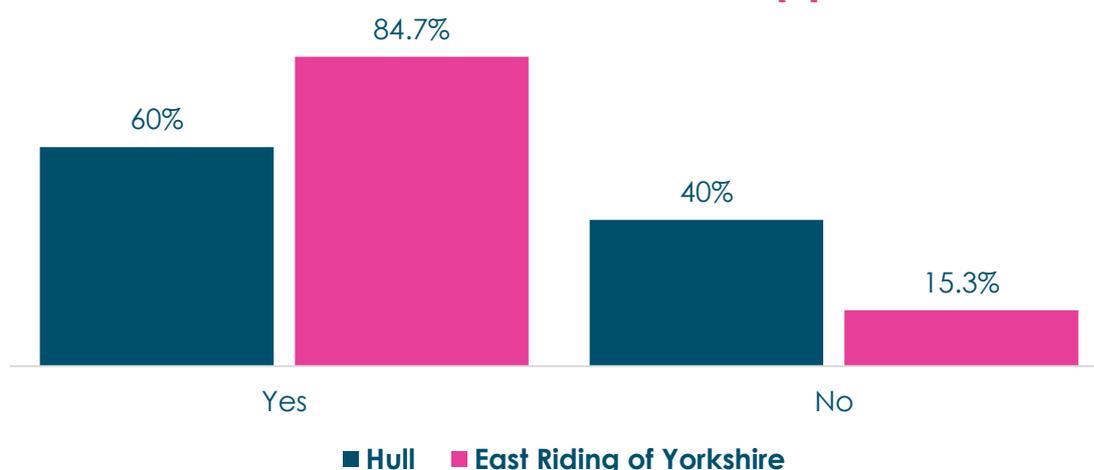
“Not kept up to date and informed.”

Staff support

Due to the importance of staff wellbeing, Healthwatch explored the staff perspective further and whether staff felt satisfied with support throughout the pandemic.

In Hull, Healthwatch identified 60% of staff answered ‘yes’ that they felt satisfied with the support throughout the pandemic; whereas in the ERY, Healthwatch found 84.7% answered ‘yes’ and felt satisfied with the support they received.

Staff Satisfaction With Support



Additionally, staff highlighted where support could have been improved. Hull included employer support during the pandemic and being listened to and heard by their management and Senior Management Team. In the ERY, the support could have been improved mainly included the information provided by the government at the start and throughout the pandemic. A range of staff responses are listed below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Where Support Could Have Been Improved (Staff) - Hull

“Just due to the fact that no one really knew what was happening it felt as though the staff working with the customers were last to know everything without proper support.”

“No one called to ask how I have been during the pandemic.”

“I feel my direct line managers were extremely helpful and supportive of my mental health and wellbeing and genuinely could not have done more to support me in what was/ is a difficult time. I feel somewhat let down by Senior Management as day services have faced numerous changes and adaptations to our role and not one of the higher management has not enquired once about day services staff. We have worked all through the pandemic, and at times this has been very challenging and upsetting, leaving me to feel somewhat undervalued as a worker.”

“I answered yes but I feel there was always more that could be done now by those higher up. The community support is not an idea that has the best interest of clients at heart and is a gimmick for appearances.”

"I was put onto a zero-hour contract during the pandemic and had to look for work elsewhere."

"More in regards to my day centre, I don't believe the staff got the support they needed from management with all the changes and confusion."

"Short staffed at times. Too much overtime needed on staff."

Where Support Could Have Been Improved (Staff) - East Riding of Yorkshire

"I felt we were forgotten by the government on occasions. East Riding has been great supporting our progress in day-care with trying to support us to re-open as best we can."

"Due to the nature of this new virus very little information was available at the beginning which didn't help the likes of me. My line manager and the team at the service have been a great support to my recovery. With the information I gave them and the research done we have made some good progress. But this has been down to us and NOT the powers that be."

"At times it was difficult as I did feel like I could do more especially when wearing PPE and regular testing been done. But I had to accept that the East Riding Council wanted to protect the client's physical health and prevent illness. I was and still am very hopeful that we will get back to supporting lots of people in our community, this will come when the time is right."

Ongoing support to attendees

Since new ways of working had been introduced to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, Healthwatch wanted to understand whether staff found benefits to any of the changes which they would want to support attending day services in the future.

Healthwatch established across both areas that staff felt an increased contact with families, whilst delivering community-based support and conducting welfare calls have been beneficial to service delivery. Being able to focus on individual attendees or by having smaller groups has allowed for more interactions and meaningfulness to the service attendees.

Secondly, staff comments highlighted a number of staff preferred the use of e-learning and the option of meetings online compared to traditional delivery methods. A range of responses are listed below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

What Changes Staff Would Like to Keep - Hull

"I would like to keep in touch with families like we have been through the COVID-19 pandemic."

"Welfare calls have been good as we have been able to get closer and more informed of the extended family around our clients and all information helps us care better and do better for our clients."

"Welfare calls have been a good form of communication and building a relationship with parents and carers."

"Meetings over Teams. Sometimes it's impractical to leave my base to attend a physical meeting at another destination."

"More regular welfare calls with families."

"Enhanced PPE, infection control procedures. New communication methods with service users and families."

What Changes Staff Would Like to Keep - East Riding of Yorkshire

"Regular vaccinations for staff members, continue to wear PPE until it is safe not to. Continuing with infection control, ensuring the correct paperwork is completed before contractors enter our buildings. Maintaining communication with service users, families, and staff."

"More person-centred, carry on building strong ties with families and carers, smaller bubbles."

"I think home working when you have a large piece of work to do is important as you can get on with it undisturbed and without worrying about clean downs etc. before you actually start work which lengthens the time you have to actually do the job you need to do."

"Working in smaller groups, in a more person-centred way. Opportunity to do some tasks at home, in a quiet environment, and not have to commute."

"As I had have to work 1-1 supporting individuals in the community I can really see the benefits from this support, getting to know client's and achieve a person-centred approach was nice. This would be nice to continue for all clients who want maybe 3 hours per week in the community 1-1 and time at the day service to socialise, learn, try new things and play games with their friends, etc."

"On a personal level, I have done one-to-one support and felt that the service users have become more confident and enjoyed the one to one time, not just being a number in a very large group. I really don't feel I would not like to go back to the mad rush we had before COVID trying to get groups out for activities. I found this very stressful and have made

mistakes. Whereas on a one-to-one basis, I feel more creative and much less stressed. Service users also didn't get the attention as there were too many in the groups."

"Enhanced PPE, infection control procedures. New communication methods with service users and families."

"Online learning – personally, I have found it less stressful."

"With smaller numbers of people attending day services at a time, it allows for more individual interaction and personalised activities. Improved infection control/cleaning regimes."

"Online training, digital offer, activity packs, community support for individuals e.g. as a person with dementia might find coming to a service would be more stressful to them than staff going to their home environment to provide a service or a balance of the two. Staff to be more flexible situations are not only 9 to 5 individuals can need help outside these hours."

"Online training to avoid lots of traveling. Flexible hours, supporting people in their home too, mixing the service as well as the day service, especially some users with dementia where the centre is too busy/noisy, more electronic recording centrally."

"Pre-COVID, I felt as a staff member we were always stretched beyond our means, didn't have enough time to plan and arrange activities, and weren't always able to work in a person-centred way due to staff restrictions, time scales, and the numbers of service users in the building.

I would prefer not to go back to this, I see working with smaller groups, appointing job roles to staff to plan, research and put together activities for groups, and allowing time for this to actually happen. Identifying those who would benefit more from 1-1 work and support in the community, rather than large groups in the building."

"Online training and communication have been great and we have made Zoom calls about sessions like table cricket I hope to continue this with other sessions and communications. This has brought me closer to the council and safe to do my work with the systems or work and risk assessments."

"To continue working flexibly in both the day service setting and the community. This will help build a better rapport with individuals and their families."

"I would like to see masks stay in place even after the restrictions are lifted. I like the increase in community support that we are offering."

Additionally, Healthwatch asked staff about what they missed about indoor provision. Overall staff responded that indoor provision could enable interactions with attendees, with whom staff may have not been in contact since the beginning of the pandemic. Other responses on what staff missed about indoor provision are included below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

What Staff Missed About Indoor Provision - Hull

“Missing all the clients and the way things were before COVID.”

“The social aspect and watching the customers grow as individuals.”

“We used to have a lot of customers in and everyone would take part in fun activities like Fun Friday afternoons, the atmosphere was very uplifting and everyone was happy to come to the centre and be together. Since the pandemic we have been very limited with activities, number of customers, and places to go out.”

“Communication with other human beings, being part of a group laughing and having a fun time.”

“Being able to support and care for customers in a person-centred way.”

“The social aspects creating strong bonds with other staff and service users.”

“The atmosphere, teaching them how to read and write.”

“Ability to meet welfare needs in a safe place. Community facilities placing risks meant people had less time outdoors as the risk was too great to assess community facilities. Building-based support was always going to be safer.”

What Staff Missed About Indoor Provision - East Riding of Yorkshire

“Spending precious time with everyone, the role of a staff member employed in day services is person-focused. We are here to ensure we support individuals to maintain and develop skills and to live a good life. It has been hard to not physically see people and for the individuals to not see us. It has been lovely to return some form of normality in the bubbles we are providing.”

“Social interaction seeing how much joy they get from day services, individuals building friendships and relationships with others.”

“I feel that we as a team have been very lucky there have been difficult decisions that we know were put in place to keep us safe. My senior is very proactive she kept us all involved with any changes that were made. I personally managed the changes well.”

“The fun and liveliness that clients bring, the day goes by so fast and is filled with fun tasks, challenges, and activities. I miss using my skills every day and learning new things. I miss communicating and building relationships with clients. I miss being able to support clients with their own objectives and

building personal independence. I miss giving clients new opportunities in life that they may not be able to access at home/residence. I miss seeing clients filled with excitement to see the staff and their friends, ready for their day of fun at the day centre."

"The interaction with them all, whether it be to see their smiling faces to see their characters shining, to see their development which builds their self-esteem. I even miss the challenges of the job which we didn't get a lot of but with our good way of working and our personal centred approach to our service users the confrontation was soon resolved. I think being able to turn a tricky situation into a positive outcome helps everybody especially, our service users. The whole buzz of the place has lacked our service user's energy, enthusiasm, and camaraderie. I came in this job to work with people with a learning disability and I have had so much fun since 91 until 2020 and the pandemic hit us."

"Knowing we made a difference and making a positive effect on students' lives."

"Working with Individuals with specific needs they like to give staff a hug and it has been a difficult time not being able to do that. Even with explanation some individuals have limited understanding and the look of hurt they give is the hardest thing to see."

"I've missed seeing the friendships between service users grow and how excited service users got when they saw staff and friends."

"The social aspect with service users, all the activities and fun theme days and seeing how they enjoyed themselves. The centre working as a full team."

"I have missed group social interaction, have worked on one-to-one with the most vulnerable service users, I need this to get back to group interaction and teamwork."

"I have missed the face-to-face interaction with service users and hands-on work with them. However, I have valued and appreciated a quieter work environment too, it has allowed me time to build better working relationships with my colleagues, service users, and their families/carers as I have actually had the time and resources available to get to know people. This has actually given me confidence when working with others and see this as a skill I can use moving forward."

"I have missed the group sessions and individual service users and the day-to-day routines. Hopefully, these will be back to how it was in the near future."

"Teamwork. Having access to facilities. Access to disabled toilets in the community has been a challenge as there is a lack of these and changing places."

Furthermore, Healthwatch aimed to identify the challenges of returning to indoor provisions and similar concerns were evident in both areas.

Staff responded that main challenges were attendees transitioning from one-to-one support back to a day service setting, including being able to adjust to the changes in the noise and environment, whilst the maintenance of infection control was highlighted because attendees may not be able to maintain social distancing in addition to attendees and carers having anxieties around mixing indoors with others. Other challenges of returning to indoor provision are listed below:

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Challenges of Returning to Indoor Provision - Hull

“Customers getting used to a new routine again and staffing numbers due to we are now used to working with less customers I think staff will struggle getting used to working with more customers again.”

“People are still scared to go out and socialise, especially families of vulnerable individuals. Even when everything technically goes back to normal, masks are not mandatory and most of the people have been vaccinated some of the day service users will still not be convinced it is safe to do the thing we used to do.”

“Overcoming the individual worry, anxiety, and distress it has caused our individual clients and their families.”

“I think people’s anxieties regarding COVID will be around for a long time.”

“Re-establishing routines and managing behaviours that may have grown in the time they have been unable to attend a service.”

“Will struggle to do community-based services due to transport and staff issues. Customers who are building-based have always gone out to access community-based facilities, but having a base enables PC needs to be met as well as mobility and health needs, e.g. time out of wheelchair/ postural management, etc. Need to encourage staff to make full use of the building, using all rooms and to work in smaller “focus” groups and look at splitting group into community and in-house sessions.”

“Building reassurance with service users and families. Ability to social distance.”

“Explaining to certain service users the importance of social distancing and PPE.”

“People have become accustomed to receiving 1-1 support. Confidence has been affected.”

Challenges of Returning to Indoor Provision - East Riding of Yorkshire

"I think service users and staff will feel anxious for some time about returning and the worry of further lockdowns or outbreaks."

"I envisage a great deal of anxiety from service users, families, and staff. Difficulties in ensuring safe systems of work to provide for a larger capacity of people. The rate of infection, what the future recommendations will be. Keeping vulnerable people safe."

"Concern at the numbers that we may need to support, we cannot go back to the large groups as before. This virus will be around for a few years. Staff reductions/redeployment and possible redundancy. "

"People will return and think that things are the same as before, but they won't be, things have changed, and it will take time for people to adjust, and some people may not want that rushed hectic life anymore. Working for the staff will also involve the safe working practice of hygiene, which will be more difficult in a large group."

"I anticipate that the client's well-being/ mental health/social skills/life skills has had a negative effect, this has been a HUGE change and something that even myself has had to adapt to, I can only imagine what it has been like for them at home for 17 months. We may have increased behaviours as again another change to come back to the centre after so long not attending."

"I feel service users will find it difficult to adapt to a new way of working, also comments, questions and queries, and angry carers and families asking why we are not going back to how it was before COVID."

"Ensuring the building remains a safe, comfortable environment for the individuals as they return. Some individuals' needs or wishes may have changed and we will need to work with them to ensure they remain safe and confident in what we provide for them. Some individuals may have concerns, worries, or anxieties about the pandemic and what they have faced during it we will need to be prepared to offer support and if required get professional support/advice."

"I think COVID is a long way from going, so I can see going back to ways we worked at the service is a long way off. The restrictions have affected how many people we can have in a bubble how many days they can attend the service. The health and safety and COVID checks which have to be done by staff."

"Less people in groups. Service users not fully understanding rules etc. Service users not being happy about not being in bigger groups/being able to see their friends. Service users not understanding why we still have to wear PPE/social distance. Less freedom."

“Maintaining COVID safety, being able to work at full capacity, service users and carers’ expectations - what they see on the TV news may not be reflected in the day service. Changes that have happened to service users during their 16/17 month absence.”

“Keeping service users safe from COVID, unvaccinated service users, and impact that may have on their safety and that of others.”

“Those individuals who have declined any support during the pandemic and possible behaviours that they may present on return due to possibly feeling overwhelmed and anxious. Also how individuals will manage with the transition themselves being within a larger group due to some who have only having been at home with a relative. This again may present with overwhelming anxiety, frustration.”

“People adapting to new systems/ways of working and socially distancing from one another i.e. as in their friends. The anxieties and fears that people have because of the COVID-19 pandemic and what the future holds post-COVID.”

“Ongoing challenge of COVID and new variants emerging and keeping service users safe whilst still providing a service to meet their needs.”

“Anxiety of service-users. Infection control. Staff fears new ways of working and the future of day services. Been able to maintain individuals in their bubbles. Service-users adapting to the change may be negative.”

“The challenges of infection control with extra people in the building, maintaining bubbles, the anxiety of returning service users. Things are not being the way they used to be and users struggling to adjust. Lots of reassessments etc. as needs will have changed, mental health issues that have arisen, risk of more incidents of isolation if the virus came into the building. Service users not complying with infection control.”

“Questions from parents/families and carers about why we have been working as we are and why we are not open as before. The presumption that we haven't been doing enough or what we should have been over the pandemic, I personally feel that we have done as much as possible under the government guidelines and restrictions. That when people do return, their needs may have changed, is a day service setting actually beneficiary to them?? Returning to a day service with large numbers of service users where we are short-staffed and can't provide person-centred care but we are expected to do so, smaller working numbers would allow this.”

“Meeting the expectations of the service users and parents/carers. The loss of life skills many of the service users may have experienced. It will be important to understand the levels of anxiety from both the service users and their families and how this will manifest itself.”

“Managing the volume of people in the building, ensuring that staff all know and understand the new ways of working. This will ease the transition

when the service resumes and help us to better support our service users' needs and expectations."

The final question of the survey presented staff with an opportunity for any additional comments they wished to share with Healthwatch.

Please note:

Responses listed are a summary of responses because some staff provided similar experiences.

Additional Comments - Hull

"Only the fact that our payments from Hull City Council are late and we have bills to pay and rent which our landlord is not happy when the rent is late."

"There should have been training for service users and their families in PPE, hand hygiene, and infection control. Day services should have remained open due to the isolating effect of anxiety, stress, and worry caused by the closure of services. Closing the day service meant that person-centred care was not a priority, this should never happen. Our clients have complex needs and their health and wellbeing including mental health needs and those of their families should have remained a focal point of the decision making."

"Front line staff have not been listened to at any point during this by those above day service level employment such as social workers and brokerage and above we have had the experience of what it's been like to give care in this pandemic and are being told how we should be doing it from here on out in a way that will not put the clients' needs or wants first."

"I don't think you can underestimate the need for day services, particularly with those families with learning disabilities. We are a safe environment, we have all the resources to look after our customers. They can go out or stay in it's their choice."

"Community sessions from home and not into base not really working for the customers we have. Transport is tied up with doing this and then centre-based customers missing out as no bus available."

"Staff doing extra hours as the company is short-staffed causing stress and pressure on staff."

Additional Comments - East Riding of Yorkshire

"Some people are struggling with the whole COVID issues and need extra support."

"I feel it is better for staff's mental health and the service users who have wanted support from staff have benefited. I feel that people, in general, don't like change as its fear of the unknown."

"ERYC has been very well organised throughout the pandemic brilliant communication and updates now hopefully seeing the end of the tunnel we will continue to support vulnerable adults' parents and carers to work towards their future aspirations with support wherever needed."

"I am impressed with the level of detail and guidance from ERYC who have thoroughly addressed all of the issues."

"Our Service Managers and safety services have been amazing."

"Safe systems of work has been in place to give us clear guidelines to work in a safe place. Lots of wellbeing info has been sent to us. Staff group has got closer to support/show concern with each other with health issues."

"Have enjoyed visiting and caring for service users in the community, not just the day service building."

"No I feel supported and well informed on how to keep myself, staff team, and service users safe throughout the pandemic. I have also been well supported with my wellbeing."

"I think the key to a smooth return to day services is through clear communication between everyone that is involved with delivering a service to people with learning disabilities and autism and their families."

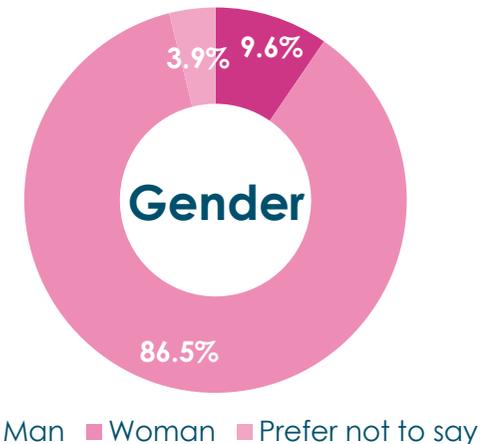
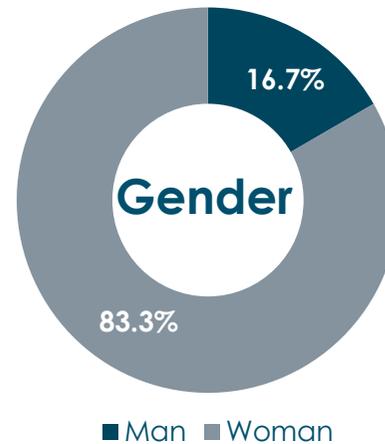
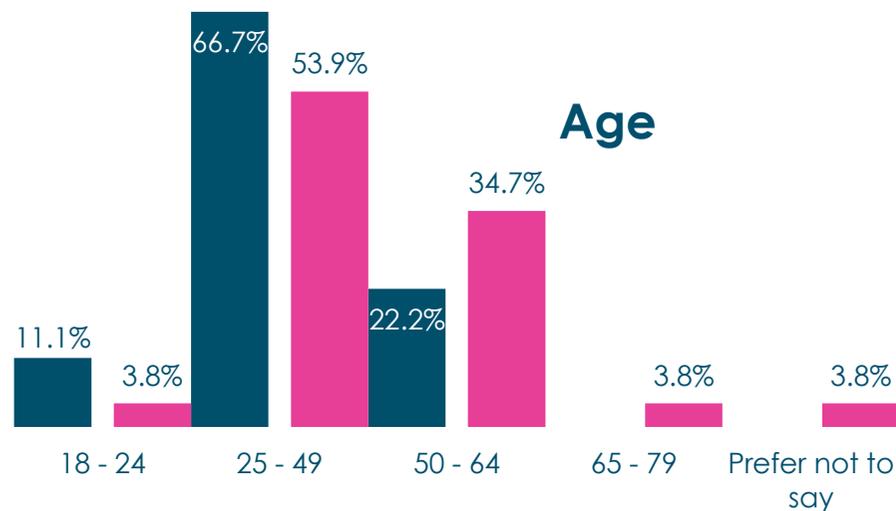
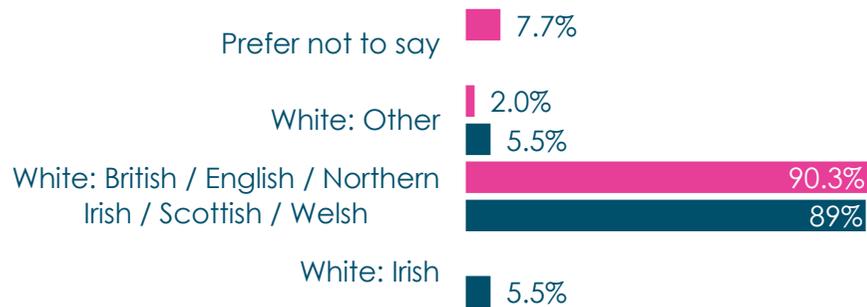
Staff Demographics

Collecting demographic data helps Healthwatch to understand how people's characteristics affect their experience of health and social care services; both at a local and national level.

Please note:

As providing demographic data is optional, some carers advised Healthwatch that they did not want to answer some or all questions relating their demographics.

Ethnic Background



6. Local Authority Updates

To understand the changes to service provision from the very start of the COVID-19 pandemic; Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY contacted their local authorities, respectively to learn:

- What were the specific date's services were closed from March 2020?
- What date did services re-open, to what capacity, and to what guidelines?
- What the current operating procedures are for day services?
- Whether there were any other ongoing issues?

Hull City Council

Day service provisions closed on the 25th March 2020 due to government direction on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the council reported they worked with all commissioned day centres to ensure building-based provisions were COVID-safe and sought to develop and scope alternatives to more traditional ways of working.

All providers were continually funded to ensure continuous contact was kept with all-day customers and to enable the risk and urgency of services to be assessed by both providers and social workers in partnership.

In addition, safe and alternative care and support was continued, which included telephone call and wellbeing checks, provision of shopping and other support needs, activity packs, online and virtual sessions, and alternatives to building-based sessions, such as the use of personal assistance to access outdoor facilities in line with restrictions.

Everyone who had been attending day centres before the changes were regularly reviewed by the day centre provider and the council Individual Temporary Support Plans every month. There was also a rapid escalation process to ensure urgent requests were fast-tracked and enable Adult Social Care (ASC) to continue to support potential crises and/or provide much-needed respite.

There was no specific date for the day service openings as this was staggered with some providers opening before others informed by Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and in line with the Safe Systems of Working (SSOW) due to the escalations of people that were in crisis. HCC highlight they engaged with commissioned providers to offer day centre services to those people rated as a high risk under the providers and social workers RAG (Red Amber Green) assessment for whom alternative provision was not appropriate.

Bubble rotas were in place support and infection control measures to keep people safe. Providers were encouraged and supported to also access additional funding, such as the Infection Control Fund, to support the purchase of equipment to maximise capacity and access to building-based day services safely.

Currently, all day service provisions are open, bubble rotas are still in place and all providers are operating six-hour day-care provision unless there are circumstances where there is a request, increase, or escalation for day service provision.

As COVID-restrictions were lifted, HCC have worked with providers to safely increase bubble size to be able to respond to needs and to ensure post-COVID provision models are viable and sustainable. Although the use of bubbles continue, this is to ensure continued compliance to health and safety expectations through pre-checks, access, enhanced cleaning, PPE, training, communication, testing, vaccination, and track and trace protocols.

HCC report that currently, there is no one with an assessed need for a day service who is not receiving appropriate service and following reassessment/review, the level of support is considered sufficient and meeting assessed need to support families and carers when taking into account assessment of need, suitability, and eligibility.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

The ERYC report that buildings were closed at the start of the first lockdown on the 23rd March 2020 and the day service offer continued throughout this time, although restricted due to government guidelines and restrictions.

Day services offered alternatives such as activity packs, welfare calls, zoom calls, digital connections, and where identified, a face-to-face/one-to-one which was escalated dependent on need through all ERY attendees receiving RAG ratings and support offered to those in greatest need.

Buildings began to be utilised again in November 2020 and this was initially on a one-to-one basis, increasing to larger bubble sizes as COVID regulations changed. The initial guidelines were shared with day service providers to incorporate health and safety requirements, public health guidance, and information provided by SCIE, to enable day services to provide comprehensive risk management plans and SSOW before opening.

Currently, day services are open with opening times and days the same as before the pandemic with bubbles in operation to ensure infection control. Day services will continue to expand their offer and continue to work with public health to ensure that services continue to function safely and increase in capacity.

ERYC has commissioned transport to ensure COVID safety and safe systems of work have necessitated fewer passengers and day service providers have accommodated where possible.

7. Emerging Themes

From the Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY engagement with attendees, carers and staff at day services; Healthwatch identifies four emerging themes and recommendations.

Emerging Theme One: Awareness of Support (Carers)

Healthwatch found 53.8% of carers in Hull and 58.3% of carers in the ERY who spoke to Healthwatch were aware of additional support available to them, and 46.2% of carers in Hull and 58.3% of carers in the ERY who spoke to Healthwatch had requested additional support during the pandemic.

Across Hull and the ERY, this demonstrates a need, which could have also been beneficial to 53.8% and 41.7% of carers across Hull and the ERY, respectively, who were not aware of such support being available.

“When the day service closed it affected both me and mum emotionally and had a negative impact on our health needs, we were given very little support from the council or social services. We had to rely completely on the support from the day service.”

Additionally, although 92.3% of carers in Hull and 100% of carers in the ERY who spoke to Healthwatch were informed of changes; the quality of information could have been improved and included some information around the support available specifically.

The Healthwatch recommendations (section 9) can assist the planning and implementation of ‘SMART’ targets for ‘Emerging Theme One – Awareness of Support (Carers)’.

Emerging Theme Two: Keeping Attendees and Carers Informed

From the Healthwatch engagements between June and August 2021, it can be identified that attendees and carers were more likely to receive updates by day service providers than local authorities.

When asked about the information received, 50% of carers in the ERY and 30.8% of carers in Hull who spoke to Healthwatch advised they received information from the ERYC and HCC, respectively and when Healthwatch asked about the method of contact, 45% of carers in the ERY who spoke to Healthwatch received information via letter compared to the 21% of carers in Hull.

Receiving written information consistently from local authorities with updates on local service provision and COVID-19 guidance may have brought some

assurance to carers who felt they were not kept up-to-date and attendees who were not sure of what and when changes would be taking place.

The experiences below stand out to Healthwatch due to the impact of service changes; some of which, may have been mitigated with consistent updates:

“We get by with help from the service. Upsetting that we weren't made aware help could be offered in the home until I asked in June 2021. Struggled in the home had to rely massively on family and friends. Really felt like we were just forgot about.”

“He (attendee) has become more anxious, obsessed with reassurance, self-harms more.”

The Healthwatch recommendations (section 9) can assist the planning and implementation of 'SMART' targets for 'Emerging Theme Two – Keeping Attendees and Carers Informed'.

Emerging Theme Three: Carer Wellbeing

Healthwatch found a trend between carers was in relation to their mental and emotional wellbeing. The survey responses from both attendees and carers, highlight there was feedback in regards to how restrictions and changes to service provision had affected carers.

When considering future service delivery, recognising that changes to service provision don't only impact the attendees but also those who care for attendees. Carers are their primary support mechanism, and therefore it's vital to consider their wellbeing from a personal perspective, but also to support vulnerable individuals (attendees) to ensure their needs are met, and changes to support are managed effectively.

The experiences below stand out to Healthwatch due to the impact of service changes; some of which, may have supported the carer's wellbeing more prominently:

“This (closing the centre) has caused us as a family mental and emotional turmoil! If the centre were to close again I do not know how we would cope!”

“Basically my daughter was at home with me all day, and got really down so obviously it got my mental health down with seeing her so upset and I wasn't getting a break from her.”

“It has caused us so much stress and anxiety and also a lot of financial worry as I could not work as I had to look after my son. Now the day service is open we are finally rebuilding our lives.”

“My son’s days have been cut as affected me dramatically emotionally and health-wise feeling drained and struggling to cope at times with him been home more stress and anxiety been a big part here.”

“I am worried every day that the source will close again. I was very anxious and sometimes my mum struggled with my behaviour when I couldn’t come to the centre.”

The Healthwatch recommendations (section 9) can assist the planning and implementation of ‘SMART’ targets for ‘Emerging Theme Three – Carer Wellbeing’.

Emerging Theme Four: Improvements to Service Delivery

Healthwatch identified 47.4% of staff who we engaged within Hull, said they felt attendees had not received the care and support they needed throughout the pandemic. In comparison, 42.4% in the ERY also stated they either did not or were unsure if they received the care and support they needed throughout the pandemic.

If day service staff feel those whom they support are either not or may not be receiving the support they individually need, it highlights:

- What day service areas could have been improved during the pandemic?
- What can be improved now in day services?
- What can be improved in day services in the future, if future lockdowns and restrictions may affect day service provisions?

The staff experiences below stand out to Healthwatch to support what areas could have been improved during the pandemic:

“When it came to community support it has become a stressful environment as families are wanting more than we can offer them and we are unable to meet the needs of the individual too.

Families were not happy that they had been told they would no longer be entitled to a five-day service or that they would have to be re-assessed for anything that they would get and many lost out on time and support because of it.

We did doorstep visits and dropped off activity packs for those who wanted it and did welfare calls to all service users weekly and found they were trying to continue but was often struggling and all asked when we would be opening again as if we would just be able to carry on as we had pre-pandemic and that wasn’t an option.”

Healthwatch also identified there was also a significant number of staff who responded positively to changes throughout the pandemic. These changes

included having more time to interact with attendees on a one-to-one or small group basis, having more contact with families, and different forms of contact (e.g. community-based support and welfare calls).

The staff experiences below stand out to Healthwatch to support what can be improved now and in the future if future lockdowns and restrictions may affect day service provisions:

“As I had have to work 1-1 supporting individuals in the community I can really see the benefits from this support, getting to know client's and achieve a person-centred approach was nice. This would be nice to continue for all clients who want maybe 3 hours per week in the community 1-1 and time at the day service to socialise, learn, try new things and play games with their friends, etc.”

“To continue working flexibly in both the day service setting and the community. This will help build a better rapport with individuals and their families.”

“Welfare calls have been good as we have been able to get closer and more informed of the extended family around our clients and all information helps us care better and do better for our clients.”

“On a personal level, I have done one-to-one support and felt that the service users have become more confident and enjoyed the one-to-one time, not just being a number in a very large group.”

“I really don't feel I would not like to go back to the mad rush we had before COVID trying to get groups out for activities. I found this very stressful and have made mistakes. Whereas on a one-to-one basis I feel more creative and much less stressed. Service users also didn't get the attention as there were too many in the groups.”

“Pre-COVID, I felt as a staff member we were always stretched beyond our means, didn't have enough time to plan and arrange activities, and weren't always able to work in a person-centred way due to staff restrictions, time scales, and the numbers of service users in the building.”

When considering how to make improvements to service delivery, staff have provided valuable feedback and acknowledged changes to processes to improve aspects of their role when working with attendees.

Furthermore, when planning for the development of provisions, staff identified having virtual training and meetings, working from home, and having more flexibility in terms of indoor and outdoor service delivery was also evident.

The staff experiences below stand out to Healthwatch to support what areas could be considered in the future for day service delivery:

“Online learning – personally, I have found it less stressful.”

“Online training to avoid lots of traveling.”

Flexible hours, supporting people in their home too, mixing the service as well as the day service, especially some users with dementia where the centre is too busy/noisy, more electronic recording centrally."

The Healthwatch recommendations (section 9) can assist the planning and implementation of 'SMART' targets for 'Emerging Theme Four – Improvements to Service Delivery'.

8. Conclusion

As we move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we look at the lessons learned from the impact that the closure of day services had. However, it is equally important to recognise where changes to provision have allowed attendees to receive new and different types of support, which they would not have received otherwise.

Although attendees, carers and day services will benefit from a return to full service provision; there may be added value from evaluating the changes that have taken place since March 2020 and learning from those who work directly with and care for attendees, to discover if and what changes had the most beneficial impact with a view to incorporate these into future service provision.

Due to the pandemic, day services and staff were required to rapidly change established ways of working and adapt to new processes which were significantly different from any time before. It should be recognised that both worked hard to meet the COVID-19 guidance and guidelines and successfully incorporated new methods of service delivery so attendees were able to receive as much support as was possible during that time.

Healthwatch found that day service staff highlighted some of these changes were beneficial, both for themselves and for attendees. Healthwatch heard that a focus on providing one-to-one or small group support improved staff's ability to provide care which was also beneficial to attendees as they were able to receive more individualised support. Day service staff also told Healthwatch that adaptations such as being able to complete administrative tasks and training online at home was beneficial to their lifestyle.

As we move towards 'Living with COVID' and as part of an evaluation process, engaging with staff to understand what worked well for them will assist in developing more resilience within day services and help to enhance the care and support that they provide.

Beyond this, it is also vital that we understand where restrictions and changes to service provision had negative impact. Healthwatch heard that for both attendees and carers, the removal of normal service provision caused significant issues; especially around mental and emotional wellbeing.

It is important to recognise however, that the local authority had a duty to protect those most vulnerable and to take into consideration the difficulties faced in ensuring they understood the associated risks with contracting COVID-19.

In light of this, the local authority had to make decisions based on individual's best interests to avoid unnecessary risk to their health as COVID-19 is six times more likely to cause individuals with a learning disability to die as a result.

Whilst restrictions are easing and increased provision should provide improvements to attendees and carer's wellbeing; when developing contingency plans in the case of new variants, the wellbeing needs of both should be considered and factored in; with adequate support to be made available and offered to those who need it.

From the information we collected, Healthwatch identified four 'Emerging Themes' which focused on the awareness of support available, keeping attendees and carers informed, carer wellbeing and improvements to service provision. These themes shape our recommendations detailed below; which are set out in a SMART format.

Healthwatch looks forward to working with HCC and the ERYC to assist in implementing the recommendations made below and support the return of local day service delivery across Hull and the ERY.

9. Recommendations

Healthwatch recommendations are 'SMART' to support implementation and through monitoring processes Healthwatch endeavours to support local impact which leads to clear outcomes overtime.

The Healthwatch recommendations for each local authority (HCC and ERYC) are:

- To review the current day service processes for informing carers of support available.
- To review the current day service processes for keeping attendees and carers informed of updates and changes to provisions.
- To review the availability and accessibility of health and wellbeing support in Hull and ERY, specifically for carers.
- To engage with day service staff and providers to determine where changes to service provision provided benefits, where it had negative impacts, and look to implement positive changes to the future service-delivery/provision.

Healthwatch will monitor the recommendations made in this report to utilise them effectively, we ask for each local authority to complete the following 'SMART' targets in collaboration with Healthwatch.

Emerging Theme One: Awareness of Support (Carers)

Specific	<p>What is the recommendation?</p> <p>To review the current day service processes for informing carers of support available.</p>
Measurable	<p>How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?</p> <p><u>Ways in which this recommendation could be met are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To research what processes day services use to communicate what local support provisions are for carers and how can they be accessed? ● To send a written survey to carers asking what information they would like to have/need now, in the future, and during restrictions/lockdowns (to help plan for potential future scenarios). ● To collaborate with the local authority to map local support provisions to communicate to carers across a range of new and existing ways.
Achievable	<p>Is the recommendation achievable?</p>
Relevant	<p>Is the recommendation relevant?</p>
Time-Bound	<p>When will the recommendation be achieved?</p>

How Healthwatch can help:

- Healthwatch has dedicated Read Right Volunteers who can review and critique documentation for carers before day services communicating messages. This is useful for organisations in Hull and the ERY to ensure messages are effective and meet the needs of their audience.

Emerging Theme Two: Keeping Attendees and Carers Informed

Specific	<p>What is the recommendation?</p> <p>To review the current day service processes for keeping attendees and carers informed to updates and changes of provisions.</p>
Measurable	<p>How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?</p> <p><u>Review:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How often and how are carers currently provided with updates and changes to provisions at day services? ● Are Easy-Read materials available to assist carers in explaining changes to attendees? <p><u>Please highlight ways in which this recommendation could be met:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●
Achievable	<p>Is the recommendation achievable?</p>
Relevant	<p>Is the recommendation relevant?</p>
Time-Bound	<p>When will the recommendation be achieved?</p>

How Healthwatch can help:

- Healthwatch has dedicated Read Right Volunteers who can review and critique documentation sent to attendees and carers before day services communicating messages.
- Healthwatch also has a network of organisations that develop Easy Read materials and Healthwatch would be able to signpost day services to organisations to support improve accessibility to written materials across Hull and the ERY.

Emerging Theme Three: Carers Wellbeing

Specific	<p>What is the recommendation?</p> <p>To review the availability and accessibility of health and wellbeing support in Hull and ERY, specifically for carers.</p>
Measurable	<p>How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?</p> <p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carer's engagement to understand what their needs are currently and additionally may be in the future. <p><u>Please highlight ways in which this recommendation could be met:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●
Achievable	<p>Is the recommendation achievable?</p>
Relevant	<p>Is the recommendation relevant?</p>
Time-Bound	<p>When will the recommendation be achieved?</p>

How Healthwatch can help:

- Healthwatch is an independent organisation and can engage with carer groups to learn further about their wellbeing needs and support local authorities by sharing any trends and themes.
- Healthwatch is available to signpost and support inquiries from the public to enable access to health and social care services, including support to mental health services.

Emerging Theme Four: Improvements to Service Delivery

Specific	<p>What is the recommendation?</p> <p>To engage with day service staff and providers to determine where changes to service provision provided benefits, where it had negative impacts, and look to implement positive changes to the future service-delivery/provision.</p>
Measurable	<p>How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?</p> <p><u>Review:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes to day service provision and their effectiveness. ● Attendee and carer thoughts and preferences. ● Day service scenario planning to forecast effectively. <p><u>Please highlight ways in which this recommendation could be met:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●
Achievable	<p>Is the recommendation achievable?</p>
Relevant	<p>Is the recommendation relevant?</p>
Time-Bound	<p>When will the recommendation be achieved?</p>

How Healthwatch can help:

- With support from each local authority, Healthwatch can engage with day services, their attendee, carer and staff groups to gather more information on thoughts, preferences, and effectiveness to plan the successful reintroduction of service provisions.

10. Next Steps

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY will present this report to local commissioners and providers of services to request feedback on the content and responses to recommendations made.

Both Healthwatch teams will endeavour to work with relevant partners to assist in recommendations being successfully implemented by monitoring actions stated underneath recommendations and supporting if requested.

Following this report being sent to relevant partners, under Healthwatch powers to produce reports and recommendations, they will have 20 working days from receipt to respond.

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY will monitor responses to this report and to our recommendations and keep members of the public and stakeholders informed of progress; actions taken and outcomes to improve services provided.

When published, this report along with responses will be available as a Portable Document Format (PDF) on our websites and will be sent to Healthwatch England. A physical version of this report can also be made available upon request.

This report has been submitted to and we have received responses from:

- Hull City Council.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

This report has also been circulated to wider partners for information and consideration in future activity and development, via the following platforms:

- Hull Health and Wellbeing Board.
- East Riding Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Health, Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust Learning Disability Services.

11. Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch ERY would like to thank:

- Matthews Hub for assisting and reviewing the survey and marketing material prior to publication.
- The 143 services, organisations and groups that supported Healthwatch by sharing information and materials.
- The day service providers for distributing our surveys to attendees, carers and staff.
- Those that took the time to engage with us through a variety of formats to ensure their and significant other voices and experiences were heard.
- The Carers Advisory Group for their continued support with this project.

12. Report Responses

Following our report being submitted to local commissioners and providers, we received responses from both the Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

Recommendation 1

To review the current day service processes for informing carers of support available.

Feedback for Recommendation – Hull City Council

Hull City Council (HCC) uses Connect to Support Hull (C2S), a local information and advice website, to provide information to people about available services and support. Whether people are directed to C2S by Adult Social Care (ASC) See and Solve or they navigate to it themselves, the site provides up-to-date information on available services, support and community activities that people, families and/or carers can access. The Council is constantly working to develop the information presented by C2S to maximise its usefulness to individuals and carers and this will continue. We will continue to engage with people who use services to inform the ongoing development of the website.

Where someone is assessed as having an eligible social care need, then the Social Worker, Commissioning Team and Brokerage Team will work together to identify appropriate options to meet the assessed needs and will then liaise with the individual and their family/carers to determine the most appropriate and preferred option. Over the last couple of years, the Commissioning Team has been working with providers to develop a greater range of person-centred service options including offering personal assistants, regulated provision, and community-based provision in addition to the traditional building-based models.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, the Council introduced several interim processes to ensure that people accessing commissioned day activities prior to the pandemic continued to receive some level of support during the pandemic. As the Covid restrictions meant it was difficult for people to access group, building based activities, priority for limited access to building based provision was given to people assessed as at high risk of carer breakdown, working families and key workers. Everyone else was able to receive remote support and/or community-based activities.

As Covid-restrictions have been lifted people have returned to their pre-Covid provision and HCC has re-commenced work towards establishing a framework for all commissioned day opportunity services. The framework will be established through a procurement exercise during 2022 and will set out the requirements and expectations for all commissioned day

opportunity services to ensure services are of a consistent quality and which will meet the assessed needs of people within the City. The intention through the framework is to ensure a range of services are available to meet people's needs in a person-centred way.

Consultation with current and potential providers and current people who use services will be key to the development of the framework

Feedback for Recommendation – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

We acknowledge Communication as being one of the key areas highlighted in the report.

We were pleased to hear that all respondents to the survey were communicated with via a telephone call. Letters were sent to all day service attendees addresses. It has been noted that where individuals live away from their parental address some families expected direct correspondence too. The local authority cannot commit to this and will continue to use the primary address of the individual using the service.

We will:

- work with carers support services to offer more information advice and guidance regarding day service provision.
- review business continuity planning to ensure that this covers any future scenarios regarding lockdown and lessons learned re service delivery from previous lockdowns.

Recommendation 2

To review the current day service processes for keeping attendees and carers informed to updates and changes of provisions.

Feedback for Recommendation – Hull City Council

All commissioned Day Opportunity Providers have a contractual responsibility to ensure ongoing communications to people, families and/or carers to share expectations for potential changes or future delivery impacts – as well as the importance of issues such as safety (PPE, access etc. depending on agreed changes).

During the height of the pandemic, providers were required to submit detailed Temporary Support Plans to the Council. Providers were also funded to deliver weekly health and wellbeing and support checks for every individual (either virtual, telephone or in person). This enabled us to ensure that everyone received appropriate support within the confines and limitations of the Covid restrictions and enabled us to identify people and

families who might be at risk of going into crisis during that period and provide appropriate additional support.

In the last two years we have introduced new processes that enable commissioning and brokerage officers to track existing provision, changes in capacity and any changes in provision. This allows to inform and work with individuals and families regarding any potential changes to the services they access.

The establishment of the new Day opportunities framework will allow us to strengthen the contracts in regard to information provided to individuals and families and make clear providers' responsibilities in informing, and getting the agreement of, the Council and people of any proposed changes to services. This will ensure that commissioning and social work teams are sighted on any potential changes and enable pro-active communications with people who use services and families/carers.

Feedback for Recommendation – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Communication was increased following the pandemic. We requested that weekly well-being telephone calls were made to individuals and their families, letters were sent out at periods of change. Conference calls were created for day service providers to share information and best practice regarding working safely, PPE, vaccinations etc.

Community wellbeing teams were briefed on the support available and how to provide additional support. Strategic leads also met with the Carers Advisory Group on request. However, we acknowledge that we can always do more to communicate with individuals and their families.

We will:

- Create a database of carer email so that information can be sent out in a timelier manner.
- Review current processes and make any adjustments required e.g. adding easy read guidance.

Recommendation 3

To review the availability and accessibility of health and wellbeing support in Hull and ERY, specifically for carers.

Feedback for Recommendation – Hull City Council

As described above, the Council will be establishing a new framework for all commissioned day opportunity services during 2022. In shaping future services, it is essential the views of providers and local people who have

experience of accessing care and support are considered to inform future models.

Engagement with service providers continues through group forums and one to one discussion. The Council has also been collating the views of service users through several mechanisms, such as attending events or liaising direct (1 to 1) with customers, families, carers, friends and advocates. Alongside this, approximately 200 customer consultations have been sent out with a return of 125 (62.5% return). 50 people were contacted over the telephone (1 to 1) to collate views on the services that they are currently receiving and any barriers they may face when attending a day opportunity service in Hull (i.e., what worked well - and what they wanted to receive from the service that would better meet their needs or what was missing). More vulnerable and complex customers were encouraged to have a friend, carer, or advocate to help complete the survey. Providers were also requested to capture individual and group views, using existing meetings, keyworker sessions or consultation events.

Market scoping and engagement has identified several opportunities to increase the variety of services available and enable them to better meet people's needs, including:

- More alternatives to 'day centre' models (where inappropriate or not assessed)
- Developing more person-centred day offers to support carers, such as Personal Assistants
- Developing innovative occupational opportunities to meet aspirations or outcomes.
- Develop access to day services to support carers across the weekend (7-day service).

These improvements will be secured through the new framework to be established in 2022/ 23.

As part of the Building Forward Together initiative, a review is underway between the Council, other commissioning bodies and the Voluntary and Community Sector of what services are offered in the city to support people and their carer's. It is hoped that this will develop greater capacity and choice of services to complement formally commissioned services.

Feedback for Recommendation – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

We will work with colleagues in health and with the carers support service to achieve this outcome.

Recommendation 4

To engage with day service staff and providers to determine where changes to service provision provided benefits, where it had negative impacts, and look to implement positive changes to the future service-delivery/provision.

Feedback for Recommendation – Hull City Council

As described above, there has already been significant levels of engagement with providers and people who use services to inform the future model development and this will continue. This consultation has identified a need to move beyond the traditional 5-day facility-based provision and develop a community offer as an alternative.

During the pandemic, the Council established regular ASC provider forums, and these will continue monthly. Each monthly forum will be chaired in rotation by our Commissioning Managers with the first part of the forum targeted to all commissioned providers and the second part focusing on a particular provider sector. The next Forum taking place on Thursday April 28 – will be targeted to commissioned day care providers. This ensures regular consultation and engagement with our commissioned service providers and providers will be encouraged to help shape future agendas and suggest topics for discussion and workshops.

As part of our ongoing engagement with our workforce we are seeking views and ideas to ensure we continually improve our services and have several bespoke events arranged for both directors, heads of service including commissioning to engage with staff.

Feedback for Recommendation – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

We also acknowledge service delivery as a key action from this report. When building-based day services resumed, individuals have had the opportunity to consider what they wanted. Some people have chosen not to return to services and continue to use personal budgets as a way of meeting identified needs. Some people have chosen to return to services and have enjoyed smaller group settings. Some people wish to return to how services were delivered pre-pandemic. Views of individuals are captured in a variety of ways, within services, within their own reviews or via their advocates.

To progress the learning from the changes to day services during the pandemic the local authority has made some key changes. We have created a daily surgery for social workers or day service managers to attend to discuss service delivery or to obtain advice and support in service delivery. We have also employed two new key staff to support the development of day service provision in the future. A co-production lead will work with individuals, their families and with providers to look at provision

and co-produce future change. We have also employed a project officer to specifically manage day service data. Their role will also be to ensure that a coordinated response to communication with all is provided in an accessible format.

We are proud of our workforce and their endeavours to provide person centred support to individuals during the pandemic. We are proud of their effort to work creatively and differently. Staff went above and beyond to support individuals wherever they could. The day service workforce in the East Riding supported many people to stay safe and well during lockdowns and we are extremely proud of their efforts.

We will:

- Gather information from peoples reviews as to potential service delivery
- Ensure that the annual survey that is sent to individuals who attend services, families and staff captures specific questions regarding day service delivery that is fit for the future needs of attendees
- Review day service provision in the East Riding to ensure that provision meets future identified needs adequately



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