

Stakeholder Feedback Wellington House - Your Voice

Questions

Total 56 responses

Page 1: About you

56/56 responses

1. Which of the following best describes your relationship to the service? (Select all that apply)

56/56 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Member of staff based at Wellington House (SCDS) 58.9% (33 choices)

Member of staff at Wellington House Day Options Service 17.9% (10 choices)

External care provider / voluntary or community organisation 8.9% (5 choices)

Health partner 3.6% (2 choices)

Advocate 0% (0 choices)

Other (please specify) 14.3% (8 choices)

2. Are you responding as:

56/56 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

An individual 85.7% (48 choices)

On behalf of an organisation (please name) 14.3% (8 choices)

Other responses (8)

Page 3: Views on the proposal:

56/56 responses

3. Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?

56/56 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Strongly oppose the proposal 53.6% (30 choices)

Tend to oppose the proposal 26.8% (15 choices)

Neither support nor oppose the proposal 14.3% (8 choices)

Strongly support the proposal 3.6% (2 choices)

Tend to support the proposal 1.8% (1 choice)

4. Please explain the reasons for your answer:

56/56 - Short answer - required

Most respondents expressed strong concerns about the proposed closure of Wellington House Day Centre, emphasising its vital role for people with learning disabilities (LD) and the wider community

A recurring theme was the lack of alternative provision and limited capacity elsewhere, with several highlighting that other providers cannot meet current needs

Respondents also noted the importance of the centre as a safety net for those who do not fit with private providers

Many stressed the negative impact on service users, particularly those with complex needs who may struggle with transitions and require a calm, familiar environment

The integrated nature of the service, with day centre and SCDS office together, was seen as beneficial for cohesive, multidisciplinary support

Concerns were also raised about the potential loss of employment and the broader impact on the whole building and integrated team

Some respondents questioned whether closure would deliver the intended savings for the council

Overall, the dominant view was that Wellington House provides essential, accessible support that cannot easily be replaced, and closure would have significant negative consequences for service users, staff, and the community.

5. What do you see as the potential benefits of re-providing support through external provider services?

Most respondents expressed significant concerns about re-providing support through external provider services, with many stating there are no benefits or that the change would be detrimental, especially due to a lack of suitable provision in the city for those with complex needs.

Several highlighted the importance of consistency and established relationships for service users, warning that disruption could lead to increased challenging behaviour and poorer mental health.

A few respondents acknowledged potential benefits, such as the possibility of more choice, new opportunities, or a refresh of services, but these were often caveated with concerns about losing current service quality or continuity.

Some noted that benefits might only arise if a skilled alternative provider could replicate or improve on current provision.

There were also comments about the lack of evidence that external providers would offer better or more cost-effective services, and that council resources should be optimised rather than outsourced.

One response mentioned the potential for the council to sell the building but flagged the risk of service users being left without appropriate day care.

Overall, the dominant trend is scepticism and concern about the adequacy and suitability of external providers, with only limited and conditional support for potential benefits.

6. What do you see as the potential risks or disadvantages of re-providing support through external provider services?

Respondents most frequently raised concerns about the loss of specialist knowledge and experienced staff, with several highlighting that Wellington House staff have many years of experience and that external providers often have high staff turnover

There is a strong emphasis on the risk that external provision will not meet the complex and individual needs of service users, leading to distress, trauma, and disruption for both users and their families/carers

Many respondents are concerned about the lack of suitable alternative provision, with some warning that this could result in more people entering full-time care or costly specialist accommodation, and increased risk of family breakdown

There is also concern about the loss of Wellington House as a valuable resource and safety net, especially as other in-house services have already closed

Additional risks suggested included negative impacts on users' mental health, and the likelihood that some users will refuse to engage with new providers

Overall, the main themes are the risk of unmet needs, loss of expertise, disruption to vulnerable individuals, and insufficient alternative provision.

7. What risks or opportunities do you see in relation to market readiness and sustainability?

The most common concern raised by respondents is the lack of capacity among existing providers to accommodate additional service users, especially those with complex needs

Several respondents question whether the 21 spaces referenced in the consultation exist and highlight that most providers are already at or near capacity, without plans to expand. There is also concern that the needs of those leaving college and requiring day services each year have not been accounted for. Another recurring theme is the risk that the anticipated financial

savings from changing provision may not materialise, especially when considering the potential increased costs of care, support, and bespoke packages

Some respondents also raise ethical concerns about treating learning disability provision as a market and warn of the risk of corporate providers exploiting staff and delivering substandard services

There are worries about the suitability of alternative services, particularly for those coming from Shared Lives placements and the stress and challenging behaviour that could result from service users having to adapt to new environments and staff

A few respondents note potential opportunities, such as greater choice for service users and the possibility of more responsive services, but these are generally seen as theoretical or outweighed by the risks

Overall, the dominant trend is scepticism about market readiness and sustainability, with significant doubts about capacity, cost-effectiveness, and the impact on service users.

Page 7: Impact and quality of support

56/56 responses

8. What impact do you think this proposal could have on people who currently use the service? (Select all that apply)

56/56 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Reduced quality of support 75% (42 choices)

Reduced choice and flexibility 58.9% (33 choices)

Reduced community inclusion 55.4% (31 choices)

Improved community inclusion 7.1% (4 choices)

Improved choice and flexibility 5.4% (3 choices)

Improved quality of support 3.6% (2 choices)

No significant change 3.6% (2 choices)

Other (please specify) 32.1% (18 choices)

Respondents most often expect negative impacts on current users, especially reduced community inclusion, reduced choice and flexibility, and reduced quality of support. Many describe Wellington House as a familiar, safe and structured environment, and think losing it would be very distressing. A strong recurring theme is emotional harm: anxiety, grief, rejection, confusion, loss and difficulty coping with change were mentioned repeatedly

Several responses say disruption to long-established routines and relationships could lead to serious distress, dysregulation and lasting trauma

Another major concern is the loss of trusted staff, personalised support and a specialist base. Respondents worry that alternative or private provision would be more stretched, less tailored, and less able to meet complex needs, with people becoming “just another number”

Some also raised concerns about poorer joined-up working if health staff are no longer based with council staff

Loss of friendships, peer groups and social contact was also mentioned often. Respondents fear people would become more isolated, lose bonds built over years, and see worse health outcomes as a result

Several responses also highlight knock-on effects for carers and families, including increased caring responsibilities, stress, and possible breakdown in support at home

A smaller number said they could not judge the impact without more detail about the replacement provision, though even these responses noted that service users are likely to prefer stability and may not respond well initially to change

9. What would good support look like under the proposed new arrangements?

Many respondents emphasised the importance of continuity and consistency in support, particularly maintaining existing communities and relationships among service users

Several highlighted concerns about disruption and the negative impact of breaking up established groups. A recurring theme was the need for experienced, well-trained, and consistent staff, with some suggesting that support staff known to service users should remain with them

Respondents also stressed the importance of person-centred, tailored support, including flexibility in hours and activities, and a focus on individual needs

Concerns were raised about the lack of clarity and transparency in the proposals, particularly regarding provider capacity and the future of Wellington House

Some felt the options did not adequately address the needs of those with complex requirements

There was support for maintaining or increasing building-based day services, with suggestions for expanding capacity and offering additional drop-in or short break options

Community access and strong links to local services and families were also seen as important

Overall, respondents prioritised continuity, experienced staff, tailored support, and minimal disruption, while expressing concerns about capacity, transparency, and the adequacy of the proposed arrangements for those with higher needs.

10. What should the council consider in promoting equality and inclusion?

37/56 - Short answer - optional

Respondents most frequently emphasised the importance of understanding and meeting the individual needs of service users, particularly those with learning disabilities (LD), autism spectrum conditions (ASC), and other complex needs

There was a strong call for the council to ensure that both service users and staff are actively included in decision-making processes, with an emphasis on listening to those who know the users well and not overlooking staff perspectives

Several responses highlighted the need for good accessibility, skilled communication, and cultural sensitivity, with attention to both individual and group needs

The importance of continuity of care and support, to avoid loss of knowledge about individuals, was also mentioned

Some respondents suggested making better use of the available space to bring the community together and to provide for a wider range of groups, including young people aged 16–25 and other community groups during evenings and holidays

Equity, health inequalities, and the need to reflect the voices of those affected were also noted as important considerations

11. Is there anything else you would like the council to consider before a decision is made?

Respondents most frequently emphasised the importance of considering the wishes and needs of current service users and their carers, as well as the potential negative impact on these individuals if the centre were to close or change significantly

Several responses highlighted the value of the relationships and specialist knowledge built up by staff over many years, warning that these should not be sacrificed for perceived financial savings

Concerns were also raised about the risks to families, carers, and staff, and the need to assess whether external providers have sufficient capacity to meet needs if changes are made

The potential for increased costs in the future, should individuals need to be placed in more expensive services due to the loss of Wellington House, was mentioned

Some respondents suggested creative thinking to maximise the use and efficiency of the space, including reorganising services to offer more capacity

There was also a call for a safety net for service users who may not thrive with private providers and a suggestion to improve the consultation process itself

12. Do you have any other alternative suggestions to this proposal that the council could deliver?

Most respondents strongly oppose the closure of Wellington House Day Options, with repeated suggestions to keep the service open and seek savings elsewhere within the council rather than targeting services for vulnerable people

Several recommend reorganising or reducing the service instead of shutting it down entirely

There is a call for increased marketing to boost attendance and revenue, aiming to restore the service to pre-pandemic levels

Some responses highlight the need for genuine consultation and for the council to listen to experienced staff and stakeholders, rather than conducting what is perceived as a token exercise

A few respondents mention that alternative office spaces may not meet the needs of the SCDS team

Overall, the main trend is a strong preference for maintaining the service and finding alternative cost-saving measures that do not impact the most vulnerable.

