

Summary Parent Carer Survey Wellington House Feedback- Your Voice

Summary Parent Carer Survey Feedback: 23

1. What is your relationship to the person who uses day services?

23/23 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Parent/carer 56.5% (13 choices)

Shared Lives Carer 17.4% (4 choices)

Other family carer 13% (3 choices)

Other (please specify) 13% (3 choices)

Please provide details about the person you care for (tick all that apply)

23/23 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

Learning disability 100% (23 choices)

Autism 78.3% (18 choices)

Mental health needs 43.5% (10 choices)

Complex health needs 39.1% (9 choices)

Physical disability 8.7% (2 choices)

Other (please specify and add more information where appropriate) 21.7% (5 choices)

3. What works well about the current day service provision?

-The strongest theme is the quality and consistency of staff. Respondents repeatedly said staff are highly trained, experienced, compassionate, and know service users very well, often over many years

. Families particularly value staff's understanding of autism, complex behaviour, and early signs of distress, and their ability to provide safe de-escalation and tailored support

Safety, routine and familiarity were also mentioned very often. People described Wellington House as a safe, predictable environment with structure, regular people, and established routines, which helps reduce anxiety and supports mental wellbeing

. Several highlighted the importance of individual rooms or quiet spaces where people can regulate, take time out, or avoid becoming overwhelmed

. Another common point was that the smaller-scale setting suits people who struggle in larger, noisier groups. Respondents said it allows for 1:1, 2:1, small group support, and flexibility for those with more complex needs or who cannot always access the community

. One response described the service as a last resort for people whose needs are not met elsewhere

. Social connection was another clear benefit. Families said the service helps build friendships, offers a genuine peer group, and gives service users a social life in a place where they feel accepted and listened to

. Activities and community access were viewed positively, including creative programmes, arts, gardening, allotment work, outdoor space and supported trips out

. Transport was also valued where mentioned

. A final recurring point was the benefit to families and carers: the service provides reassurance, respite, and confidence that loved ones are safe, supported and happy

4. Do you experience any challenges or difficulties with the current service?

21/23 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No 82.6% (19 choices)

Yes 8.7% (2 choices)

No answer

8.7% (2 choices)

5. If yes, please describe below:

3/23 - Short answer - optional

All responses (3)

The hours of care 10:30 - 3pm with no transport provided make it hard for me to return to work.

This service is well run and provides exemplary support and care for both Service users and those who care for them

Sometimes transport is very late arriving, and my son gets very agitated

6. Please tell us about the impact this day service has on your role as a carer?

-Respondents most often described Wellington House as essential respite for carers, giving them a few hours to rest, attend appointments, run errands, see family and friends, and in some cases work or consider returning to work

. Several said this break helps prevent exhaustion or burnout and makes caring at home manageable. A strong theme was reassurance: families trust that their relative is safe, well looked after, happy, and in a calm environment while attending

. This peace of mind was especially important where carers also support other relatives or have additional caring responsibilities

. Many also valued the benefits for the person attending: maintaining routine, staying calm, enjoying activities, mixing with peers, accessing the community, building independence, and improving wellbeing

. Respondents felt the service supports both mental health and stability at home. There was repeated concern about the impact if the service closed. People feared distress, loss of routine, increased pressure on carers, breakdown in home life, and worse outcomes for those with high or complex needs

Page 6: Views on the proposed change

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

23/23 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Strongly oppose the proposal 95.7% (22 choices)

Tend to oppose the proposal 4.3% (1 choice)

Strongly support the proposal

0% (0 choices) Tend to support the proposal

0% (0 choices) Neither support **nor oppose the proposal**

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

Most respondents saw no benefits in re-providing support through external providers. This was by far the dominant view, with several giving very direct answers such as “none” or “I don’t”

. The main concern was that external providers would not be able to meet complex needs as well as Wellington House. Respondents stressed the importance of

experienced staff who know individuals well, 1:1 support, calm and quiet environments, structured person-centred programmes, and safe spaces for people to withdraw when needed

- . One response argued that Wellington House is one of the last places for people who do not fit the “commercial model” of existing services

- . There was also doubt about whether enough suitable external provision exists at all. Respondents said current options are very limited and already stretched, and some questioned whether the expected financial savings would actually happen

- . A small number saw possible benefits only if there were major improvements: better surroundings, experienced staff, good resources, and opportunities for younger people, more activities, outings, drop-in support, and evening use of the building

- . Even these comments tended to focus on developing Wellington House rather than replacing it with external provision.

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

The main concern was that external providers would not be able to meet people’s complex needs as well as Wellington House, particularly for autistic people and those needing highly individualised or 2:1 support

- . Respondents repeatedly said Wellington House staff know people extremely well, can recognise early signs of distress, de-escalate effectively, and understand personal routines, communication and care needs. There was strong worry that this knowledge would be lost with new providers, alongside concerns about staff experience, training and retention

- . A very common theme was the harmful impact of change. Families said unfamiliar staff, buildings, routines, activities and transport could cause significant anxiety, stress and distress, and that for some people this is not something that can simply be managed

- . Several feared increased challenging behaviours, deterioration in wellbeing, and even breakdown of home placements if support does not work

- . Many also doubted whether alternative settings are suitable. Concerns included overcrowding, noisy or fast-paced environments, insufficient space for individual support, and loss of specialist facilities such as sensory rooms, gardens, kitchens and allotments

- . Some said private sector options are too financially driven and not designed around this group’s needs. Another repeated issue was the loss of relationships and

continuity: familiar staff, peers, friendships and transport were seen as important parts of support, and respondents worried these would be broken up

. A few specifically highlighted that no other provider offers Autism Accreditation, making respondents question whether equivalent specialist provision exists at all

Page 9: Carer concerns and risks:

10. What concerns would you have if the day service closed? (tick all those that concern you)

23/23 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Loss of routine or familiar environment 95.7% (22 choices)

Anxiety or distress for the person I care for 91.3% (21 choices)

Suitability of external providers 87% (20 choices)

Staff skills and understanding of complex needs 78.3% (18 choices)

Impact on friendships 69.6% (16 choices)

Travel or transport difficulties 43.5% (10 choices)

Impact on my ability to work or manage other responsibilities 43.5% (10 choices)

Loss of respite for carers 39.1% (9 choices)

Concerns about costs 34.8% (8 choices)

Other (please specify) 13% (3 choices)

11. Are there specific risks around the proposal that you are you are worried about in relation to the person you care for?

The main concern raised repeatedly is that changes to Wellington House would be very distressing for people who struggle with any disruption to routine. Respondents often said this could lead to heightened anxiety, poor sleep, self-harm, aggression or other challenging behaviour

. A common theme is that Wellington House provides stability, familiar staff, friendships and a trusted routine, and that losing these could seriously affect mental health, wellbeing and behaviour. Several respondents felt the people they care for would struggle to cope in a new setting, especially if it is noisier, busier or less suited to their needs

- . Respondents also worried that specialist knowledge and experienced staff would be lost, and that replacement provision may not have enough staff, space or understanding to manage distress safely. Some said this could unfairly set people up to fail and would also have a negative impact on family life at home
- . Other concerns mentioned were the loss of long-standing friendships, increased vulnerability in unfamiliar transport arrangements such as taxis, and communication difficulties making anxiety worse
- . One response also warned that if the change caused a care placement to break down, any expected savings could be outweighed by the cost of alternative support

12. Are there specific impacts around the proposal that you are worried about for you as a carer?

The main concern was the effect on the person cared for becoming distressed, anxious or unsettled if Wellington House closes or changes. Several carers said they would then have to manage more challenging behaviour at home, including aggression, hitting or biting and that this could undo years of progress and stability

. A strong theme was the knock-on impact on carers' own wellbeing. Respondents described the situation as mentally exhausting and distressing, with worries about coping day to day, their own health, sleep, and their ability to continue caring at home long term

. One single parent said a reliable day service is essential to manage both caring and everyday responsibilities

. Some were also worried about wider effects on the whole family and other people they care for, as well as the risk of the person becoming isolated at home if an alternative placement fails

. A few highlighted practical concerns such as possible loss of transport

. There was also a clear lack of confidence that other providers could match the specialist support, understanding and consistency currently provided by Wellington House. One respondent felt families were not being listened to and that people with autism and learning disabilities were being treated as "numbers" rather than individuals

. A small number gave no concerns or no meaningful answer.

Page 12: What would need to be in place:

13. If changes went ahead, what would be most important to you? (Please tick all that apply)

22/23 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

Continuity of staff 91.3% (21 choices)

Involvement of carers in planning 82.6% (19 choices)

Choice of provider 78.3% (18 choices)

A gradual, well-planned transition 73.9% (17 choices)

Small group or specialist provision 69.6% (16 choices)

Advocacy support 65.2% (15 choices)

Continued friendship groups 56.5% (13 choices)

Continued access to transport support 43.5% (10 choices)

No answer 4.3% (1 choice)

Other (please specify) 26.1% (6 choices)

14. What would make you feel more confident about external provision?

The strongest theme was lack of confidence in external provision, with several respondents saying plainly that nothing would reassure them, or that they would only feel confident if Wellington House stayed open

. Linked to this was distrust in the process, including a view that decisions may already have been made and that previous promises have been broken

. Where respondents did suggest what would help, the most common point was continuity: keeping familiar staff, keeping friendship groups together, and ideally moving current staff and peers with the person into any new arrangement

. Respondents also stressed the need for experienced, skilled staff who understand people's complex needs, rather than inexperienced staff learning on the job

. Other points mentioned were wanting a genuine choice of provider, opportunities to meet any new provider in advance, reassurance that support would continue if problems arise, and having a suitable local building if the site changes

. Overall, respondents were mainly concerned about disruption, loss of trusted relationships, and whether external services could safely meet complex needs.

Page 14: Support during change:

22/23 responses

15. What support would you need during any transition? (Please tick all that apply)

22/23 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

Regular updates

91.3% (21 choices)

Face-to-face visits/meetings

73.9% (17 choices)

Carer support or advice

73.9% (17 choices)

Written information in accessible formats

65.2% (15 choices)

Advocacy

56.5% (13 choices)

No answer

4.3% (1 choice)

None

0% (0 choices)

Other (please specify)

17.4% (4 choices)

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23/23 responses

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

23/23 - Short answer – optional

Respondents most often asked the council to prioritise the wellbeing, safety and individual needs of current service users over cost-saving, stressing that these are vulnerable people “not numbers” who often cannot speak for themselves

. Many emphasised duty of care, and the importance of preserving the safety, support, routine and familiarity people currently get at Wellington House

. A strong theme was concern about the impact of change on people with complex needs, especially those who take a long time to settle or rely heavily on structure and trusted relationships

. Families worried that closure or transfers would cause distress, anxiety and instability for both service users and carers. Several responses questioned whether suitable alternative placements really exist. Concerns included limited capacity among other providers, lack of expertise to support complex needs, uncertainty about long-term provision, and what happens if placements break down

. People wanted reassurance about a proper safety net rather than being left with no realistic service option. There were also calls for clearer information and transparency about why the change is happening and what options are genuinely available

. One detailed response argued families have not been given enough time or information to assess alternatives properly before consultation ends

. A smaller number suggested keeping Wellington House open in some form, for example by transferring the building to a new provider and retaining staff under new management

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

Most respondents wanted Wellington House to stay open, arguing that closing or changing it would cause unnecessary stress and harm for disabled people and families, for only a small financial saving

. A very common theme was that Wellington House is underused rather than unviable. Several respondents said the council should promote it better, improve referrals, and advertise it more widely to schools, colleges and families so more people know it exists and can access it

. Some also questioned whether people have been turned away or not referred despite spare capacity. Many suggested making fuller use of the building to reduce costs: renting space to other providers, leasing the building or parts of it, and hiring it out for evening/weekend activities, clubs, classes, events or social use

. Related to this, some proposed bringing in an outside provider to run the service while keeping the building and existing experienced staff

. There were also suggestions for a more flexible model rather than closure, such as shared use with other providers, dual placements, rotating activities across services, and using community venues for some sessions while keeping Wellington House for higher-support activities

. A smaller but notable point was that respondents want clearer, more detailed cost information, including whether current attendance levels, unused capacity and individual staffing arrangements have been properly assessed before decisions are made

Page 16: Final thoughts:

21/23 responses

18. Is there anything else you would like decision-makers to understand about how this proposal could affect you or the person you care for?

Respondents overwhelmingly describe the proposal as highly distressing and potentially devastating for people who use Wellington House and for their families and carers. The strongest recurring theme is that service users have complex, severe needs which respondents do not believe other services could safely or appropriately meet

. Many say Wellington House is not just a day service but a vital, stable part of people's lives: a safe environment, a main reason to leave the house, a place for friendship, routine, social contact and being understood

. A repeated concern is that removing this routine would increase anxiety, worsen health and behaviour, and "turn lives upside down"

. Carers also frequently stress the knock-on impact on themselves: more stress, poorer mental health, major disruption at home, and the burden of trying to manage increased anxiety and change

. Several frame this as a matter of dignity, rights and how society treats its most vulnerable members

. Another recurring issue is doubt about the practicality of the proposal, especially whether all current users could actually be placed successfully elsewhere

. Overall, respondents want decision-makers to recognise that these are individuals with complex needs, not numbers on a spreadsheet, and that keeping Wellington House open is seen as essential to their safety, wellbeing and quality of life