

# Towards a new model of day opportunities

Consultation brochure  
North Dorset 2025



**A new way of delivering day opportunities in Dorset**





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## Why we want to consult with you?

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In 2021, and again in 2023, we asked people who use day services about their experiences.

You told us you would like a wider choice of local activities with more flexible options. You also told us that you wanted to be able to do activities during the evening and weekends.

The two rounds of engagement have helped us gain a real understanding of what people want from day opportunities and how they operate. As a result, we must change the way we deliver our day opportunities to give people wider choice of local activities with more flexible options.

We propose to introduce hubs across the county, where people can go to access information, make connections to everything that is going on in their local area and take part in some activities.

We will connect these hubs to a range of community activities (spokes) including specialist projects and services through to local libraries, community centres, cafes, pubs, and community groups,

The community activities (spokes) will focus on providing the type of activities you have told us you want, with more availability during evenings and weekend

You told us you wanted to feel safe, be supported by people you know and that carers need to be supported to take a break during the day, as well as have access to information, advice, and guidance. We think our hubs and spokes will be able to do this.

We plan to ensure there are specialist services available for those with the most complex needs. We want to be able to invest and modernise them.

Now that we have a proposed new way to deliver day opportunities, we want to consult with you on how it affects services across Dorset and how we will put it into practice. This is your opportunity to help us to shape the delivery of the service.

This brochure explains to you what a hub and spoke model is, how we will increase the range of community-based day opportunities and how we will better use the day service buildings that we currently have.

We have reviewed the use of our buildings and are proposing some changes. Our reasons for this are set out below and this is your opportunity to tell us what you think.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that everyone is well-supported through these changes and will be working with people who provide day services in the county, to ensure that this can happen.

We know that this may cause some anxiety, however, you will be fully supported when considering our new offer and making choices about your future day opportunities.





## What we are proposing

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### All about the model

Currently around 600 people attend a day opportunity paid for by the Council.

Over half of the people that attend day opportunities have their service delivered by Care Dorset in Council-owned buildings.

These buildings are large, and in need of updating. Activities are provided mostly within the buildings, with some options for trips out or connections to the local town.

Rather than thinking about day 'services', we want to think more about day 'opportunities'. We mean a wider range of activities, in different places, better connected and easy to plan and access, for those with support needs.

Under our plans, the day opportunities available in each community will better reflect the needs of local people. Opportunities may be delivered by local individuals, groups, organisations or public agencies.

Organisations, groups, and individuals delivering opportunities will be supported to feel confident in delivering services to Dorset residents who have additional needs, so that people can have access to everything our towns and communities can offer.

The proposed plan is to deliver day opportunities that encourage local organisations to work together and use all the venues, people, and groups within a community, as an alternative to the current focus on day services all delivered in one building.

Dorset is a big place; to make it easier to connect people and services we break it down into five localities. We want there to be at least one main hub per locality. Each hub will be the focus for connecting community activities (spokes) and specialist service provision in that area, all to better meet the needs of local people.

### What a hub could look like

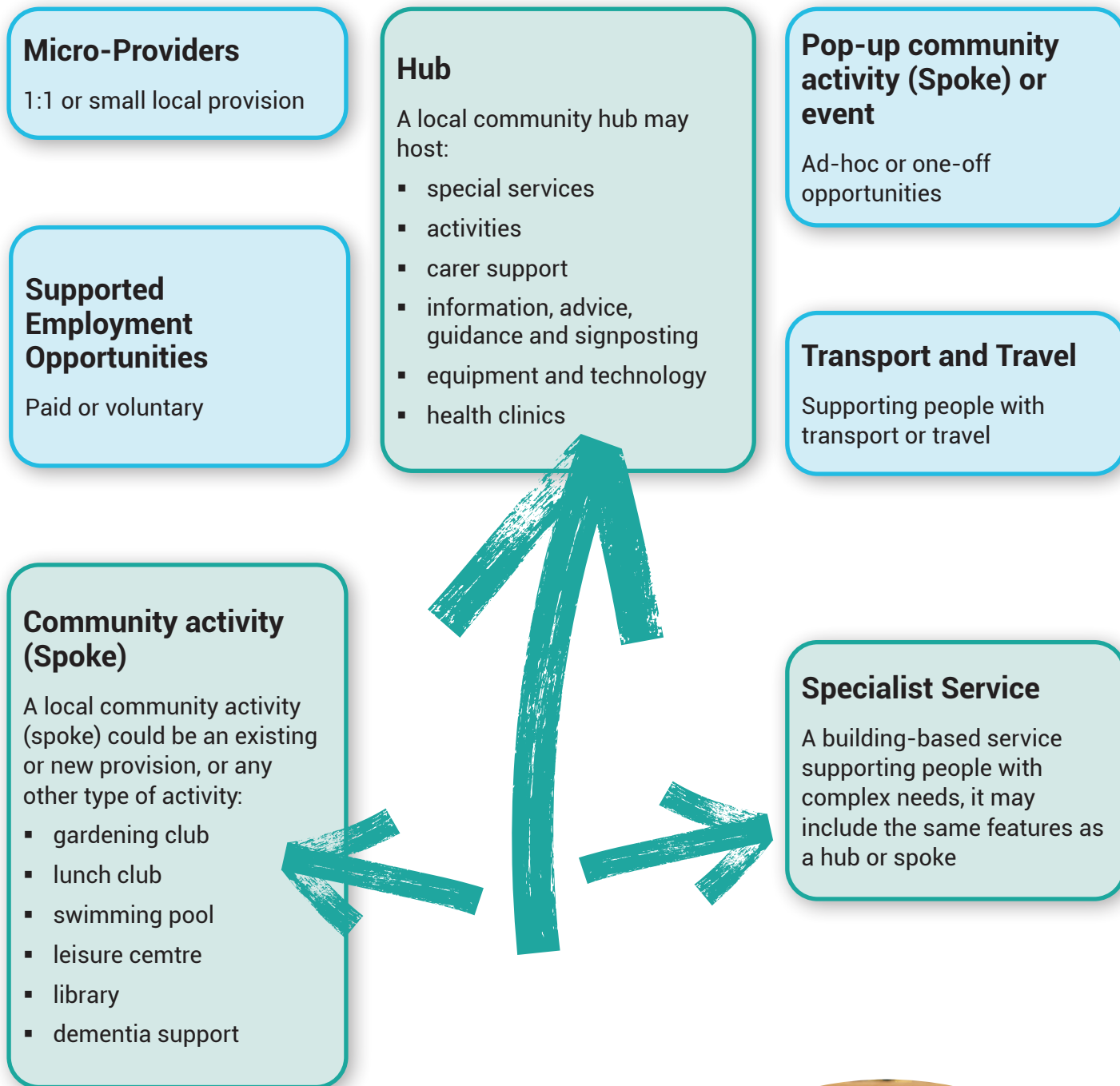
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A hub is a place where activities may take place but, more importantly, people's access to day opportunities is supported. You can access information, advice and guidance and explore or take home the sorts of equipment that is available to help people live independently at home.

It is a place where connections are made, new opportunities identified, and further activities planned. It will make use of local venues, provide a base for opportunities, activities and reduce the need for unnecessary travel.

A hub will be larger than the spokes and will act as a central point, connecting community activities (spokes) and some specialist services. It will also be a place where rooms and spaces are available to other community organisations to run their projects and activities. A hub could arrange and provide training for the community activities (spokes) so that they can better support people in Dorset. It will also offer wellbeing support, information, advice and guidance, signposting, connecting people with local spokes, specialist services and activities.

# Hubs, community activities(spokes) and specialist services





## A hub could be:

- based in a local venue or community space
- a place where people can meet, connections are made
- a place to access services and organisations in one place
- a place where activities are on offer
- a meeting point for activities or outreach – such as when a group wants to meet to go out on a trip
- a central point for local information, advice, guidance
- somewhere that can signpost to local community activities (spokes), specialist services and other organisations
- a place to access supportive equipment and technology
- could be a provider of, or broker for Individual Service Funds (ISFs)  
\*see document enclosed for more information
- a location for health practitioners such as chiropractors, opticians, medical professionals to provide pop-up clinics or sessions as required
- a location for services to come and support you with drop ins, for example housing or any other organisations that could help

## A hub will be available in each of the 5 Dorset localities:

- North Dorset
- East Dorset
- Purbeck
- West Dorset
- Weymouth and Portland



## What a community activity (spoke) could look like

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Community activities (spokes) are smaller than hubs.

Community activities (spokes) can be places where you attend a group to do an activity, and they can also be run by an individual.

Each local community may have many community activities (spokes), all offering different things to support a range of requirements for the people who live there.

You may have access to a community activity (spoke) as part of a package of care provided by the Council, but equally they will often be open to everyone to arrange their own attendance – depending on the type of activity or project.

### A community activity (spoke) could be a meeting place for dedicated activities:

- a place, group or person that delivers regular activities
- a place, group or person that delivers occasional activities
- a place, group or person that offers outreach support
- a meeting place for dedicated activities
- a local service to meet the needs of local people

The sorts of things that community activity (spokes) could provide is almost endless; opportunities may include:

- carers groups
- health and wellbeing activities
- employment support
- library services
- Information, advice, and guidance
- benefits and housing support
- lunch clubs
- arts and crafts

The development of local community activities (spokes) could help reduce the time you have to travel to attend a day opportunity. The number of community activities (spokes) available in a locality will not be limited.





## What a specialist service could look like

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Some people need considerably more support for their daily activities than others. In these cases, specialist provision is absolutely vital. It recognises the need for well-trained people, delivering more complex support, specialist equipment and facilities.

These services are likely to be more focused in the buildings in which they are based, like traditional day opportunities that we have today. They are also likely to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as care providers.

Specialist services will support the needs of those attending, for example, rooms/spaces for physiotherapy or speech and language sessions.

Even though it is most likely that specialist provision will take place in a fixed building base, we will want it to work closely with locality hubs to make the right connections into the community and to work in partnership with community activities (spokes).

A specialist service could be within a hub, or it could be a standalone community activity (spoke).

### Specialist provision could be:

- services for people that need more complex support
- a place that delivers activities
- a place where there is specialist equipment and facilities, for example hoists, hydrotherapy pools, sensory rooms, or specially adapted furniture
- a place that provides more intensive support
- operating from a specific, fixed location



## Evening & weekends

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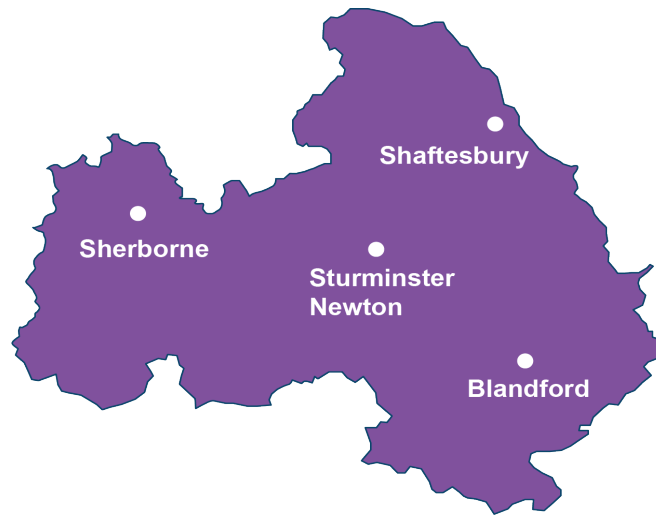
In the engagement you told us you would like a wider choice of local activities, more flexible options with availability during evening and weekends.

This proposed hub, spoke and specialist service model may offer opportunities in the evening and at weekends.



## Proposal for North Dorset Locality

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## North Dorset

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In North Dorset there are currently four day services operated by Care Dorset.

- Stour Connect - Sturminster Newton
- Sherborne Connect - Sherborne
- Shaftesbury Plus - Shaftesbury
- Blandford Connect - Blandford

We have reviewed how these buildings are used, as well as other local services and have set out below our consultation proposals for day opportunities in North Dorset.

## Sturminster Newton

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We are proposing that the Sturminster Newton day opportunity, also known as Stour Connect, becomes the hub for North Dorset.

Care Dorset currently operate Stour Connect; we would expect them to continue to operate the North Dorset Hub for the immediate future. The Friends of Stour Connect are an important part of the life of Stour Connect, and we would want to talk to them about their role in running the hub, as well as other organisations in and around North Dorset.

### Stour Connect currently offers:

- flexible, accessible space over two floors
- an onsite café
- a charity shop
- a local sixth form college
- a hydrotherapy pool
- accessibility with parking directly in front



## The North Dorset Hub would:

- Provide space to other people, groups or organisations offering regular activities, for example:
  - lunch clubs
  - health clinics
  - classes
- Provide space for other people, groups or organisations offering occasional activities or events.
- Provide training, support, and connection for people across North Dorset who are delivering community activities (spokes), so that individuals, groups, and organisations delivering opportunities can have confidence in accessing a local activity.

## If you currently attend Stour Connect the proposed model would provide you with the following options:

- You can continue to attend Stour Connect which will become the North Dorset Hub.
- You can change to other community activities (spokes) that offer activities to meet your specific needs and interests.
- You can change to a specialist service if you need more complex support.
- You can choose to attend a mixture of community activities (spokes) and attend the North Dorset Hub

## Sherborne

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The current building used by Care Dorset, known as Sherborne Connect, is a large, three-story building with limited accessibility. Sherborne Connect is attended by a small number of people.

Currently, we have a contract for this service with Care Dorset, where the full cost of running the large building and services is paid by the Council for a relatively small number of people to attend. We want to end that contract and focus on the right support for people in their local area. If we do this, it may mean that this service closes in its current location and form.

We have been talking to Care Dorset, and we are aware that they are looking at the possibility of developing alternative services from more appropriately sized venues in Sherborne. These would be accessible by people who fund their own support, and in some cases by people supported by the Council.

We plan to increase community activities (spokes) in Sherborne. We will work to develop services in addition to the existing places, groups and individuals that offer activities to meet the needs of local people.

## If you currently attend Sherborne Connect the proposed model would provide you with the following options:

- You can change to a community activity (spoke) or a range of community activities, that offer opportunities to meet your specific needs and interests, this may be a smaller, newly developed building.
- You can change to a specialist service if you need more complex support.

- You can change to the proposed North Dorset Hub (currently Stour Connect).
- You can choose to attend a mixture of community activities (spokes) and attend the North Dorset Hub.

## Blandford

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The current building used by Care Dorset, known as Blandford Connect, is a large building, with a small number of attendees. It is not easily accessible by public transport as it is not in a central location, therefore some people have difficulty accessing it.

Currently, we have a contract for this service with Care Dorset, where the full cost of running the large building and services is paid by the Council for a relatively small number of people to attend. We want to end that contract and focus on the right support for people in their local area. Together with Care Dorset, we are proposing that we find a smaller building in a more central location for this service.

We are proposing to increase community activities (spokes) in Blandford. We will work to develop these community activities in addition to existing places, groups and individuals that offer activities to meet the needs of local people.

### If you currently attend Blandford Connect, the proposed model will provide you with the following options:

- You can change to the proposed Blandford community activity (spoke) as the service moves to its more suitable location, once identified.
- You can change to a community activity (spoke) or a range of services in the local community that offer activities to meet your specific needs and interests.
- You can change to a specialist service if you need more complex support.
- You can change to the proposed North Dorset Hub (currently Stour Connect),
- You can choose to attend a mixture of community activities (spokes) and attend the North Dorset Hub.

## Shaftesbury

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The building used by Care Dorset, known as Shaftesbury Plus, is a large building with limited accessibility. It has a small number of attendees.

Currently, we have a contract for this service with Care Dorset, where the full cost of running the large building and services is paid by the Council for a relatively small number of people to attend. We want to end that contract and focus on the right support for people in their local area. If we do this, it may mean that this service closes in its current location and form.

We have been talking to Care Dorset; we are aware that they are looking at the possibility of developing alternative services from more appropriately sized venues in Shaftesbury. These would be accessible by people who fund their own support, and in some cases by people supported by the Council.

We plan to increase community activities (spokes) in Shaftesbury. We will work to develop services in addition to the existing places, groups and individuals that offer activities to meet the needs of local people.



## If you currently attend Shaftesbury Plus the proposed model would provide you with the following options:

- You can change to a community activity (spoke) or a range of services that offer activities to meet your specific needs and interests.
- You can change to a specialist service if you need more complex support.
- You can change to the proposed North Dorset Hub (currently Stour Connect).
- You can choose to attend a mixture of community activities (spokes) and attend the North Dorset Hub.

## Paying for day opportunities

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If you have been assessed as being eligible to receive support from Dorset Council to meet your social care outcomes there are several ways in which you can choose and pay for your day opportunity.

- Your day opportunity can be commissioned on your behalf by the Council.
- You can decide to take a Direct Payment (DP).
- You can decide to take an Individual Service Fund (ISF).
- You can access a day opportunity as an Individual who arranges their own funding.

## Direct Payments and ISF's

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You may be eligible and choose to take a Direct Payment (DP) or Individual Service Fund (ISF) from the Council to pay for your day opportunity. Direct payments and ISFs provide you with the freedom to buy a day opportunity of choice, which can include local clubs, groups, cinema, gym, or one-off activities.

\*(please see the sheet enclosed for more details).

## Consultation period

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We want your feedback on the proposed model for day opportunities in Dorset.

The consultation will start on **11th March 2025** for 90 days, closing on **9th June 2025**.

Brochures for the other locality areas are available on request.

## Share your thoughts

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It is of vital importance to the Council that the service delivers what the people that use them need and therefore we would like your view on these proposals. You can share your views about the proposed changes by completing a short survey.

Online at <https://consultation.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/c-e/dayopps>

Scan the QR code to complete online



Print a copy and return to us by post at:

Towards a new model of day opportunities  
Adults Commissioning  
Adults & Housing Directorate  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1XJ









Dorset  
Council