

Optalis Performance Update

We operate a wide range of different adult care services for Wokingham Borough residents, including:

- Supported employment training for people with learning disabilities and autism
- Day services for people with learning disabilities
- Independent living services, providing care support for people with learning disabilities and autism in their own homes
- Extra care services for residents at four retirement facilities
- Day services for people with physical disabilities
- Residential care for older people with dementia
- Reablement services
- Residential homes for people with learning disabilities

Operational Performance

- **Business as usual** – we have ensured that all our services have continued to operate to the high standards required by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Care Act, despite the extra challenges of the pandemic. The quality of our infection control procedures was specifically noted by CQC.
- **Finances** – we are now halfway through a two-year programme designed to deliver efficiency savings for WBC, in line with the council's ASC strategy. We were able to return £578k to the council in 2020/21. Despite the impact of the pandemic, the programme remains on track to deliver a further £400k of savings in 2021/22.
- **New and expanding services**
 - We have launched a new independent living service at Gorrick Square in Wokingham.
 - Our award-winning Supported Employment service (SES) has maintained its position as the No.1 SES operation in South-East England and No.3 in the country. The service continues to expand, with new customers including Wokingham and Bracknell Recovery Colleges and Manor Green School.

Pandemic Performance

- **Keeping our customers and staff safe** – over the last 18 months, we have not lost a single customer or member of staff to a Covid infection picked up in our services.
- **Helping WBC to protect local residents** – we were pleased to support the WBC surge testing team in June, by providing helpers to deliver Covid test kits to residents in the target postcode areas. We also made our Trinity Court offices available to the testing team when they needed extra space at short notice.
- **Supporting minorities** – many of our staff and customers are from minority groups for whom health inequalities and vaccine hesitancy have been a concern. Working with council and health colleagues, we have supported these groups through tailored risk assessments and vaccine education sessions delivered by clinical pharmacists
- **Service challenges** – mandatory Covid restrictions caused issues for some residents who depend on our day services. Wherever possible, we have provided alternative support for these customers.

Pandemic Learnings

- **We need to review traditional ways of doing things** – the pandemic unexpectedly highlighted opportunities to do things differently. For example, customer feedback during the pandemic confirmed the importance of reviewing the day service opportunities we offer to residents so that we can meet their evolving needs and expectations.
- **Our people are willing to initiate and embrace change** – our teams showed exceptional resilience on the Covid front line in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment. They also showed themselves to be highly flexible and open to suggesting new ways of working. We must encourage and embed this.
- **Working seamlessly with WBC** – the pandemic showed us how much we can achieve when we work together as one service for local residents.





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Transforming Optalis



New Services

In line with WBC's Market Management approach, planning is well-advanced for Optalis to take on at least 10 new and existing services in the borough, covering a wide variety of different care needs.

This expansion is underpinned by investment in a new Peripatetic Team, which is giving us the capacity to transfer and initiate new services successfully when required by WBC.



Ability Travel

Our new SES Ability Travel service is helping customers to gain higher levels of independence and confidence on public transport through skills training.

The training is supported by new partnerships with South Western Railway, Network Rail and Reading Buses.

This service is also allowing WBC to reduce the need to fund adult social care transportation contracts. Projected savings over the next 5 years are estimated at between £400k and £500k.



Improving our Services

Capacity and productivity enhancements are planned for our START reablement team, to support residents where reablement will give them a higher quality of life than they would otherwise receive through the delivery of traditional expensive care packages.



Expanding our Services

Our popular Out & About service has been consistently oversubscribed in recent years. Despite the Covid restrictions, we were able to maintain a reduced level of service over the last 18 months. We are now investing to expand this service by offering an even wider range of activities for residents and generating additional income for the council.



Other Opportunities

We are working with WBC's commercial advisers to develop a range of additional opportunities for income generation for the council.

We are also evaluating options for setting up a Community Interest Company which will allow us to work more closely with the local voluntary and charitable sector in the borough, as well as providing access to external sources of funding.

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Thank You

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