University of BRISTOL
SCHOOL FOR POLICY STUDIES

Reimagining day care for older adults: what role can they play in policy and practice

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Background

The role of collective forms of day care for older adults is contested:

- a lack of consensus about function/ purpose;
- a lack of evidence of impact;
- a tension with ideas associated with personalisation,
- and, concerns about cost.

Coalescing in a view that day care is outdated.

Alternative view

While acknowledging that collective day care may not meet the aspirations of all older people, there are many who value it (Age UK 2011) and growing appreciation that:

- attendance can mitigate loneliness (Roberton 2018) and improve wellbeing and quality of life (Lunt *et al.*, 2018).

- can support person-centred care while also supporting social connections (Orellana et al 2020, 2023).

- are an important support to carers (Lunt 2021)

The term 'day care' is considered stigmatizing by many and some providers are adopting alternative terms such as 'day clubs'.

We want to consider the missed opportunity of day care.

Case study sites

SITE	DESCRIPTION
1	Day centre for older people living with dementia. Good connections with local health services and local organisations.
2	Adapted farm for men living with Parkinsons and dementia. Purposeful activities and outdoor setting.
3	Lunch club and activities for older people. Part of a community network to reduce isolation and loneliness for older people.
4	Small-scale, home-based day care for older people with dementia.
5	Large-scale club providing activities and health & education programmes for older people.
6	Community café providing lunch clubs and activities for older people.
7	Faith-based day centre for older people, with expertise in supporting people with visual impairment.
8	Peripatetic day clubs for older people.

Older people's perspectives on day care

Overwhelmingly positive:

- "Well, I don't feel lonely when I'm here, and I don't feel left out, and I don't feel isolated when I'm here." (S03OP01)

- "[Coming to Site five] gives me a reason to get out, that's one. Two, I come here, and I see people that I know, and I get on with. And I also get to meet people that I've never met before. And it also gives me the opportunity to use, I know this sounds like a job interview the answer I'm going to give, but it gives me the opportunity to use the skills that I've obtained since I left school." (S05OP01)

Purposeful and non-traditional activities

Activities that aren't 'artificial' but serve a purpose:

- "… we're not here to do activities, we're here to do a job or to make something or to make friends, even. I hate the word 'activity'" (S02M01)

- "So most of what you have done in your life has been taken away from you, so by giving people something back again to do and take responsibility for in our groups is, probably one of the most defining things about the [site four] model of care because it makes people feel that they have a role again […]" (S04M01)

- "I used to come here for mosaics class. That was lovely. I never knew how to do mosaics before. I said, "Let me learn something. Something you have not done before." (S05OP03)

Why purposeful activity

Opportunity to contribute and have a role

- "It has to be about helping. These men have been rocks in their families all their life and, suddenly, they feel […] a hindrance." (S02M02)

Building new skills

- "… if not for [site 5] I wouldn't have been able to keep in touch with my son [who emigrated to Canada]. I've watched [my grandchildren] grow up on Facebook because I learned from [site five]" (S05OP02)

Identity, self-esteem and confidence

- "If I hadn't found [site 5] when I did, I don't know because I'd gone from being needed, for want of a better word, with my grandchildren. Then, they didn't need me." (S05OP05)

Working with local community partners

Organisations were embedded in local networks

- "... [site 5] have an overall understanding of what's happening within the community, where to send people, the needs of the community." (S05SH03)

Collaborations improved offer for members and sustain organisations

- "So, I think [the community partnerships] is really amazing. It really affects our members going to all these different places, that they would never have been able to go to before." (S05CW03)

- "... with [city] having quite a diverse range of organisations, it could be that you'd have where organisations are competing against each other on a particular bid that they would benefit from doing more of a joint-bid approach to guarantee securing that funding and then reaching their communities" (S03SH01)

Partnership working with health

Specialist clinical condition focused:

- **Site 1 –** works with local dementia clinic including as part of inter-professional care management "I, as a care coordinator, and one of our consultants actually hold a clinic, often at [site 1]. We try to do it every couple of months, just to run through service users that we've got at the day centre just to kind of like reinforce support is there and for us to review and feed back to the care coordinators" (S01SH02)

Preventative, health-engaged programmes and interventions:

- **Site 3 -** partner in local strategic networks for loneliness and social isolation of older people, strong links with GP practices leading to education and intervention programmes e.g. falls prevention, diabetes

- **Site 5 –** deliver preventative programmes providing long-term support post NHS discharge e.g. balance/falls prevention "… the evidence states that you need to have nearly a year, essentially, of tailored exercises that are facilitated. Obviously, as an NHS service, we can't offer that option, so we've got [site 5 falls prevention programme]…" (S05SH01)

Carers – distinct offer of day care

Greater understanding of extent and distinct support inc. duration & trusted nature

- Describing feelings of isolation "It's been made better by him going to [site 4] because it does give me that six hours when I can go and meet friends for coffee, […] go and do something for me. That amount of time he is at [site 4] is my little core of being normal" (S04C02)

Emotional support and connection for carers, as well as wider advice and guidance

- "I think 50%, we look after the people living with dementia, and I think 50%, we look after the carers as well. The times I get people in here in tears, and they just want to shout at somebody, and they shout at me." (S01M01)

- "I used to go in with my wife just to sort of settle down with the other three people. Since then I always go in, and I seem to be part of the family for half an hour and have a cup of tea with them, and general chat" (S04C01)

- "… [CEO] was always on hand for when I needed information about getting [mum] a blue badge, getting her different benefits, etc., etc." (S03C01)

Day care and COVID-19 pandemic

Sites closed but continued to provide support in creative ways

- "They were wonderful. I got phone calls every week […] checking in that we were alright" (S03OP01)

- Site 7 focused on maintaining their 'talking newspaper', ensuring that members kept connected to their wider community.

- Site 5 developed an extensive online programme of activities

- Site 2 created videos of the farm and visited members on a tractor to deliver food parcels and when guidance allowed started weekend coffee mornings as a means to support carers.

- Site 3 became a COVID hub, used minibuses to provide transport to hospital appointments and developed new initiatives inc a walking programme

Day care: outdated?

- Our findings challenge the view that day care is outdated and undesirable, and illustrates creative, agile and responsive services that members and their carers value

- Found examples of innovative day care models that are a clear break from the 'normal', as well as innovative practice within sites

  - Site 2 adapted farm for men

  - Site 4 small-scale, home-based care

  - Site 5 large-scale, extensive community partnerships

Reimagining models of day care

Three reimagined models of day care, clubs and activities for older people with care and support needs.

Based on examples of innovative practice and observations at case study sites

In particular, responses to interview questions about:

- what was important to older people and their carers
- the role of day care
- what an ideal model of day care would look like
- Workshops with research partners

Underpinning themes

- Social inclusion
- Person-centredness
- Flexible and responsive
- Space and place
- Local community identity
- Involvement of older people in management and decision making
- Carers

1- SUPPORTIVE, SMALL-SCALE COLLECTIVE CARE FOR LOW TO MODERATE NEEDS

- Informed by Sites 2 and 4

- Small groups, based in the home of hosts.

- Runs for a full day, host picks up and drops of members

- Hosts are supported by area co-ordinators and link with other local hosts, as well as wider services and community organisations.

- Could also be applied to other non-traditional settings such as a farm or workshop

1- SUPPORTIVE, SMALL-SCALE COLLECTIVE CARE FOR LOW TO MODERATE NEEDS

WHO IS IT FOR:

- low to moderate needs e.g. early to moderate dementia.

- Personal care is not provided but it could be an add on.

- Carers are able to stay for part of the day if they would like.

WHERE:

- often suited to more rural settings.

- A suitable, relaxed, homely environment is central to this model.

- Outside space is available.

2- LARGE SCALE, PREVENTATIVE AND SOCIAL FOR ALL OLDER PEOPLE

- Informed by Site 5, as well as sites 3, 6, 7 and 8

- Membership organization providing a large and varied programme of activities and groups.

- Groups and classes are staffed by diverse 'tutors', many are older people.

- People often attend a centre for multiple activities over the course of an afternoon or a whole day. Transport is not provided.

- Lunch groups and cooking classes are on offer

- Central to the model is partnerships with local organisations such as gyms, theatres, galleries and sports clubs, to build opportunities that meet the needs of local older people and supports mental and physical wellbeing

- In some settings this may be a collection of smaller organisations working together. Volunteer opportunities are a strong element of this model

2- LARGE SCALE, PREVENTATIVE AND SOCIAL FOR ALL OLDER PEOPLE

WHO IS IT FOR:

- all older people

- support available to enable all older people to participate

- Personal care is not provided

- specific programmes for wellbeing and health

WHERE:

- works particularly well in urban areas

- has a building of its own, also utilizes other community venues

3- COLLECTIVE CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX AND PERSONAL CARE NEEDS

- Informed by Sites 1 and 7
- All-day care for people with complex needs
- Staffed by skilled staff who have training opportunities
- Transport is provided in accessible vehicles with trained drivers
- A shared and social meal is part of the day

3- COLLECTIVE CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX AND PERSONAL CARE NEEDS

WHO IS IT FOR:

- Older people with moderate to complex needs
- Personal care is available

WHERE:

- Purpose-built or re-designed existing building
- Relaxed, informal and homely feel with outdoor space for members to enjoy independently if they wish
- Part of the local community

ECOSYSTEM

- The three models presented are not intended to exist in isolation but as part of an 'ecosystem'
- The models are able to work together to share resources and manage transitions as older people's needs and preferences change over time
- Older people may attend more than one model

The role of day care: what's the future?

Our findings highlight

- a strong story about the current and potential role of day care and its importance as a lifeline for members and carers, providing a distinct opportunity for connection, joy and, supporting wellbeing

- are well-placed to support the preventative agenda, to identify and respond to needs, support mental and physical health of members and carers, illustrated by creative and agile COVID-19 response

- are archetype local place-based partnerships, enabled by their central position within community networks, their in-depth knowledge of members, their carers and community organisations and, are trusted by all.

- could play a key part in achieving the ambitions for local Integrated Care Systems set out in NHS Long Term Plan (2019)

Disclaimer and further information

These presentations report on independent research funded by the NIHR School for Social Care Research. The views expressed in these presentations are those of the research team and not necessarily those of the NIHR School for Social Care Research or the Department of Health/NIHR.

FUNDED BY

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

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