

Asking You! Report for Leeds City Council:  
Aspire Community Benefit Society

# Aspire Consultation Project Report





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## Project Summary

Asking You! were commissioned by Leeds City Council to undertake a consultation of Aspire stakeholders around the changes that were being made to the way Aspire services are paid for and what people thought of the different services that Aspire provide. Aspire stakeholders; people with learning disabilities, their carers / family / significant others, and trustees were asked about the change from block contracts to an individualised approach to payments and what they thought about Aspire services. The consultation was to focus on day opportunities and supported living service provision.

Asking You! worked closely with Aspire customers to co-produce the work in an accessible way within the limitations of COVID 19 restrictions. Volunteer sampling was used to gather participants, a mixed methods approach was used for the gathering of qualitative and quantitative information, using structured and semi-structure interviews, through digital and non-digital formats. A deductive thematic analysis was selected to analyse the findings of the project.

## **Main Conclusions**

The feedback on the services was predominantly positive. The staff are very highly thought of, and the customers felt supported. Customers did not like the use of agency and unfamiliar staff. Staff turnover is an industry wide issue and at lower levels in Aspire at 9% compared with industry standard of 30%.

In terms of the change of contract type from a block contract to individual contracts it was mainly thought to be a good idea if it brought more choice and personalised care. Potential positives seen as stronger links to care management and the ability for the customer to change services and activities if they wanted.

There were concerns that it would have an additional bureaucratic impact, and therefore cost, which may negatively impact on service provision, so potentially a cut in services as there is no overall increase in funds available. It was recognised as important that the individual contracts reflect the true and actual cost of the service provision to deliver benefits.

There are opportunities for improvement that have been highlighted in the feedback such as facilitating open discussions and education about sex and relationships, a review of transport provision and a fresh look at the complaints process.

There was a strong theme that it is important to maintain the wider benefits Aspire provide to the city and the sector as a whole. This is a position it has developed and maintained through the legacy of being part of the council and the strength and commitment of the staff, and potentially the security of a block contract.

Overall, the report suggests a significant amount to celebrate, customers feel listened to, safe and had very positive relationships with staff.

We would like to thank everyone involved for their constructive and open approach to this consultation, especially the customers that gave some much time and enthusiasm to co-producing the survey.

### Project Brief

Aspire is commissioned by Leeds City Council to support more than 950 learning disabled adults through day services, supported living services, respite and emergency respite across Leeds. The contract ends in Summer 2021 and as such consultation was proposed to help inform decision making on contractual arrangements in the future.

Leeds City Council was committed to engaging with a wide group of stakeholders and worked with Asking You! part of The Advonet Group to determine a best approach to ensure engagement of those stakeholders, whilst taking into consideration restrictions presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. In October 2020, Leeds City Council's Executive board approved the consultation exercise, based on planned future commissioning arrangements for the service provision.

The consultation aimed to inform Aspire stakeholders' people of the proposed changes to the way that Aspire is contracted to deliver services in Leeds. This involved changing from a 'block contract' which is where Leeds City Council pay Aspire a lump sum to provide all of their services each year, to 'individualised arrangements' where for each service user there is an agreement between Leeds City Council and Aspire detailing what will be provided for that person and how much it will cost.

For Supported Living, it was proposed that the block contract would be replaced with Supported Living Individual Support Agreements or SLISAs. For day opportunities, the proposed approach was to individually 'spot purchase' each service user's day opportunities directly with Aspire. Both of those arrangements would enable the Council to put in place a clear price for the cost of care and support services for each individual service user.

Neither arrangement aimed to reduce or cut back the care and support which Aspire service users receive, instead, it aimed to develop a more transparent and accurate process for paying for services. It also aims to bring Aspire in line with how most of learning disability supported living services in the city are paid for.

## Project Activity, Delivery and Methodology

### Project Activity and Delivery

Co-production was key to engaging stakeholders and ensuring accessibility. This was embedded by creating accessible information which was quality checked by people with lived experience of Aspire services.

Key stakeholders who participated in the consultation were as follows; people with learning disabilities, families or significant others, carers and Aspire Trustees. The consultation aimed to explore those stakeholders' perspectives of the changes to the way Aspire services are paid for and what people thought of the different services they may experience. Those services include day opportunities and supported living. Aspire also provide respite/emergency respite services but that was outside the remit of this consultation.

An accessible version of the consultation was co-produced by Asking You! and Aspire Customers at a series of weekly meetings. The illustrated version of the Easy Read Survey was produced by CHANGE and subsequently quality checked by Aspire customers. The survey was distributed across services in West Leeds, East Leeds and South Leeds. A question-and-answer session with commissioners was organised for stakeholders' questions or concerns to be addressed.

Promotion and communications regarding the consultation was through internal contacts at Aspire. Initial contact with the weekly customer 'meet up' meetings, to establish the survey, was progressed by Aspire's Involvement Coordinator's. Advertisement to participate in the consultation took place via oral communication from Aspire staff to customers and project workers following up various interests of involvement by phone calls and asking customers their preferred methods of communication. Managers of services also distributed the knowledge of this consultation to staff, customers and the family members or carers of customers. Postal copies were distributed to all customers and carers.

### Methodology

To ensure the consultation process was accessible, multiple survey formats were available:

- Paper version of the EasyRead survey (*Appendix 3*)
- Digital version of the EasyRead survey
- Microsoft Forms
- Phone calls
- Video Calling via Zoom

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, less customers were accessing day opportunities due to restrictions and increased risks from new strains of the virus, therefore there was sometimes reliance on Aspire staff supporting customer engagement. Face to face contact was covered where possible via Zoom video calling.

Participants were accessed through volunteer sampling. The consultation aimed to involve 80 participants as a minimum. In total 241 participants partook in the consultation, exceeding the initial figure. Paper, digital and Microsoft Forms versions of the survey used a structured interview, consisting of both open and closed questions. Where surveys were completed face to face (Zoom) or via phone calls with Advonet project workers, a semi-structured interview took place, comprising of both open and closed questions. A mixed methods approach was used, ensuring qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

### Data Analysis

A deductive thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the qualitative findings as this was coherent with the underlying principles of 'learning from experts by experience'. Quantitative findings were analysed using statistical graphs in the form of pie charts, to illustrate the numerical proportion.

The information the council wanted to gather:

- Views/comments/thoughts/concerns on the proposal to move from a block contracting arrangement with Aspire to an individualised approach to payments.
- What do people think about the service(s) that is being provided by Aspire (what do they like, what don't they like and what could be better?)
- Do the services help people to meet the aspirations that are important to them?
- Do people have choice and control over what they do and how does Aspire keep their wishes central to the process?
- What do people think about Aspire staff?
- What do people think about the management of Aspire?
- What do people think about the variety of the offer?
- What do people think about the location of the services they attend?
- How do individuals benefit from the added value?
- How does the city benefit from Aspire?

As agreed, we took this information and linked it to the CQC standards, and through a co-productive process of working we evolved the following questions:

### **You should have care that is right for you and meets your needs**

We want to ask you:

1. Do you like Aspire services?
2. Do you choose what you do in the daytime?
3. Do you choose what you do in the night-time?

### **You should be treated with respect and asked about what you want to happen.**

We want to ask you:

4. What are your goals? A goal is something you want to do for yourself.
5. If you want something are you listened to?

**You should be always kept safe.**

We want to ask you:

6. Do you feel safe at Aspire services?

**Where your service is should be safe and all equipment should be clean.**

We want to ask you:

7. Do you like where your service is?

**You must be able to complain about your care.**

We want to ask you:

8. Do staff ask you how you feel?
9. Do you know how to make a complaint?

**Aspire services must have plans to make sure your service is good.**

We want to ask you:

10. Do you know the manager of your service?
11. Do you think about how your service is well managed?

**Aspire services must have a good quality of staff. The staff must support you and have a lot of experience.**

We want to ask you:

12. What do you think about the support that you get? For example, respite, support staff.
13. What do you think about different people that work for Aspire? This might be your key worker, managers, cleaners etc
14. Who at Aspire services has helped you?

Below are the themes, linking the information gathered to the CQC standards.

1. You should have care that is right for you and meets your needs
2. You should be treated with respect and asked about what you want to happen.
3. You should be always kept safe.
4. Where your service is should be safe, and all equipment should be clean.
5. You must be able to complain about your care.
6. Aspire services must have plans to make sure your service is good.
7. Aspire services must have a good quality of staff. The staff must support you and have a lot of experience.
8. Changing from paying for all the services for everyone to paying for each service for each person (Aspire must be open and honest about changes to your care.)

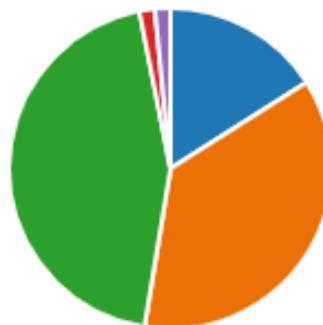
### Demographic Data

Demographic characteristics were summarised by using descriptive statistics, to show the range of engagement with participants during the consultation. The charts below show the percentage of people who participated in the consultation, as well as the range across service areas.

#### Person Filling in the Form

- Aspire Customer (Someone who uses Aspire services): 31 (16%)
- Aspire staff helping customer to complete: 71 (36%)
- Carer or Family of person using Aspire Services: 86 (44%)
- Other: 3 (2%)
- Trustee: 3 (2%)

Aspire customer (someone th...	31
Aspire staff helping customer ...	71
Carer or family of person usin...	86
Other	3
Trustee	3



NB. This number accounts for 194 of the 241 responses, the missing 47 were mainly Aspire customers whose data was processed earlier in the project before this question was added to MS Forms. An additional trustee response was received after the survey was closed and processed. The statistics are as follow:

Customers 149 61.6%

Carer	86	35.5%
Trustee	4	1.7%
Other	3	1.2%
Total	242	100%

### Where in Leeds they use Aspire Services

- West Leeds: 54
- East Leeds: 40
- South Leeds: 46



### Findings

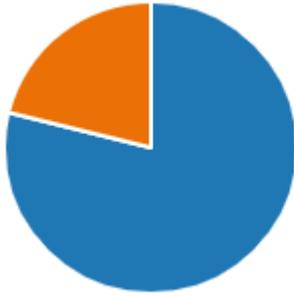
#### Quantitative Data (Appendix 2)

Categorical data was analysed through the use of pie charts and percentages. For a comprehensive set of the analysed data, please see *appendix 2*. The findings of this analysis are as follows:

Most people chose what they do in the daytime (90%) and at night-time (87%). People also reported that their support listens to them (98%) and that they felt safe at Aspire (99%). 98% of participants also reported that staff asked them how they felt.

The consultation found that 79% of participants reported knowing how to make a complaint, with 21% of participants not knowing how to make a complaint. As demonstrated in the chart below:

Do you know how to make a complaint?



- Yes: 168 (79%)
- No: 45 (21%)

Furthermore, the consultation also revealed that again, 79% of participants knew who the manager of their service is, leaving 20% who did not know. *As demonstrated in the chart below:*

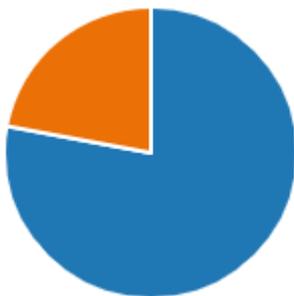
Do you know the manager of your service?



- Yes: 168 (79%)
- No: 45 (21%)

The question was also asked, as to whether participants thought their services were managed good, OK or bad. *As demonstrated in the chart below:*

What do you think about how your service is managed?



- Good: 166 (78%)
- OK: 47 (22%)
- Bad: 0 (0%)

The majority of participants reported that they thought the support they got was good (85%), leaving 15% reporting it as OK and only 1 person (0%) reporting it as bad. When asked about what participants thought about different staff at Aspire, such as key worker, managers or support workers, similar statistics were found; 84% of participants reported that different staff were good, 14% reported that they were OK and 2% reported that they were bad.

The consultation also explored participants experiences around friendships and relationships. People reported that they felt supported to make and keep friends (95%), but less participants reported being supported to have relationships (66%). *As demonstrated in the chart below:*

Do you feel supported to make and keep friends?



- Yes: 205 (95%)
- No: 10 (5%)

Are you supported to have relationships?



- Yes: 111 (66%)
- No: 58 (34%)

Finally, the consultation aimed to explore what participants thought about paying for all the services for everyone to, paying for each service for each person. 79% of respondents reported that they thought this was a good idea, in comparison to 21% of respondents reporting that they thought this was a bad idea. *As demonstrated in the chart below:*

What do you think about changing from paying for all the services for everyone to, paying for each service for each person?



- Good Idea: 104 (79%)
- Bad Idea: 28 (21%)

## Qualitative Data

The deductive thematic analysis produced 8 thematic areas.

### 1. You should have care that is right for you and meets your needs:

Participants reported that they liked a wide variety of activities at Aspire services or accessing the community. One participant stated:

*“Working at the cafe, swimming, using minibus / public transport for community outings, bowling”*

Many participants highlighted that working at/volunteering/visiting the farm was a popular activity. This participant stated that:

*“Open country organisation is fantastic - different activities each week. Plenty of help to do things and enjoy. During covid - news better sent etc. Brilliant. Disabled bikes - great. Farm - looking after then hens.”*

Working at Aspire cafes and activities which allowed access to the community were strong sub-themes. Another participant shared their experience of accessing day opportunities:

*“I like going out on social activities like the pub, going to bingo, going out for walks, I go to Yorkshire Dance and rides out in the minibus. I enjoy the pottery group and art activities in the base. I take part in indoor sports at Morley every week. I enjoy being with my friends and staff, I always look forward to coming in.”*

Few participants reported that they did not like activities at Aspire. Most participants stated that:

*“There is nothing I dislike.”*

Customers would make staff aware if they did not want to do an activity, or that they disliked it. A participant reported:

*“I would refuse to do an activity if I wasn't interested.”*

The viewpoints of people who did not like the opportunities provided by Aspire, can be explained by several factors. The participant stated that:

*“Staff often change”*

Familiarity of staff members appears to be a potential contributing factor as to how much customers enjoy activities. Another factor for the dislike of services was the type of opportunities customers had available to access. For example, a participant reported:

*“Not being able to go out due to covid 19”*

The impact of COVID-19 restrictions reoccurred throughout:

*“I don't like stopping in but the virus is still spreading.”*

Customers stated that they had a choice as to what they did in the daytime. One participant outlined the following:

*“Yes, usually discuss the day with support staff. I don’t like them pressuring me, it happens sometimes, they pressure me to go places I don’t want to go. It only happens at the daycentre. Staff where I live are better because they talk to you and what you want to do. They could leave me for a bit to make my own decision, rather than prompting me. If I say no, they keep saying I need to be out and about and doing activities, when I don’t want to. They could explain better why they’re asking you to do it.”*

Overall, customers felt that they had a choice of what they did at night-time. Participants reported:

*“I live with my family. I spend a lot of time with my mum watching TV. I sometimes go to my bedroom to watch films.”*

Watching TV in the evening was a strong theme, however, some participants also reported that they lived with family and did not use Aspire services at night. Therefore, not all of the results of reporting a choice or having no choice was impacted by Aspire services. Other reasons for people reporting that they felt as though they did not have a choice, were due to other factors such as the current restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants talked about their experiences:

*“At home I enjoy watching tv, prior to covid 19, enjoy going to Monday club, also the monthly disco”*

## **2.You should be treated with respect and asked about what you want to happen.**

The consultation wanted to explore the theme of customers being treated with respect and if they had experiences of being asked about what they wanted to happen. This took its form in two questions; ‘what are your goals? A goal is something you want to do for yourself’ and ‘does your support staff listen to you?’

When exploring people’s goals, there were strong themes around customers going on holiday both abroad and in the UK were common. Participants reported that:

*“Like a dating thing, I’d like to meet somebody. Go drinking, go on holiday. I was gonna go on holiday for my birthday to Benidorm.”*

*“I go on holiday to Blackpool when we are back to normal.”*

Overall, customers at Aspire felt listened to. People mainly spoke about being able to speak to their support workers or keyworkers about any problems they have or if they would like to do new activities. Participants reported:

*“Support, yes, I can talk to them about problems, new stuff I want to do too.”*

*“I can speak to my support workers and they will support me to do things I like doing”*

*“At Holly Bush and Herd farm my staff are lovely and listen to me when I have something to say. At home they listen to me as well, I can chat with people and I know that people pay attention to me.”*

*“I can speak to my support workers and they will support me to do things I like doing”*

Feedback from one customer was positive around listening, but the recurrent theme of changing staff appeared. Many customers at Aspire have reported spending vast amounts of time around staff and the importance of having a keyworker and a good relationship with those staff members, which will be explored later in this analysis. A participant reported:

*“Yes, good listeners, they will listen to you. I’m fed up of changing keyworker though, gets me down. I’d rather stick with the one I’m given, that I like. Some I don’t like, they’re awkward. I can end up snapping at them, the ones I don’t like. I should pick my own keyworker.”*

The quote from this participant stood out because they felt as though they did not have a choice to pick their own keyworker. As these people will have frequent interactions with one another, it would seem beneficial to both staff and customers to maintain good working relationships, through a person-centred approach to hiring keyworkers.

A small proportion of customers reported that they did not feel listened to. This was reported as taking place due to busy schedules which reduce time spent with customers and some customers feeling as though staff do not act on their words or there is a miscommunication of why action has not been taken.

*“They might listen, but do they take any notice?”*

*“Sometimes staff are really busy, but they get time in the end, unless its important. I try to be patient but sometimes I get my temper up”*

A quote which was not a strong theme but did appear, was a customer who was unsure of what opportunities are available to them. Whilst customers felt listened to overall, not all customers would speak up and ask questions. One participant stated that:

*“I’d like to learn how to cook. I’ve not told anyone at Aspire that. I didn’t think to ask as I didn’t think they could help.”*

### **3.You should be always kept safe.**

When we asked participants if they felt safe at Aspire services, the overwhelming majority felt safe. This was identified through several sub-themes, such as feeling safe because of physical factors like locking doors, environmental factors such as Covid-19 cleaning and finally, social factors such as staff keeping people safe. Participants reported that:

*"I have a key to my flat and bedroom, we have fire drills and test fire alarms weekly. we do not let people in that we do not know"*

*"We have sleep in staff, there is someone around all the time."*

*"I have my own work area at centre, or I like to say stay in my square. I am given hand sanitizer to use. Staff check my temperature when i come to centre. Staff wears masks and goggles. Staff clean the doors, bathrooms, chairs, tables, and kitchen area. I feel safe at centre"*

*"during covid staff used gel on our hands they wore masks and we sat at separate tables"*

*"We have sleep in staff, there is someone around all the time."*

#### **4. Where your service is should be safe, and all equipment should be clean.**

To address this theme, customers were asked 'what do you think about where your service is?'. Customers reported that services were safe and that the areas of which the services were based felt safe. It was also reported that services were clean and close to amenities. Participants reported that:

*"Always clean, always cleaning tables at the daycentre. The carpark is busy, there's a nursery next to us, it's too noisy sometimes. I don't think there should be a nursery near our daycentre, too noisy. We have to keep the doors shut because some people can walk off. I lock the gate when gardening with my friend in case she walks off. I have to keep an eye on her, Staff are sometimes busy because there's loads of people. There should be more trained staff to do activities like art or help others. It's clean and safe. I've got a sports hall too, I play pass the ball with friends."*

*"My base is in Guiseley. I like where we are. Plenty of room in the base. We are close to Morrisons. I am happy."*

*"I feel safe where my day service is"*

*"I'm in Cookridge but I go to Aireborough day centre, it's a bit far but I enjoy the bus journey and seeing everyone. I am close to everything, a bus or taxi away. Clean. I like it here."*

*"I think the Morley base is situated in a very good place, it feels very safe and provides a lot of things to do in the local community."*

*"It is local to my home I am a wheelchair user, and I don't like long bus journey's so I do not have far to travel"*

*"I am near all things I need, I'm near family and can visit them anytime."*

There was not a dominant theme around the design of buildings, but the next factor stood out. It was mentioned that some of the sports centres did not have any windows, meaning customers would spend much time without natural light or access to views of the outdoors.

This is an important factor as natural light improves mood, and motivation, as well as helping internal body clocks and sleeping habits by regulating circadian rhythms and melatonin production. Access to views of the outside is important to feel more connected to the outside world and reduces separation and improves mood with views to green spaces. Participants reported:

*"Would be nice to have a window and not to share toilets with the public."*

*"Rothwell sports centre, it's boring, no windows to look out, can't see anything, just a door. It's clean. Not close to shops. Where I live is close to shops, got to go with staff, I am happy with that. Long bus journeys, would like them to be shorter."*

*"Yes clean - I've seen it. Daycentre, no shops near it in Rothwell. No windows, one window looks on to the sports centre. Ruth does like to look out of windows. There's a bit over the swimming pool, but it's closed off. Be nice to see outside."*

*"I like it at my day service it is clean I am happy but it has not got a window I would like more windows"*

## **5. You must be able to complain about your care.**

To explore whether customers were able to complain about their care, we asked, 'Do staff ask you how you feel?' and 'Do you know how to make a complaint?'

Most participants reported that they felt staff asked about how they were feeling:

*"I feel ok about the staff. Staff ask me how I feel and if I am ok. When I go to the doctors, the staff support me."*

*"Yes, we have customer meetings."*

*"I know I can tell staff if I am unhappy, and they will do their best to sort things out"*

*"Sometimes I get depressed, and they ask me how I am. Sometimes I tell them to leave me alone."*

*"I like the staff at Fearnville. I have known them for a long time. They always ask me how i am and what i have been doing when i haven't been at Fearnville."*

*"My support worker knows me inside out. Knows when I am having a bad day and is there to help."*

*"Staff always ask how I am I can talk to staff"*

When exploring the minority responses of people who felt that they were not listened to, these quotes showed how sometimes not all staff would ask how people were or that some customers did not have the expectation for staff to ask how they were, as participants reported:

*“Not everyone but \*\*\* asks me how I am, \*\*\* asks also, I like living here”*

*“No but do must family members ask how you feel?”*

21% of customers did not know how to make a complaint. Many of the customers who did know how to make a complaint stated that they would tell staff and some customers reported that if they had a problem with staff, they would tell a family member or a manager. In semi-structured face to face interviews, customers were asked how they would get in touch with their managers if they needed to. Aspire have created a culture where customers can engage with staff and share their concerns, but it is important that all customers know, understand and have a method in place to remember the organisations complaints procedure. Participants reported:

*“Tell our staff or tell big bosses about staff complaints. If they were hitting us I would tell the big staff, big managers. Deborah, Maureen, Julie or Peter. I’ve got their mobile numbers. Smaller complaints, I would ring a member of staff.”*

*“I would tell big bosses about staff complaints and for smaller stuff call a staff member.”*

*“If I complain about care, I have to go to a manager. I do. To a manager they are Kathryn and Dawn. I would ask for her. If I had a complaint about a manager, I would go to a different one.”*

*“My brother is able to do this for me.”*

*“You phone up aspire, or tell the staff at Aspire, or can tell \*\*\*, because he's actually in charge of Aspire.”*

*“Yep I do, the manager who works in Aspire”*

Reasons for those who didn't know how to make a complaint were around people not being able to understand the procedure or needing support or an explanation to do so.

Participants stated:

*“Have not capacity to understand complaint procedures but I know that my relatives can complain for me if I mention problems to them”*

*“No I don't know but my carer and PA will support me with this if necessary”*

*“No one has explained this to me”*

*“I'm not sure I speak to staff”*

## **6. Aspire services must have plans to make sure your service is good.**

Customers were asked; ‘Do you know the manager or your service?’. 20% of customers did not know the manager of their service. In semi-structured face to face interviews, customers

were asked how they would get in touch with their managers if they needed to. Similarly, it is important that all customers know, understand, and have a method in place to remember the managers of their services. When exploring the responses from customers, we found that some people named the manager of their service or that they would know where to find them. Some people did not name the manager of their service but did state they knew who it was. Participants reported that:

*"I don't know about at the daycentre, \*\*\*? I don't see them a lot. \*\*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\* are managers for where I live. You don't know who's going to leave. Why do we have 3 managers? We only need 1. 1 manager should keep seeing us and the other 2 go to the bungalows. Same people see the same people over time."*

*"When straight to ask and found out her name. She looks after everything – \*\*\*"*

Many customers who reported knowing their managers, simply named them. The responses of customers who did not know the managers of their services varied. Some people did not know the managers due to staff changes and also changes in services due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, due to the pandemic restrictions, many customers had not been attending services such as cafés or daycentres and subsequently had forgotten over time. Participants reported:

*"\*\*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\* are managers, where I live. At the café I think it's \*\*\*. There's been a lot of changes in managers so it's confusing at the minute. Same managers should see the same people."*

*"don't know, i think \*\*\* is the boss."*

*"I think staff. No."*

*"\*\*\*, dunno how to get in touch"*

*"it's been a long time since I have been to the day service because of covid, I can't remember their names."*

*"I haven't been at my base for very long and now I am shielding due to covid"*

*"Staff have told me but i sometimes forget names"*

To further explore whether customers felt as though Aspire had plans to make sure their service is good, the consultation asked; 'what do you think about how your service is managed?'. 78% of customers reported that they thought how their service was managed was 'good', 22% of customers reported how their services were managed was 'Ok' and 0% reported management of services as bad. Participants reported:

*"Yes, it's very good actually. I like that the staff can help with shopping, I feel supported. I get enough time with staff."*

*"I think it is good"*

*“Yes only got the customers at heart we are well managed”*

Some of the responses from customers can provide an explanation for where services could improve the management of their services, as participants reported that:

*“Support plans, they check what food is out of date otherwise we would be ill. Help us to go food shopping but we do our own cleaning. At the moment they go shopping for us. I think they can manage. At the daycentre, it would be good if they had more staff, for days off, maybe agency staff so people can go on walks and not be stuck in the daycentre, if they can’t go out on their own. Activities, in the morning they should have a meeting with everyone, instead of at lunch, then people aren’t coming up to them asking what they are doing today.”*

*“Needed better contacting during early/mid covid outbreak”*

*“Ok because it's new still short of staff but most of the staff are very good and helpful”*

*“It could be better run by keeping my key worker with me at my home and not keep swapping/changing this. I also don't like it when people tell me what to do”*

## **7. Aspire services must have a good quality of staff. The staff must support you and have a lot of experience.**

Customers were asked ‘what do you think about the support that you get? For example, support staff’. 85% of customers reported that the support they got was ‘good’, 15% reported that the support they got was ‘Ok’ and 0% reported the support they got was bad. Participants reported that:

*“You wouldn’t have a member of staff not trained, because they wouldn’t know what they are doing. We don’t have a lot of support; we only get 30 mins and they rush off to the bungalows. There’s not much time, 2hrs would be better, 9am – 10am would be better than 10am – 11am which is near their dinner. Support with cleaning would be good. Support to make things like apple pie or pizza from scratch, putting mushrooms on top things we like. Less microwave or ready meals and more cooking. Staff member used to help us make lasagne or tuna pasta bake, we did batch cooking and put it in the freezer after, to eat throughout the week, I would like to do batch cooking again, it’s better.”*

*“They are good, really good, they look after us really well. They help us sort any problems out. They ask if we want to talk privately”*

*“I like the staff; they know me and look after me. I don’t like it when new staff or temporary staff I didn’t know or that don’t know me come though.”*

*“Staff are very good with me even though I have just started at the service.”*

*“I like my support staff my keyworker makes me laugh”.*

Also, customers were asked 'what do you think about different staff at Aspire? This might be your key worker, managers, support workers' to discover if their experiences around different staff was homogenous. From the responses, it was seen that 84% of customers thought the different types of staff were 'Good', 14% of customers found them to be 'Ok' and 2% found that they were 'Bad'. Participants reported:

*"I get along with the staff that work with me/ I have a keyworker as well. I get on with her, she is friendly, we go for walks. I like support staff and managers. Don't think anything could be better, I like Aspire."*

*"Keyworker, she's alright. Managers are good. Support, they're alright."*

*"I like all the staff that work with me but I do have some favourites. I have a preference for male staff to support me with personal hygiene care."*

*"Really good because they help you out if you want to do anything, like go for a walk"*

*"Happy with everyone"*

*"My Keyworker is funny he takes me to football games and on Holidays"*

*"Keyworker is very good and the managers always have time for us."*

When exploring sub-themes around why people might think the variation of staff could improve, it was found that the changing of staff caused unfamiliarity, participants reported:

*"Keyworker and staff are good. Don't like agency staff, they bash you around<sup>1</sup> and stuff, they rush you, they sit in office all day with phones off. Reported it to manager. Want own staff back, less because of lockdown."*

*"The managers see, to change a lot. Just to get to know them and then a new one arrives. Staff are supportive to family."*

*"I like to be supported by regular staff who know me. I do know that different staff come to my home if regular staff are not on shift"*

*"Not keen on staff I don't know"*

*"Key workers good can be difficult when staff are not familiar with you, when they replace usual staff members"*

*"Some staff understand my needs better. I need set routines and don't like change so I prefer to have the same staff on a regular basis I tend to become more anxious with unfamiliar staff"*

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<sup>1</sup> This incident was discussed in the presence of Aspire staff and later reported through Aspire reporting systems.

Other factors to explain where services could improve was that some participants felt there was a difference in personalities or cultural fits, as in some responses managers were reported spending more time in the office.

*“A mixture of personalities so some staff I get along with better than others.”*

*“Keyworker, be good to have one. Managers in office. Support worker here with me, all staff support, I get support every day.”*

*“My Keyworker is good and listens. Managers are always busy, on the computer and emails. They have to do it but it is better at the end of the day or in their spare time. The staff are good.”*

To greater understand the quality of staff at Aspire, the consultation asked customers ‘who at Aspire services has helped you?’. Participants reported many names of staff members who have helped them and some customers also named some tasks, skills or activities and emotional circumstances, which they felt staff had helped them with:

*“They help you, make you more confident, managers help me sometimes. Keyworkers do help you as well.”*

*“Ordering Christmas presents and clothes.”*

*“All the staff help me. They help me print things on the printer”*

*“All the staff at my base help me to do the things I enjoy and they help me to stay calm”*

*“All the staff. they have sent info for online activities during the virus”*

*“The staff at Holmsley Green.”*

*“My keyworker helps me with lots of things, also other staff help me if i am sad”*

*“All the staff at Potternewton help me, support staff and Managers.”*

*“Everybody staff come around and help ya”*

The consultation also asked customers; ‘do you feel supported to make and keep friends?’. The changes during the Covid-19 pandemic have made it increasingly difficult for the general population to keep in contact with friends, family and communities. There is a digital gap, whereby people with disabilities are more likely to be digitally excluded (NHS Digital, 2021). However, 95% of customers reported that they felt supported to make and keep friends. Participants reported:

*“Yes, friends for all things. In lockdown we have been on Zoom, Aspire helped do this.”*

*“I do. I have my own friends, I don't see them now but I do normally. Sometimes you can see friends on Zoom. They helped me get on to Zoom, I have my own tablet. My keyworker helped me to get a tablet. To start with my keyworker showed me how to use Zoom, taught*

*me Zoom and Facebook. She showed me how to do it first and now I can do it. Put meeting ID and passcode to get in."*

*"Although has been made more difficult due to the Covid 19 pandemic."*

*"Yes, can't think. My mum, phone calls."*

*"Staff helped me to access zoom meetings and I saw some of my friends from my old day service"*

*"I miss my friends. I understand I can't see them at the moment because COVID and that's why everyone has to wear masks."*

*"Staff have helped me keep in touch with my girlfriend and friends"*

*"It has been hard to see my friends during lockdown, but staff usually help me stay in contact with them"*

*"Staff support me to meet my girlfriend and my friends, I cannot meet them during lockdown, so I phone them"*

The 5% of customers who did not feel as though they were supported to make and keep friends could be due to the limitations the Covid-19 pandemic has presented. Also, some customers do not wish to be supported to make friends, particularly customers who were reported as being more introverted. Participants reported:

*"Don't go to Carelands anymore so I don't see them"*

*"Staff take out others but not me. I used to go to church, no staff to take me"*

*"I don't see my friends at the moment as we are shielding due to the pandemic but hopefully that will change"*

*"I don't like social events with more than two people"*

*"The user likes to be on his own sometimes but I know if he wanted he could have plenty of friends"*

*"I feel if he went out on an evening more this would be more likely (probably do this at day centre?)"*

*"But during covid Barleyfields allowed to have their own laptop so zoom to friends in the hostel only available if one brought in."*

*"I do not make friends. I do not like people near me."*

Customers were also asked; 'Are you supported to have relationships?' This question was interpreted as romantic relationships or as different types of non-romantic relationships, for example, professional work relationships with staff as friendships are not allowed,

relationships such as family or friends. 66% of customers reported that they were supported to have relationships and 34% of customers reported that they were not supported to have relationships. Participants reported:

*"We have been boyfriend and girlfriend since we was 10 years old. I used to have lots of boyfriends, but then they told me what a friend was and what relationships were, this was before Aspire, it was a buddy scheme. Not many of the others have relationships. There's a woman I know, in a relationship but I don't think she knows about making love, I don't think she would understand, she's not like that. More people should have the opportunity to learn about making love. It's their body, their choice whether they do it or not. My ex-boyfriend was violent, my boyfriend now doesn't hit me. This didn't happen when I was at Aspire. The police helped me. I would rather talk to the police if that happened again. I would be able to ask support, I just would prefer to talk to the police."*

*"I have a girlfriend, she goes to a different base, before the virus I used to go do drama at her base, and see her at Gateway on a Wednesday. I now see her on the gateway zoom"*

*"I've got a boyfriend at the day centre."*

*"I have a boyfriend, my mum and my keyworker support me to buy valentines card and presents."*

*"I have a girlfriend who i see all the time."*

*"Staff have in the past arrange Dinner dates with my girlfriend"*

*"I have a boyfriend, he doesn't live in the same house. Staff help me phone him, because of the virus: staff helped me see him on my birthday"*

Some customers who did not view this question in a romantic way, talked about their experiences of professional staff relationships or familial relationships. Participants reported:

*"I've got a sister, I feel supported because I can phone my sister up or I can go on Messenger."*

*"Most of my relationships are with staff. I haven't been able to see family since last year because of covid"*

Other customers shared their feelings of a romantic relationship not being something they are interested in:

*"i don't want a relationship"*

*"I don't want a girlfriend they are too much headache"*

*"Mary used to phone me, but I'm bothered about a girlfriend. I have favourite staff relationships, at the daycentre."*

Further analysis showed some customers were not supported to have relationships or received limited support due to Covid-19 restrictions, barriers to accessing technology or lack of familial support. Participants reported:

*"It is home that do not support me to have relationships. I know I can talk to staff"*

*"In normal circumstances staff help me to stay in contact with my boyfriend, but because of covid I haven't been able to see him for some time"*

*"I tried to look for a girlfriend, I've had a girlfriend, but we fell out. I want someone nice"*

*"got a girlfriend but can't find her, I used to go to her house but can't because of COVID"*

*"staff support me to phone and meet my girlfriend when it is not lockdown time"*

A recurrent sub-theme emerged that some customers did not understand what a romantic relationship was.

*"I don't understand relationships and don't ask about them"*

*"He really does not understand"*

*"I don't want to be in a relationship and don't really know what it would mean to be in one"*

## **8.Changing from paying for all the services for everyone to paying for each service for each person (Aspire must be open and honest about changes to your care.)**

Those participants that thought it was a good idea said so because it sounded fairer, as people will be paying for the services they use.

Another positive theme was people thought it should lead to more choice:

*"good because if people want to do different things it should be easier for them to do different things"*

*"I hope it help me to do more stuff that I like doing. Like go to more nightclubs, cinemas, theatres, events. Not have to go to bed at 10pm every night!"*

A significant number of people did not know what they thought, either because of not understanding the concept, or because there was not concrete example as how things would change.

*"It could be a really good thing if it meant people had more input into their care, more choice and more personalisation but that kind of change would require more money, is there more money?"*

*"Not sure if this is a good idea or not. It could mean that services are limited for one person, to provide extra support for someone else. Or someone moving away could have used their*

*allocated money and not have much to move with. Or someone coming into Aspire who have used their share of resources for a given period when they arrive.”*

*“Do you firstly have enough staff for this? If so how much more is this going to cost the council and how much more for customers, the reason your customers are in centre are believe is to do things as a group. How will you make this work and more so how would this be good for customers?”*

The concern was that it will cost more to implement and administrate this initiative, and due to a limited pot of money, this may ultimately mean less money for actual services. A general feeling of cynicism arose, as to whether this is a cost cutting exercise. It is assumed that this initiative will lead to more administration costs and was viewed as doubtful that there is additional money available to cover these additional admin costs and again, resulting in less money for actual services people use.

*“It depends on whether it leads to an overall cut in funding, this would be bad. But if it leads to more activities and more support that would be great”*

It is questioned as to whether these changes will realistically make it easier for services users to swap between services. For example, are people able to attend services such as Tech North for 6 months, then begin using another service such as Purple Patch and then be able to return to the previous service. Participants were also concerned that existing services, in particular day opportunities which people enjoyed would change. Although in principle people felt like it was fair, that people pay for the services they use, there were concerns that it would increase bureaucracy and therefore cost and ultimately reduce service.

### **Further Feedback**

‘Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience with Aspire?’

Overall people left positive comments or said they didn’t have anything else to say. When we had the semi structured interviews this was an opportunity to prompt and talk generally, though usually we were way over the planned time. People also shared their frustrations at the change of services due to the pandemic, a positive reflection on the normal service as they were looking forward to going back to day services and seeing friends.

Some carers used it as an opportunity to say thank you.

*“I have not had a lot to do with Aspire for nearly a year, because of covid situation but I will have to say thank you for keeping us in touch and for your kind thoughts through these hard times you in my opinion have tried your best to keep going for those who need it and in the post we me and my brother can only say thank you. He knows as well as us his family you would be those for us. Thank you.”*

*“As parents, we believe that our son looks forward to the services provided, enjoys the company, and is particularly delighted to take part in the activities. It is so important to keep him 'on the move'!”*

*“My daughter lives at South Leeds supported living. I am very happy with the staff there; they have done an incredible job in lockdown. I do think that they are overstretched a lot of the time. Meal supports are difficult with one person supporting to make a meal. It has been wonderful to have extra support from the day centre staff who have been redeployed to Joseph Court. Once lockdown ends, I think it is time to start letting people out a bit more. I understand Aspire is doing everything to keep them safe, but this can't go on forever. They have to start living again. It would be nice to see them gradually being able to leave the house even if only going shopping.”*

It was also an opportunity to raise concerns, sometimes about things outside Aspires control like transport. Though only a few people mentioned the transport concerns, it had a very significant impact on the quality of life / access to service and stress levels for customers and their carers.

*“Transport needs to be looked at. Our son is the first and last off the bus each day. The day is much too long after leaving the centre at 3.30 and can get home at 5 or later. During covid my husband and I have taken him as transport (when I phoned said they couldn't ensure some drives and escort). As he is supported to be in a 'bubble' this seemed crazy. Transport is also poor when he goes to respite. He is taken all the usual nightly route and then back again and heads to Scott Hall respite (great place and staff) getting there well after 5 after leaving centre at 3.30. Much too long to be on a bus. This is mentioned on every consultation and told it's nothing to do with social care - transport is a law unto itself. Why cannot Aspire have its own transport?”*

*“I enjoy going to my day centre Fearnville, my only problem is transport. There is no consistency with the bus drivers, and when there is no bus, a taxi is sent, and they do not know the client's name they are collecting. The council should inform our parents, carers if a taxi is going to collect us, and should be on time instead of me waiting around, until they come”*

The point was also raised by several carers that the survey was not aimed at them. If the exercise were to be repeated, we would do two versions and rephrase the questions to make them more accessible to carers.

*“I found the consultation difficult to fill in as not a user of the service - My son is and I know he felt well looked after in lockdown and was thrilled to be taught by support workers how to use zoom to contact and see his brother- I have no information on whether paying for all the service or paying for each person on the council is more equal and hope some of the users do not lose out financially or lose help they rely on. Personally, would like my son plus others to have more exercise i.e. swimming, games etc as a preventive measure of health = as often users are overweight diet? lack of exercise?”*

*"This consultation is really quite a complicated document. Will be there many of Aspire clients who can understand it? I suspect there will be very few, if any, at my daughter's day centre who would be able to. As for understanding the implications of a new contract I would guess this as an honest consultation is a non-starter. Also says the council are changing how aspire are paid. Not really a consultation then, is it?"*

Of the 148 responses to this question, 12 used it as an opportunity to raise issues and complaints. This is an 8% rate of complaints. Unfortunately, most of them could not be resolved or signposted due to them being received anonymously.

*"This is a new build, and the builder did not put any handles in the wet room for my son so delayed his moving also the toilet was not suitable far too small still waiting for a larger and comfortable and safer one. Also shower chair is the cheapest and not suitable so we are buying a better one"*

*"I am a solo patient in my eighties, my daughter is a resident and is almost 60 years of age. Had lots of issues recently mainly due to poor staffing, lack of communication and change overs also lack of space. My daughter has limited communication skills with an acute disability and hygiene problems. Has been left solo with male staff attending overnight sleep ins and all that involves undressing, toilet care etc and is much to my disapproval. And, last but not least, her house phone broken since 25th dec. This has still not been actioned after several complaints."*

*"Yes. I think they need to get better at including partner in decision about their girl/boy (husband/wife). They should let people decide which bank, building society, post office, credit union they want to have their money with. They should also let them have a bank card if they want to use one. They need to remember opticians, dentist, hairdressing needs. They need to remember anniversaries like birthdays, valentine's day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and wedding anniversaries."*

*"I love the home I'm in but I need regular staff that I can rely on all the time when agency staff come in and look after me, I don't know them and they don't know me and I cannot speak as I need staff that know me. My mum filled in all answers for me."*

*"Supported living = prison. Treated like children"*

*"My brother seems very happy and safe. Home is nice and staff are very caring. Area is nice. Managers responsive. My only slight niggle is that I feel he could be taken out on an evening more if they had more staff available. The staff ratio to clients could be more and could resolve the issue."*

*"I feel that aspire day services at Holt park are inadequate, the service and options offered are not person centred, they do the same thing each week, just because they have always done them. They do not care for individual s who the activities do not suit. They do not make adjustments, think outside the box"*

*"Could you find a name for people who use the service other than "customer " which implies money. e.g., Attendee, individual, client, guest, or visitor."*

### **Trustee Responses**

Below is a detailed analysis of trustee responses, separate from the previously stated themes. All data was used in the completion of the thematic analysis. All participants completed the same questionnaire during this consultation.

When trustees were asked 'what are your goals?' it was noted by one trustee that they had the ambition to take Aspire forward and achieve greater things. The participant reported:

*"To provide leadership to the Board. To provide supervision and support to the Chief Executive."*

Another question addressed the following, 'does your support listen to you?' Participants reported:

*"My experience of seeing clients interacting with carers has been quite humbling and I am amazed at the support and attentiveness given"*

*"Excellent relationship with CEO"*

Trustees were also asked 'do you feel safe at Aspire services?' A participant reported:

*"Aspire provides a safe environment for conducting the business of the Board"*

To gather feedback on environmental, social and functional factors around Aspire services, trustees were asked 'what do you think about where your service is?' A participant reported:

*"Headquarters provide off street parking, secure entrance to the building"*

A trustee also responded to the question of 'do staff ask you how you feel?' the participant reported:

*"General conversation- e.g. how are things, everything ok?"*

Trustees were also asked 'what do you think about how your service is managed?'

Participants reported:

*"There are good management structures, with appropriate training and supervision in place to ensure ASPIRE is a well led service."*

*"I think our senior managers are very competent. I am not too sure about some more junior managers."*

Regarding the payment changes of Aspire services, trustees were asked 'what do you think about changing from paying for all the services for everyone to, paying for each service for each person?' Participants reported:

*“I think that devolution of the client choosing to pay for the services they require is paramount to making choices. I think this is also helpful to aspire to have a continuity plan as the current arrangement of contracts and long-winded renewal process does not provide for a stable environment which is bedrock to provide this kind of care.”*

*“Allows the opportunity to provide the care and support that individuals would like for themselves.”*

*“Paying for each service for each person seems fairer.”*

Finally, trustees were asked ‘is there anything else you would like to say about Aspire?’ Participants reported:

*“It continually strives to improve, it is well led, it has the well-being of the people we support at the heart of everything we do. It is ambitious, well led and is a Provider of choice.”*

As a future improvement, it would be beneficial to engage more with trustees to gather further feedback. Further engagement could perhaps be done by arranging individual interviews or holding a focus group.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Aspire services met the majority of the CQC’s fundamental standards. Overall, reports from customers have suggested that Aspire provide a beneficial service to most people who use their services and customers have good relationships with staff. Customers experience care which is right for them and felt listened to as well as reporting feeling safe at their services. There were no reports of services being unhygienic or non-compliant to Covid-19 safety and cleaning. On average, people reported knowing who the manager of their services were and how to make a complaint, however, not all customer reported knowing this or reported any evidence for us to verify the responses. As previously stated in this report, Aspire has created a culture where customers feel that they can engage with staff and share their concerns, but it is also important that all customers know, understand and have a method in place to remember the organisation’s complaints procedure or who the manager of their service is.

Customers reported that they thought their support was good and when it came to ‘different’ members of staff, which included anyone other than just a support worker, some of the responses were mixed. An overarching theme was that unfamiliarity with staff causes anxiety or unease, as there is no established relationship, and subsequently person-centred care or support could not be achieved due to various factors such as, a lack of time to understand the individual and a lack of trust in the staff member. Customers also highlighted the desire to be able to have more say in who would be supporting them, such as keyworkers and support workers. Customer experience would be greatly enhanced by having a greater say in who comes into their home and furthermore, help reduce anxiety

and disagreement, as well as enhance better interpersonal relationships. Retention initiatives to keep Aspire staff would also help to reduce the need of staff replacement and reduce the occasions where customers would encounter unfamiliarity. It should be noted that the staff turnover rates at Aspire are far lower than the average at only 9% compared with 31% nationally (Skills for Care, 2020). It is critical that the changes do not increase staff turnover if the quality of service and the customer experience is to be maintained.

Some stand out factors that came up as part of this feedback exercise related to environment. Some of the leisure centres do not have windows. This would raise concerns about, not only, the impact on customers who may spend time there, but also the impact on staff's mental health and wellbeing due to a lack of natural light or stimuli and its apparent effects on mood, sleep, and health (Boubekri et al, 2014; Blume et al, 2019). Further areas for improvement were around relationships. Some customers reported not being able to go out or to see their partners or friends during the pandemic. Whilst strict guidelines are enforced or when they are not, it felt essential that something would be in place, so people felt able to report a loss of contact or feelings of disengagement. This is necessary to ensure people are kept connected to those they care about. When asked about romantic relationships, there appeared to be a gap in understanding around those relationships, which may benefit from more access to learning courses so that people can make informed decisions.

In terms of the changes to individualised payments, a repeated concern was that the changes would result in additional costs in terms of management and bureaucracy and could lead to a reduced service. Importantly, we can see from this feedback exercise the overall view that there is much more provided by Aspire than is outlined in the individual 'commissioned' service and in any decisions the cost and value of this must be factored in.

Aspire often lead in co-ordinating the third sector response in the area of learning disabilities, without being specifically 'commissioned' for this role, an example has been in response to the COVID 19 pandemic the CEO has produced a daily digest email summarising new legislation and the sectors response to this, providing an excellent source of information and possibly more importantly a strong sense of connection across the city and services. The bulletin has been vital in highlighting both gaps and possibilities in services across the city and added a much-needed smile to people in the "song of the day".

Across the care sector staff turnover is a serious problem, and from our years of experience evaluating services in Leeds many people's lives are improved and enabled by consistency and quality of front-line staff. Aspires legacy, a part of Leeds City Council, is demonstrated in the incredible commitment of the staff, their core values, but it also marks the foundation of structure and security that benefits the Aspire staff team. The value of this should not be underestimated.

Family carers in particular raised concerns that they often did not want to formally complain about. Concerns such as staff having a lot of responsibility in what they suspected were

relatively low paid jobs was an underlying theme. Responsibilities like managing the diet of their loved one, balancing between nutritional knowledge and respecting peoples' choices was raised as an area where further training, for example from the NHS nutrition teams may be useful. Lack of digital knowledge and experience of care working staff has been highlighted by the pandemic with many support staff not having the digital skills they are expected to enable their charges to acquire. Conversely, we can see a good take up of digital platform use by Aspire members, there are more people attending the weekly online catch up than have been attending the Leeds Learning Disability Peoples Parliament since it moved online. What will the council do to ensure these additional factors and support are not lost if Aspire are just another service provider and are competing purely on cost per person in economic terms? This is the point consistently raised by family members, carers, and trustees.

To conclude, Aspire met the majority of the CQC fundamental standards when reviewing participants feedback and is considered an excellent service in Leeds. This report makes the following recommendations to further improve Aspire services:

- Ensure customers have access to information, in a way which is accessible to them, around how to make formal or informal complaints about their care or service.
- Ensure customers have access to information, in a way which is accessible to them, around how to contact the manager of their care or services and where to find them, as well as who to contact if an issue arose with their manager or were not happy with the response they had received.
- Customers should have a greater voice and opinion over who will be involved in their care or support. It is recommended that people have a voice in who their key worker or support workers will be to reduce anxiety and enhance interpersonal relationships.
- Consider initiatives to retain Aspire staff, so that customers can experience reduced anxiety or unfamiliarity due to consistently changing staff.
- Consider accessing training in sex and relationships for both customers and staff to support better conversations and informed decision making.
- Consider the 'added value' already offered by Aspire services that may be overlooked in a change to commissioning methods.

### **Reflexive Statement**

As a project worker for a human rights organisation for people with learning disabilities and an independent advocacy organisation, who had no previous connections with Aspire, it was interesting to understand the services and listen to the experiences of Aspire customers. From the outset, it was a good experience of working on the development of the consultation with customers from the beginning and some interactions from the involvement coordinators across all the service areas. From previous experiences of working

with people with learning disabilities, it is consistently reported that many organisations do not include people with learning disabilities to truly co-produce work. Many have simply created consultations from their own perspective and not one of a person who is learning disabled thus leading to inaccessible consultations or inaccurate representations of a population. This consultation was co-produced by people with lived experience from the outset.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted data collection. Best practice would have ensured that all data collection was collected by independent project workers, directly from customers, however, restrictions meant that this was not possible to complete face to face interviews. Zoom video calling was substituted for this, but it also meant that project workers had little control over participants environments, for example sometimes staff were present or other customers or relatives and in turn may have impacted some customers responses. Furthermore, many customers were supported by staff to complete the surveys as some customers needed support to do so. Again, independent project workers were not present to ensure a structured interview took place or record semi-structured questions.

On reflection, given the limitations of the consultation within the limited time frame and restrictions of the pandemic, the consultation could have been improved. One main adaptation would have been to ensure the questionnaire carers received, had a questioning style which was aimed at those stakeholders. Therefore, it would be clear that their opinion was being sought. However, a positive was that the confusion led to many of the carers contacting independent project workers by telephone, thus enabling longer conversations and direct feedback to be collected. Many carers appreciated the opportunity to be listened to by an independent party. It was also noted by many participants that this was not a true consultation as no matter the outcome, the council would be making the changes to the way it handles Aspires contracts and invoicing. It is hoped that this consultation will enable the views of customers and carers to be carefully considered and the strengths which Aspire provide, are protected within the changes.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Finalised Consultation Questions with underpinning CQC Fundamental Standards**

**You should have care that is right for you and meets your needs.**

1. What do you like doing at Aspire services?
2. What do you not like doing at Aspire services?
3. Do you choose what you do in the daytime?
4. Do you choose what you do at night?

**You should be treated with respect and asked about what you want to happen.**

5. What are your goals? A goal is something you want to do for yourself.
6. Does your support listen to you?

**You should be always kept safe.**

7. Do you feel safe at Aspire services?

**Where your service is should be a safe and clean place.**

8. What do you think about where your service is?

**You must be able to complain about your care**

9. Do staff ask you how you feel?
10. Do you know how to make a complaint?

**Aspire services must have plans to make sure your service is good.**

11. Do you know the manager of your service?
12. What do you think about how your service is managed?

**Aspire services must have a good quality of staff. The staff must support you and have a lot of experience.**

13. What do you think about the support that you get? For example, support staff
14. What do you think about different staff at Aspire? This might be your key worker, managers, support workers
15. Who at Aspire services has helped you?
16. Do you feel supported to make and keep friends?
17. Are you supported to have relationships?

**Aspire wants to be open and honest about the changes.**

What do you think about changing from paying for all the services for everyone to, paying for each service for each person?

Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience with Aspire?

**Appendix 2: Quantitative Data**

Do you choose what you do in the daytime?

- Yes: 196 (90%)
- No: 14 (6%)
- Sometimes: 7 (3%)



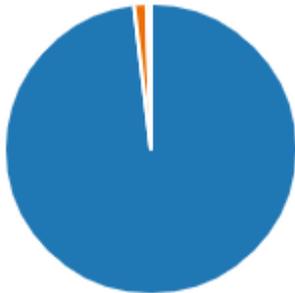
Do you choose what you do at night-time?

- Yes: 166 (87%)
- No: 18 (9%)
- Sometimes: 7 (4%)



Does your support listen to you?

- Yes: 211 (98%)
- No: 3 (1%)
- Sometimes: 1 (<1%)



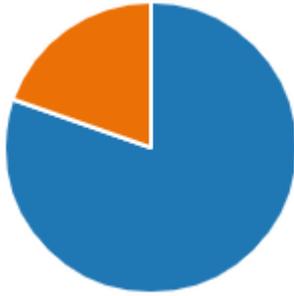
Do you know how to make a complaint?

- Yes: 168 (79%)
- No: 45 (21%)



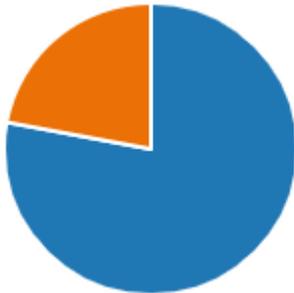
Do you know the manager of your service?

- Yes: 168 (79%)
- No: 45 (21%)



What do you think about how your service is managed?

- Good: 166 (78%)
- OK: 47 (22%)
- Bad: 0 (0%)



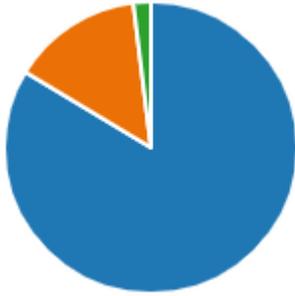
What do you think about the support that you get? For example, support staff.

- Good: 186 (85%)
- OK: 33 (15%)
- Bad: 1 (0%)



What do you think about different staff at Aspire? This might be your key worker, managers, support workers

- Good: 174 (84%)
- OK: 30 (14%)
- Bad: 4 (2%)



Do you feel supported to make and keep friends?

- Yes: 205 (95%)
- No: 10 (5%)



Are you supported to have relationships?

- Yes: 111 (66%)
- No: 58 (34%)



What do you think about changing from paying for all the services for everyone to, paying for each service for each person?

- Good Idea: 104 (79%)
- Bad Idea: 28 (21%)



### Appendix 3: EasyRead Consultation produced by CHANGE

## Aspire Consultation

easy read

#### About

We want to ask you some questions about Aspire services.

First we want to ask you about your experience.

Then we want to tell you about a change in how Aspire services are paid for.

#### Your Experience

We want to know what you think about Aspire.

Aspire provides lots of different services.

Aspire provides a **supported living** service.

**Supported Living** is where people live independently and have support workers if they need help.

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Some people might live on their own but need help to make their meals.

Aspire also provides **day opportunities** these are sometimes called fulfilling lives services.

An **opportunity** means a chance to do something.

A **day opportunity** is an activity people might do in the daytime. For example, going to a sports centre, or working in an Aspire cafe.

#### Questions

You should have care that is right for you and meets your needs.

1. What do you like doing at Aspire services?

2. What do you **not** like doing at Aspire services?

3. Do you choose what you do in the daytime?

Yes  No  Please explain:

4. Do you choose what you do at night?

Yes  No  Please explain:



**You should be treated with respect and asked about what you want to happen.**



5. What are your goals?  
A goal is something you want to do for yourself.

Yes  No  Please explain:



6. Does your support listen to you?

Yes  No  Please explain:



**You should be always kept safe.**



7. Do you feel safe at Aspire services?

Yes  No  Please explain:



**Where your service is should be a safe and clean place.**



8. What do you think about where your service is?

Yes  No  Please explain:



**You must be able to complain about your care.**



9. Do staff ask you how you feel?

Yes  No  Please explain:

6

7

9



10. Do you know how to make a complaint?

Yes  No  Please explain:



**Aspire services must have plans to make sure your service is good.**



11. Do you know the manager of your service?

Yes  No  Please explain:



12. What do you think about how your service is managed?

Good  Ok  Bad



**Aspire services must have a good quality of staff. The staff must support you and have a lot of experience.**



13. What do you think about the support that you get? For example, support staff.

Good  Ok  Bad



14. What do you think about different staff at Aspire? This might be your key worker, managers, support workers

Good  Ok  Bad



15. Who at Aspire services has helped you?

Yes  No  Please explain:

9

10

11



16. Do you feel supported to make and keep friends?

Yes  No  Please explain:



17. Are you supported to have relationships?

Yes  No  Please explain:

**What is changing**



Aspire get money from Leeds City Council to make sure you get the care and support you need.



Leeds City council are changing how Aspire are paid for the work they do.



The services at Aspire are staying the same.



At the moment, Aspire get paid this money in a **Block Contract**.



**A Block Contract** means Leeds City Council give Aspire money for different services all together.



This money pays for all the different services Aspire provides like day opportunities and supported living.



The council plans to stop using a Block Contract and start using **Individual Contracts**.

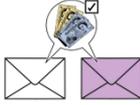


**Individual Contracts** means that Leeds City Council will give Aspire money for each customer by name for each service the customer gets from Aspire.

12

13

14

 <p>The Council and Aspire will look at what support each customer gets at the moment and write this in to their <b>support plan</b>.</p>		<p>Aspire will get roughly the same amount of money from Leeds City Council when the change first happens.</p>	 <p><b>Aspire wants to be open and honest about the changes .</b></p>
 <p>Each customers <b>support plan</b> will say what support they get and how much that support costs.</p>		<p>Then if more people decide to go to Aspire, they will get more money from Leeds City Council.</p>	 <p>What do you think about changing from paying for all the services for everyone to paying for each service for each person?</p>
 <p>The way the Council pays Aspire will change. But the type of service and the way Aspire provide the service to the customer will not change.</p>		<p>If people choose to go somewhere else then the money will move with them to a new provider.</p>	<p>Good idea <input type="checkbox"/> Bad idea <input type="checkbox"/> Please explain:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>
 <p>Changing the way services are paid for means everyone can easily see where money is spent.</p>			



Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience with Aspire?



**The Advonet Group**

Providing solutions for you

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Providing Independent Advocacy

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