Your Life
your choice

WORCESTERSHIRE

MARKET POSITION STATEMENT
FEBRUARY 2015

INTRODUCTION

What is this Market Position Statement and who is it for?

This Market Position Statement (MPS) is part of Worcestershire County Council's "Future Lives" vision. In the future, care will be directly and easily accessible to individuals, their families and carers, via on online marketplace of services "Your Life Your Choice", and there will be a diverse market of personalised care and support that offers real choice and control to individuals.

The MPS is aimed at existing and potential providers of adult social care and support. It represents the start of a dialogue between commissioners, providers and Worcestershire residents with the shared ambition of developing a thriving market of personalised care and support in our county.

This document is intended as an introduction for providers and potential providers of services about future opportunities in the market to assist you with your own business plans and enable you to build on your knowledge of local needs to develop new activities and services. This is a living document and a two-way dialogue and we want to find out about how we can help you to develop your business and service, enter new social care markets and innovate. Together we want to ensure that we maximise value for money in a climate of shrinking resources, for the benefit of all the residents of Worcestershire.

The story of Worcestershire's "Market Position Statement for the Your Life Your Choice Online Marketplace":

CHAPTER 1 – OUR VISION
The "direction of travel" for WCC adult social care

CHAPTER 2 – CURRENT DEMAND
A snapshot of current service provision

CHAPTER 3 – FUTURE DEMAND
What are some of the key future trends?

CHAPTER 4 – THE MARKET IN THE FUTURE
How does the market work now, what is needed in the future, and how do we move forwards together?

This MPS is intended to be a practical guide rather than a theoretical document. Throughout this MPS, we will therefore try to make the links to the impact on you as social care providers and start to answer the question "What does this mean for us?" and to highlight what future opportunities are likely to be available. We will also ask for your input and opinions as to what further information and support from the County Council would be useful for you.

CHAPTER 1: Our Vision

The direction of travel for WCC adult social care

Future Lives is our main change programme in Adult Services and Health and aims to achieve a number of outcomes:

- Keep people healthy and independent for as long as possible and reduce the need for adult social care
- Give service users greater choice over the services they use and greater control over their lives
- Make sure that services are safe and effective
- Achieve the savings we need to make
- Make sure that we comply with our legal duties – especially those new duties under the Care Act

To achieve these outcomes, the Future Lives programme will:

- Empower people to look after themselves
- Harness community assets and mobilise volunteers
- Maximise the impact of prevention, early help and recovery services
- Increase the use of personal budgets and direct payments
- Develop the market for care and support services
- Streamline pathways and integrate health and social care services
- Introduce new technologies
- Make sure staff have the right skill mix
- Involve people in the change

A key part of the Future Lives strategy is the implementation of an e-marketplace, as part of a new comprehensive health and wellbeing website. The website – "Your Life Your Choice" - will include information and advice about how to stay healthy and independent and plan for old age, and where to find support in local communities. It will also include an online contact assessment for adult social care and an e-marketplace. The e-marketplace will allow residents to find out about care services available in Worcestershire, choose, arrange and buy their care online, direct from providers.

Future Lives, and the new website, are part of Worcestershire County Council's response to the Care Act 2014, which comes into effect from April 2015 onwards. The Care Act requires Local Authorities to help develop a market that delivers a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services, to be available to their communities to give people more control and help them to make more effective and personalised choices over their care.

Local Authorities should think about whether their approaches to buying and arranging services support and promote the wellbeing of people receiving those services and should also engage with local providers, to help each other understand what services are likely to be needed in the future, and what new types of support should be developed.

In line with the Care Act's requirements, the website looks to provide comprehensive information and advice about care and support services in the local area, and to improve people's access to a more diverse range of services. By including details about services, plus information on quality, cost and feedback from users, the website will enable people to make informed choices about how to meet their needs and requirements.

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

The Your Life Your Choice e-marketplace, due to “go live” from April 2015, presents a huge opportunity for existing and potential providers of social care services in Worcestershire to market their services both to service users in receipt of a Council-funded personal budget and to residents who are funding their own care. It also offers significant opportunities for providers who want to develop new types of services which respond directly to people’s needs, meaning that providers can link directly to their customers much more effectively.

While Worcestershire County Council is keen to enable this direct relationship between provider and customer by stepping away from its traditional role as “broker” of care, we also recognise that we have an equally important role to play in facilitating and developing the market. For example, we can use our unique position to bring the information we know about population and demand into a dialogue with providers about investment and risk.

To give us your feedback, e-mail us at **futurelives@worcestershire.gov.uk** or see our webpages at **www.worcestershire.gov.uk/futurelives**

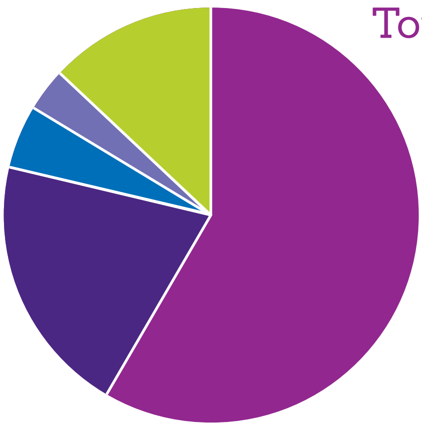
CHAPTER 2: Current Demand

A snapshot of current service provision

The tables and graphs below provide a snapshot of Worcestershire County Council's current spending with external providers and a breakdown of where the main areas of spend are.

Figure 1 - WCC gross budgeted external expenditure on services 2014/15

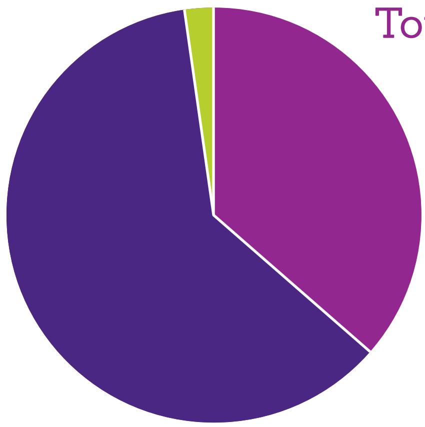
Older People



Total Spend £66.1m

- Residential & nursing care £38.8m
- Home care £13.2m
- Direct payments £3.5m
- Promoting Independence & Assistive Technology £1.9m
- Other commissioned services £8.7m

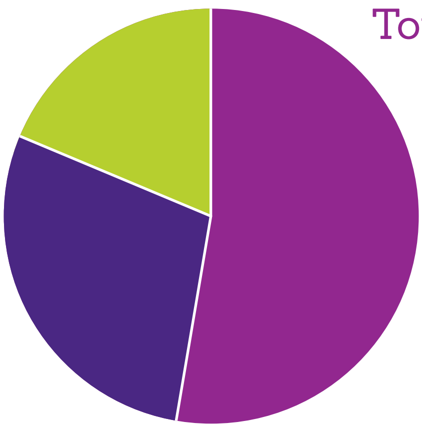
People with Physical Disabilities



Total Spend £12.9m

- Residential & nursing care £4.5m
- Home care £8.2m
- Day opportunities £0.2m

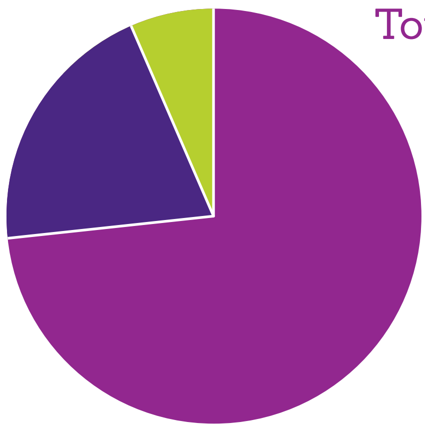
People with Learning Disabilities



Total Spend £45.7m

- Residential & nursing care £25.0m
- Home care £12.1m
- Supported accommodat'n £8.6m

Mental Health Services



Total Spend £7.4m

- Residential & nursing care £5.4m
- Home care £1.4m
- Reablement £0.6m

Source: Worcestershire County Council Budget Book 2014/15

Table 1 - Totals by type of service

	Residential & nursing care £m	Home care £m	Other commissioned services £m	Personal budget direct payments £m
Older People	38.8	13.2	10.6	3.5
Physical Disabilities	4.5	3.8	0.2	4.4
Learning Disabilities	25.0	6.9	8.6	5.2
Mental Health	5.4	1.0	0.6	0.4
Total	**73.7**	**24.9**	**20.0**	**13.5**

Source: Worcestershire County Council Budget Book 2014/15

"Other commissioned services" include extra care, supported housing, community meals, community equipment, services for carers etc.

As well as spending figures, we can also provide below details of the number of individuals funded partially or wholly by Worcestershire County Council to use adult social care services. This is also shown as a proportion of the relevant Worcestershire population.

Table 2 – Proportion of residents receiving a Worcestershire County Council-funded service

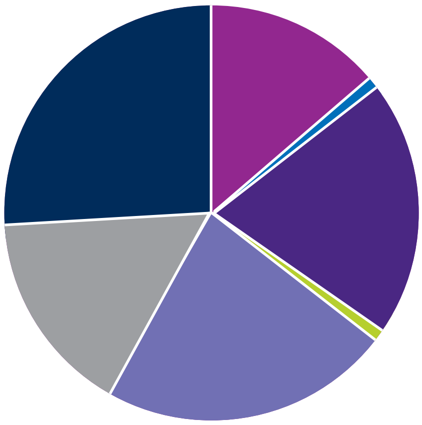
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 Q1
Residents aged 18-64			
Total Worcestershire population aged 18-64	333,545	339,806	337,693
Number of people aged 18-64 receiving a WCC-funded service	2,262	2,203	2,212
Percentage of total population receiving a service	**0.68%**	**0.65%**	**0.66%**
Residents aged 65+			
Total Worcestershire population aged 65+	110,789	114,658	118,484
Number of people aged 65+ receiving a WCC-funded service	4,132	3,993	3,992
Percentage of total population receiving a service	**3.73%**	**3.48%**	**3.37%**

Source: Worcestershire County Council Adult Social Care Data Sets 2014-15 Quarter 1

Information on community-based services is also provided in the charts below, showing the types of community-based services which Worcestershire service users currently access.

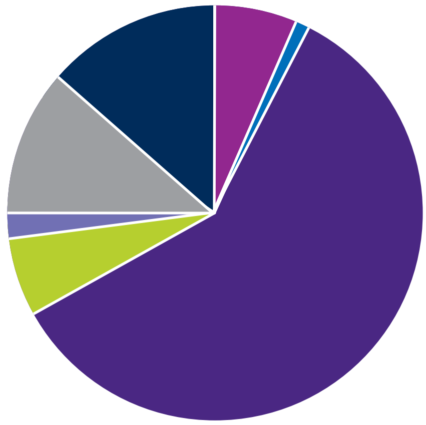
Figure 2 – Number of WCC-funded people using community based services

Numbers of people (aged 18-64) using community based services - June 2014



- Day opportunities (415)
- Equipment (13)
- Home care (575)
- Meals (8)
- Professional support (559)
- Other (402)
- Direct payments (698)

Numbers of people (aged 65+) using community based services - June 2014



- Day opportunities (189)
- Equipment (8)
- Home care (1,727)
- Meals (126)
- Professional support (61)
- Other (361)
- Direct payments (313)

Source: Worcestershire County Council Adult Social Care Data Sets 2014-15 Quarter 1

A number of Worcestershire County Council's current "in-house" provider services will also be commissioned externally during the period 2014-16, and current spend on these services is summarised in the chart below:

Table 3 – In-house provider services (FACS eligible) – current spend

Service area	WCC expenditure
Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities – Resource Centres	£2.0m
Learning Disability/Physical Disability Connect Day Services	£1.9m
Learning Disabilities Residential Care (including Short Breaks)	£1.7m
Side by Side Dementia Services	£2.2m
Shared Lives team	£0.3m
Total current expenditure	**£8.1m**

Source: Worcestershire County Council 2013/14 Expenditure

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

As we move from commissioning services ourselves from providers towards increased use of direct payments and service user-controlled budgets, control over this spend (the "spending power") will gradually move from the County Council to individual service users. Providers in the Worcestershire market will need to adjust from a relationship with the County Council to a relationship directly with customers, from the initial marketing of services right through to the ordering and payment for services, and ultimately the feedback and customer satisfaction rating.

There will also be additional opportunities for the market as the Council continues the externalisation of services which have historically been provided "in-house". As the Council moves away from a role of itself being a provider, the external market will be able to take these additional opportunities of responding to service users' needs and move into new areas of service provision.

A note on self-funders

Social care in England is means tested, unlike health services through the NHS which are free at the point of delivery. This means there are many people who fund their own care, in whole or in part, who are not included in the figures above concerning service usage. This is likely to be a significant and growing proportion of the population, given the demographic changes expected (see below).

Based on local estimates, approximately 75% of registered care home places and around 50% of home care support in Worcestershire are self-funded. On top of these figures, there are also large numbers of individuals funding their own care choices for e.g. daytime activities, social groups etc.

In the future, it is predicted that the number of people who will fund their own care will grow. With rising numbers of personal budget holders exercising choice over their care and support, distinctions between personal budget holders and self-funders continue to decrease. Increasingly, we therefore want to treat self-funding as another type of self-directed support, and aim to enable a social care market that works well for all.

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

Self-funders will require, as with council-funded service users, help with support planning and help in finding service providers who suit both their needs and budgets. Specific areas of likely support requirements are help with:

- Choosing - what to look for in a service, how to find out if it is provided and what the quality is like
- Value for money – knowing the prices of different services, and how this relates to what is provided and its quality
- Doing the leg work at crisis point – many self-funders and their carers, particularly at times of crisis, are not able to undertake the work required to research and buy the services they require
- Advice and support about the options open on financing their care

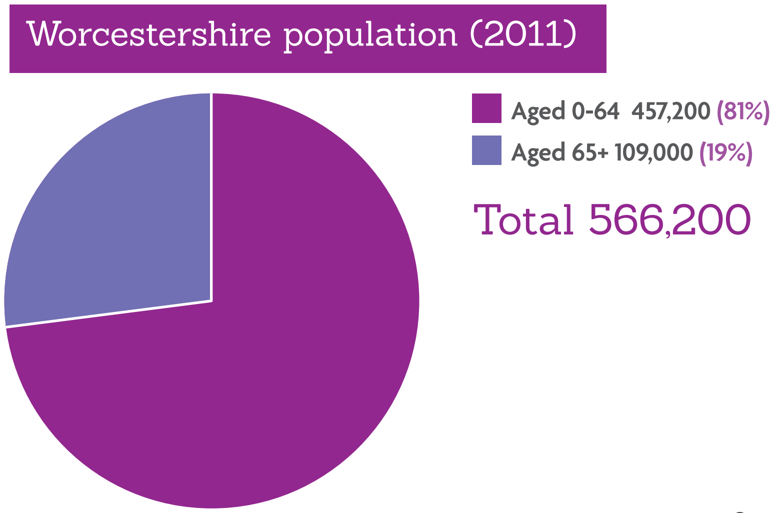
CHAPTER 3: Future Demand

What are some of the key future trends?

3.1 Increasing Demand – Population Change

The Worcestershire population in 2011 was 566,200. Of this population, the number of people aged 65 and over was 109,000 (19%).

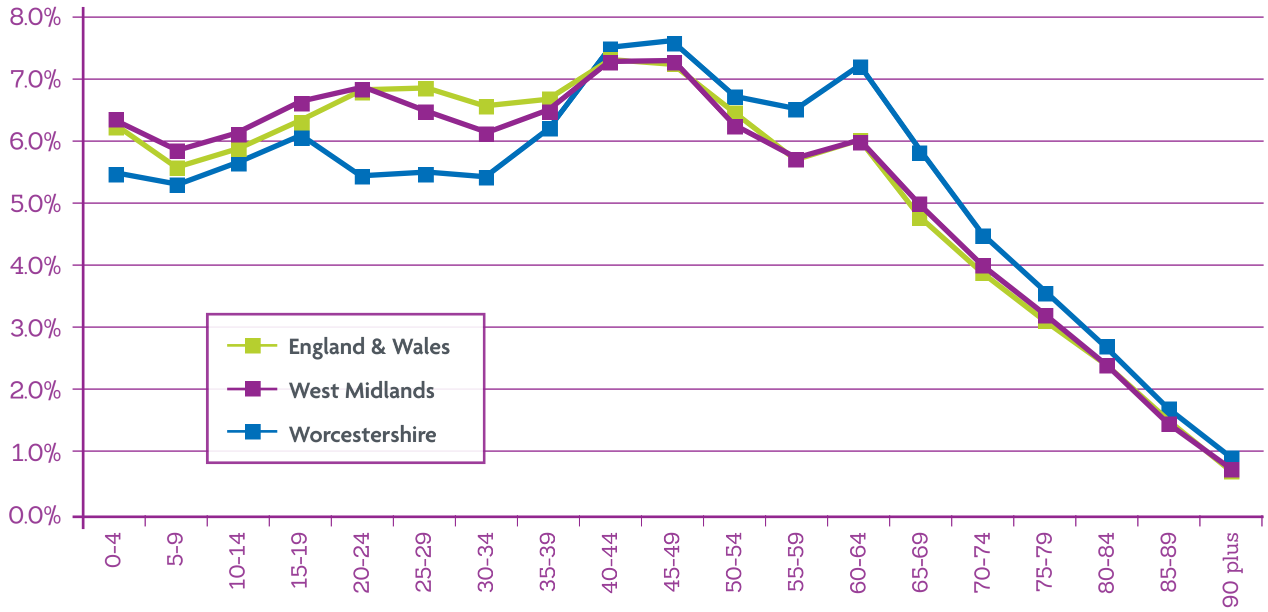
Figure 3 – Worcestershire population



Source: Office for National Statistics 2011 census

The following graph illustrates the demographic of Worcestershire's population in comparison to the West Midlands and the national picture. This shows that in comparison to both the regional and national demographic spread, Worcestershire has fewer residents in the 0-44 age bracket but more people aged 45 and above. In particular, Worcestershire has a higher proportion of residents in the 55-69 age range than the national average.

Figure 4 - Age Structure in Worcestershire, West Midlands Region and England, 2011



Source: Worcestershire Demographic Report Census 2011 (base source ONS 2011 Census)

As has been widely acknowledged, population changes will play a huge part in the future of adult social care. This will be true at the national level, and is also of particular relevance locally to Worcestershire, given the county's higher proportion of older adults.

National forecasts are for a significant growth in the numbers of people aged over 65 and 85 and an increased prevalence of people living with dementia and other limiting long-term illness. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that 9.5 million people in England are over 65 years old. This number is expected to rise to nearly 15 million by 2037, an increase of around 60%. Within this total, the number of very old people grows even faster. Nationally, there are currently 1.3 million people aged over 80 years old and this is predicted to rise to over 3 million by 2030.

Extrapolating these national figures to the Worcestershire level, the tables below show a forecast rise in population for all age groups over 65 in Worcestershire in the period to 2037, with a particularly marked increase in those aged 80+.

Table 4 – Forecast population growth of older people in Worcestershire

	2012 No.	2020 No.	2025 No.	2030 No.	2037 No.
65-69	36,000	35,000	36,000	41,000	41,000
70-74	26,000	37,000	34,000	35,000	41,000
75-79	21,000	27,000	34,000	31,000	34,000
80-84	16,000	19,000	23,000	29,000	27,000
85-89	10,000	12,000	15,000	18,000	23,000
90+	6,000	8,000	10,000	14,000	21,000
Total 65+	**115,000**	**138,000**	**152,000**	**168,000**	**187,000**
Total 80+	**32,000**	**39,000**	**48,000**	**61,000**	**71,000**

A note on the Worcestershire context

As indicated above, there are demographic features particularly relevant to Worcestershire, such as the higher proportion of older residents. There are also other features which provide a particular context for providers operating in Worcestershire.

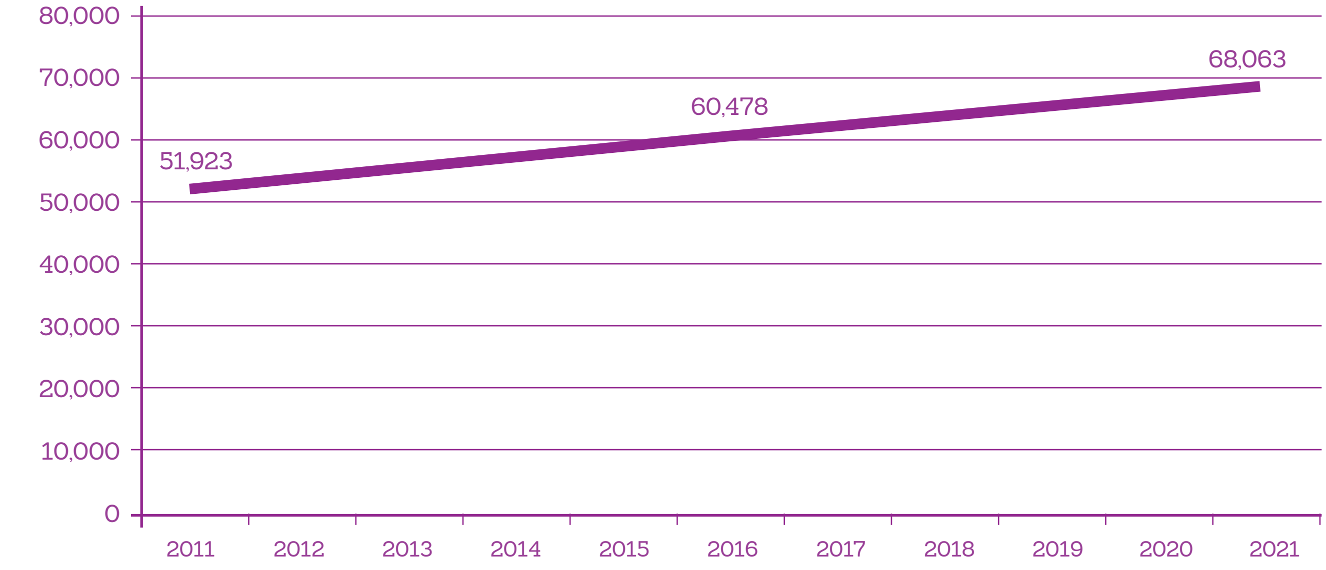
The rurality of particular parts of Worcestershire, as well as the geographical split caused by the River Severn, can present a logistical challenge, particularly to providers of services in people's homes, as well as location-based providers who want all residents, wherever they are based, to be able to access their services. The issue of transport also provides an opportunity, however, to provide services which address this issue, potentially in new or different ways.

3.2 Increasing demand – increased severity and complexity of needs

It can be seen that the rise in population for the oldest elderly is much steeper than for other age groups. It is this population which is most likely to be in need of social care services, with increases in older people living with dementia or with a limiting, long term illness which will have a significant impact on adult social care.

The projected number of people with a limiting long-term illness in Worcestershire is forecast to rise from 52,000 people in 2011 to 68,000 people by 2021.

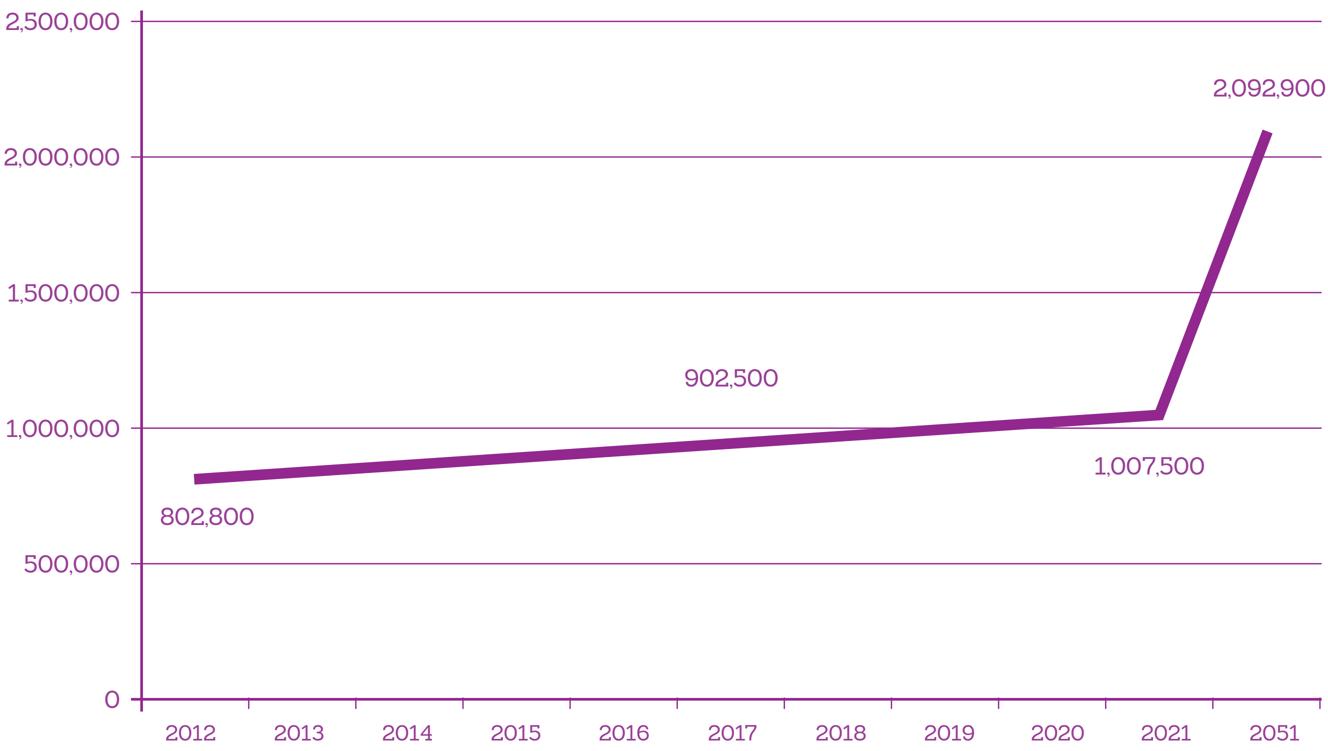
Figure 5 – Projected no. of people with a limiting long term illness in Worcestershire



Source: Worcestershire Health & Wellbeing Board Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary September 2013

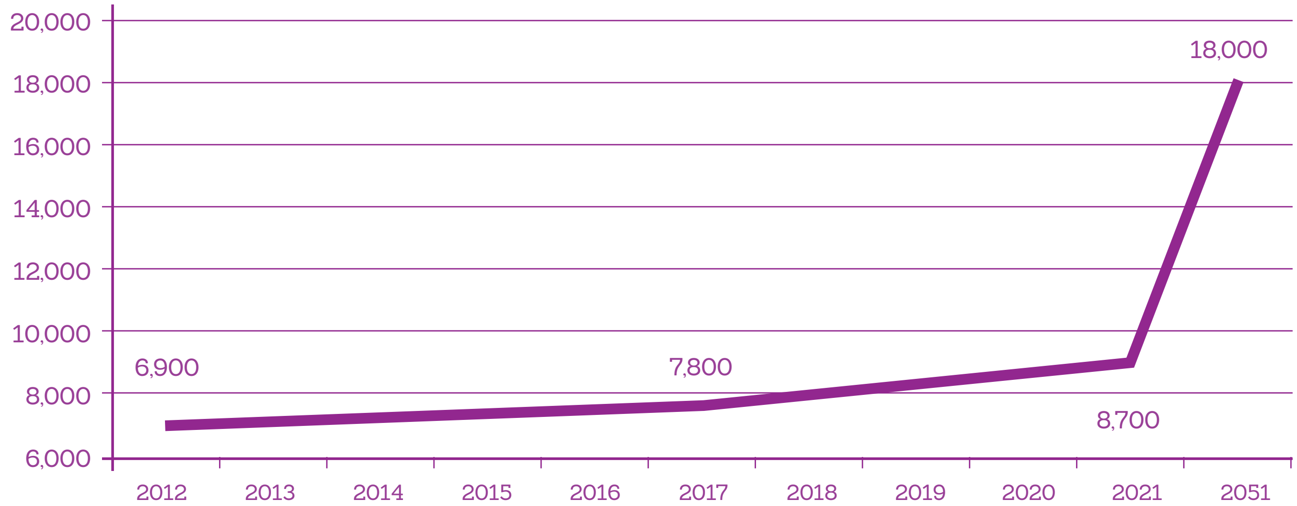
Similarly, the number of people with dementia is forecast to rise. Based on the Alzheimer's Society's projected increase in the number of people with dementia in the UK between 2012 and 2021, an extrapolation using Worcestershire data would suggest that numbers will rise from the current level of around 7,000 to nearly 9,000 by 2021 and 18,000 by 2051.

Figure 6 – Projected no. of people with dementia in the UK



Source: Alzheimer's Society "Dementia UK" 2nd Edition

Figure 7 – Projected no. of people with dementia in the UK



Source: Extrapolated from Alzheimer's Society "Dementia UK" 2nd Edition

The numbers of people with a learning disability, physical disability or mental health issues are also expected to rise, in some cases very significantly within the next twenty years, creating further demand for services.

As young adults are transitioning through to adults services, the demand for support is growing year on year. The needs of younger adults coming through to adult services are becoming more complex and children and adults with a complex range of long-term health conditions and a learning disability are living longer. The report from the Learning Disabilities Observatory "Estimating Future Need for Social Care among Adults with Learning Disabilities in England", updated in 2011, concluded that there would be sustained growth in the need for social care services for adults with learning disabilities over the period to 2030. While the prevalence of Learning Disabilities is lower in Worcestershire than on average throughout the UK (Public Health England Learning Disabilities Profile 2013), the trend of increasing numbers is likely to be reflected in the Worcestershire figures.

Carers

Reflecting other changes in demography, the numbers of people in an unpaid caring role, looking after family and loved ones with a care and support need, are also expected to rise. In 2011, the census showed that 10% of people in England provided help or support to other people because of long-term physical or mental ill health, disability or problems related to old age. Based on the Worcestershire population, this would equate to over 50,000 people locally. .

The increasing numbers of carers and the increased reliance on carers, as well as the changes to the legal status of carers under the Care Act, will mean that provision of support for those providing informal care is a key area of likely rising demand.

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

It is clear from the above that the market needs to grow, both in size to keep pace with extra demand as the population of older people increases, and in diversity and specialisation to meet the predicted increase in complex needs.

There will be increased demand for care and support which requires growth in local markets of personalised services that respond to people's changing needs and aspirations. For example, providers will need to consider what services could be offered that demonstrably maintain people at home, remaining healthy and with a sense of well-being, for longer.

Issues which are of particular relevance to Worcestershire, such as rurality, transport logistics etc. could prompt providers to explore innovative ways of addressing these issues and maximising access to and uptake of services by all the people of Worcestershire.

3.3 Increasing demand – different expectations

People's expectations for life in older age and what they expect from services are also changing. The people who will reach older age in the next 10 or 20 years will be used to expressing greater choice and control over the services they use and will expect more from their care providers. People now and in the future will expect more from their care providers in terms of the range and quality of services on offer.

There is also a desire and an expectation that people will want a different type of care and support in the future, moving away from traditional forms of care such as day care and home care towards more flexible arrangements. For example, the growth in the number of people employing "personal care assistants" ("PAs") is an example of this shift.

The way people obtain their care is also likely to change, as people increasingly prefer to "shop" for care, altering their patterns of support in line with their changing lives, rather than using the same service day in and day out without any change.

Future Lives Conversations

In February 2014 Age UK (Herefordshire & Worcestershire) and Speak Easy N.O.W. were asked to facilitate a series of conversations with service users in the county as part of the Future Lives Programme. A number of questions were developed by WCC which served as a basis for these conversations.
These questions focused on:

- the activities people do
- what limits their participation
- what would help people to maintain an active lifestyle
- what support people may need in future to continue doing the activities that are important to them

They were also asked about internet access: whether the person used the internet, if so for what and what support the person would like to enable them to access the internet to choose activities.

Age UK

The participant group comprised 17 male (35%) and 32 female (65%) respondents, aged between 65 and 92.

The activities people do

- Trips out
- Reading
- Exercise Class/activity §
- Lunch/Coffee group
- Other groups *
- Gardening/Allotment
- Walking
- Computers
- TV
- Art, Craft, Photography
- Knitting
- Shopping
- DIY
- Church
- Volunteering
- Music
- Cooking/baking
- Pets
- Other †

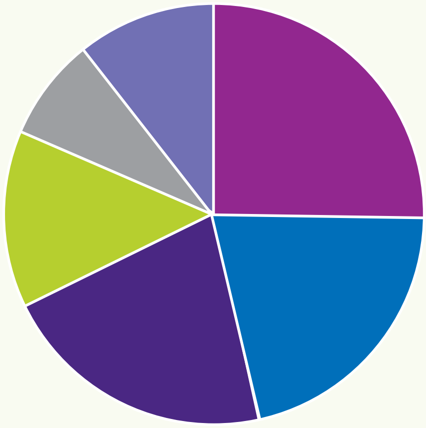
§Exercise class: mainly Age UK H&W "Ready Steady Go" exercise for strength and balance and "Young at Heart" seated exercise; also Keep Fit, "Breatheasy" class, Golf, Tai Chi and Table Tennis.

* Other groups comprise: Field Trials Society (dogs), Civil Service Pensioners Alliance, Older People's Forum, camera club, wildlife group, local history group, knitting group, bingo, art group and bird watching group

†Other comprised: vintage cars, collecting old spoons, college courses, Sudoku/crosswords, chess, model railways and steam engines.

A number of the respondents reported that due to age and mobility, they were a lot less active than in their former years and their range of activities had greatly reduced.

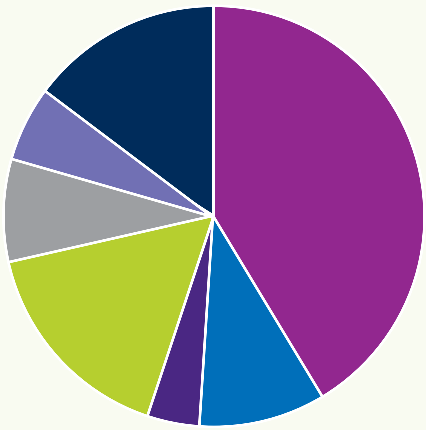
How did you find out about the activities you do?



- Advert, 14
- Word of mouth, 13
- Through family & friends, 11
- Through an organisation/ group, 9
- Through GP, 5
- Long-term hobby, 6

Note - The two responses 'Word of mouth' and 'Through family and friends' may well overlap in reality, and combined this is clearly a very common way through which people find out about and take up activities. Those who found out about an activity through their GP were referring to an exercise class that they participate in, which is specifically aimed at those who have had a fall or are concerned about their balance.

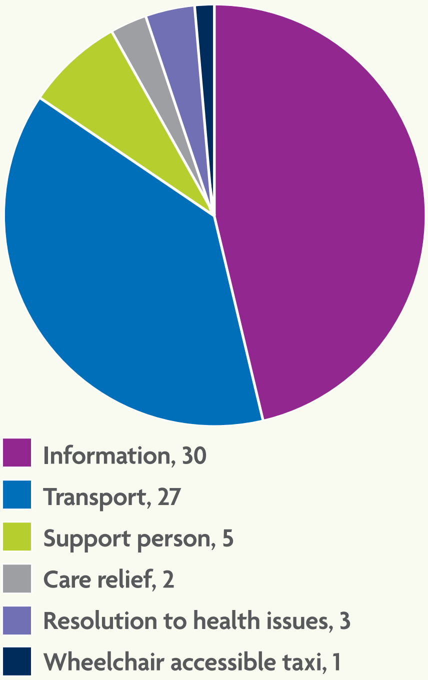
Does anything limit the activities you can do?



- Mobility, 25
- Arthritis, 6
- Eyesight, 2
- Other Health Issues, 10
- Transport, 4
- Other, 3
- Nothing currently, 9

The data shows that the majority of respondents (nearly 82%) were limited in some way and that the main issue for older people preventing them from engaging in activities as fully as they would otherwise choose is health, predominantly mobility-related issues.

What would help you to maintain an active lifestyle?



When asked which current activities people would like support to continue should they become less active, in nearly all cases participants said that they would like to carry on doing most if not all of the things that they currently do. In a few cases respondents acknowledged that they may have to give up some of the more active things they do, but only in one case did someone give an alternative activity that they would like to do in place of what they were currently doing.

Source: Age UK Hereford and Worcester 2014

SpeakEasy N.O.W.

("People with Learning Disabilities in Worcestershire speaking up for themselves")

The participant group comprised 25 men and 16 women

- 18 people who live on their own
- 11 who live with family
- 6 people who live in a shared house with a friend
- 3 people who live in residential care

The activities people do

- Going to social clubs
- Meeting friends
- Going for a walk or a swim
- Voluntary work
- Go to a day centre
- Self-advocacy meetings e.g. Speakeasy N.O.W. groups or People's Parliament
- Going to organised sports activities e.g. Special Olympics, Boccia, Tai Chi and football
- Going to church
- Theatre
- Knitting
- Music group or lesson
- Art group

How did you find out about the activities you do?

Family and friends, support workers and self-advocacy groups or organisations were the three main ways people had found out about the activities they do.

Some people also said they had found out about activities from day centres and by word of mouth.

Only four people said they had found out about their activities on the internet.

A couple of people said that they had found out about activities through college, church, a Social Worker or Mencap.

Does anything limit the activities you can do?

The biggest reason people gave was not having enough money. This was closely followed by not having support to do activities, also not having transport to get there.

Some people said that issues relating to their mobility and health stopped them taking part in activities.

Other things people said which stopped them taking part were: timing of support and activities, not knowing what there is to do, family not encouraging them to do activities and not finding activities they were interested in.

Which activities would people want support to keep doing if they become less active?

A lot of people said they would want to keep doing all of their activities. When we had a discussion about this, people said that not being able to get out and about would worry them.

The main activities that were important were:

- Getting out and about
- Doing exercise
- Socialising
- Going to groups like SpeakEasy and self-advocacy groups

Some people are worried that cuts to bus services will make it more difficult for them to get out and take part in activities. They are worried that it will make them less independent and lonelier.

Source: Speakeasy NOW 2014

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

Both Age UK and SpeakEasy have identified that the ability of service users to access and find services on the internet may vary considerably – details can be found in the reports linked below. This research indicates that support for service users to access services digitally will be a key development requirement for the market in the future.

- Age UK – "Pressing the Right Buttons – New Users of the Internet at Older Ages" http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/services-and-practice/computers-and-technology
- SpeakEasy – People's Parliament – "Future Lives and the internet: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" http://peoplesparliament.weebly.com/

Difficulties with transport were highlighted in both of the studies referenced above. We are keen to make sure that a diverse provision of transport opportunities is available through the online marketplace and will be working with providers and potential providers of transport to enable this.

3.4 Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

National research has shown that people receiving social care services increasingly want to be more in control of how their money is being spent. The issues of choice, control, involvement and self-determination are at the forefront of current government policy, and a key theme of the Care Act 2014 is ensuring that adults have both choice and control over their own care.

Nationally, the numbers of council-funded service users directing their own support is increasing. Statistics from the Health and Social Care Information Centre ("Community Care Statistics, Social Services Activity: England, 2013-14 Provisional Release") showed that in 2013/14, the number of people receiving self-directed support was 648,000 (up 6% from 2012-13). The percentage of people receiving self-directed support increased to 62% of all clients in 2013-14, from 56% in 2012-13, 43% in 2011-12 and 29% in 2010-11. Of these, 153,000 received a direct payment - up 7 per cent from 2012-13. The number of carers receiving self-directed support was 111,000 (an increase of 7% from 2012-13). Of these, 80,000 received a direct payment, up 13 per cent from 2012-13.

In Worcestershire, increased personalisation is a key factor in the successful development and implementation of our Future Lives vision and plan. In order to achieve one of our main aims of "greater choice and control for service users", we aim to increase the use of personal budgets and direct payments and to develop the market for care and support services to facilitate this change.

What does this mean for the market? Market opportunities

Recognising the diversity of purchasers, providers will need to increasingly respond not just to the Council and its partners but to individuals and small groups who may want to commission bespoke packages through their direct payments. This increasing range and diversity of customers will require providers to market their services in a different way and improve access. The Your Life Your Choice e-marketplace will help providers to enable this change.

There are real opportunities for providers to build the link between involving people in the design of services, offering people the information they need to make informed decisions and offering customers new and diversified products and services to help them remain well at home.

As the number of people directing their support through direct payments continues to rise, access to good information, advice, brokerage, advocacy and support planning assistance will be increasingly important to enable them to find the support they need and to navigate their options.

CHAPTER 4: The Market in the Future

How do we move forwards together?

As part of our development of the online marketplace, we want to gain a wider understanding of the adult social care market in Worcestershire. We know, for example, that there are around 220 care homes in Worcestershire, and have identified around 130 providers of home care so far. As a local authority, we work with 300-400 organisations in total, through our commissioning and contracting arrangements.

The Your Life Your Choice e-marketplace gives us the opportunity to work with a far wider range of providers, providing a more diverse range of services direct to the people of Worcestershire, and to facilitate the development of a vibrant market in Worcestershire.

As part of our aim to work with you as providers to develop a thriving and diverse market of personalised care and support in our county, we want to develop a more comprehensive overview of the market. This will enable us to couple the information we know about the types of services which residents want (Chapter 3 above) with a picture of the market of services currently on offer in Worcestershire, so that we can identify where there are gaps or insufficiencies of supply.

A note for new providers – Worcestershire Business Central

Worcestershire.Business.Central is the single point of contact and "one-stop-shop" for all Worcestershire business support needs – with a dedicated website www.business-central.co.uk and helpline 0300 123 1440.

There is support for business start-up and business growth, access to finance (including loans and grants) and information on business training and support programmes. There is also support for employers, focussing on recruiting staff, apprenticeships, leadership and management and employer training. Other useful tools available on the website include a Finance Finder (including a guide to types of funding), an Events Calendar (business support workshops and networking events) and an Online Business Directory.

This service was developed by partners in response to feedback from over 1,200 businesses, aiming to remove the time consuming and often frustrating task of finding useful business support and advice.

Listening to you

The notes below summarise feedback we gained from providers during some initial market engagement work in 2013-14. These threats, issues and opportunities have informed, and continue to inform, our development of the Your Life Your Choice website and the e-marketplace.

Summary of feedback by theme

Note: The points marked with a "–" below are potential threats or issues which need to be addressed, while the points marked with a "+" are opportunities.

a) Market management, market diversity and innovation

- We need to ensure that the market does not become dominated by large players, and avoid quality being driven down.
- We need to clarify the extent to which WCC should intervene in the market, encouraging a diverse market and preventing market failure.
+ The e-marketplace presents an opportunity for smaller/specialist/niche organisations to compete, to innovate and to be creative.
+ There is an opportunity for existing gaps in the market to be filled and for a much more vibrant market to be created in Worcestershire.

b) Matching supply and demand

- We need to ensure there is sufficient demand for services in the marketplace to ensure viability of providers, and match up demand and supply.
- Providers need to market themselves more effectively (and may need support on this).
+ Opportunity for Council to work with providers to share data and information e.g. about unmet need etc.
+ Opportunity for a different relationship between providers and service users

c) Digital inclusion and access, and customer experience

- We need to support vulnerable service users to use the online system effectively and maximise access to online facilities and to the e-marketplace.
- We need to maximise usability of the e-marketplace to ensure users are empowered rather than disempowered.
+ Opportunity for creation of physical hubs (potentially using existing locality-based providers) to enable virtual services
+ Include service users in the design and testing of the new marketplace.
+ IT training and support for service users

d) Direct payments

- Service users need support to understand and use direct payments effectively.
+ Opportunity to improve and speed up the direct payment process and increase flexibility.
+ Use service users for peer to peer support for and promotion of direct payments.

e) Risk to vulnerable clients

- We need a clear strategy for preventing vulnerable clients and those on the fringes slipping through the net, and for maintaining valued human contact.
- We need to clarify and define how preventative services fit in the e-marketplace.

+ Peer to peer advocacy and support
+ More community education projects on e.g. dementia/autism etc. to enable communities to support each other

f) Quality assurance and safeguarding

- We need to define WCC's role with regard to quality assurance and safeguarding.
- We need to explore the best ways of ensuring quality of service in an open marketplace environment.

+ Use "mystery shoppers" (from other organisations, or service users) to assess quality.
+ Use quality review (e.g. trip advisor) and quality marks.

g) Capacity and skills of providers, collaboration and partnership

- Providers need support in upskilling, particularly re financial and business planning.
- We need to explore how best we can enable sustainability and viability of providers when e.g. volumes are not guaranteed.

+ Opportunity for more collaboration between providers e.g. shared training, shared back office; WCC can facilitate and provide support.
+ Work together to seek alternative funding opportunities.

h) Cost of transition

- As we move towards implementing the new vision, we need to make sure that we bridge the transition period for providers to prevent provider failure in the interim.
- We need to stimulate innovation, which may otherwise be side-lined by the pace of change.

i) Volunteering

- We need to ensure a sufficient volume of quality volunteers to enable the change to an e-marketplace to happen effectively.
- We need a plan which addresses providers' concerns that significant increases in numbers of volunteers may not be realistic, given the complexities of the adult social care arena, and ensure the cost of volunteering is factored in.

+ Build on existing strengths (strong local engagement, specialist volunteers, volunteer infrastructure) within Worcestershire.

We want your input!

- Have you responded to changing demands by providing a different or innovative type of service?
- Do you have any current case studies which we could use to showcase different types of service provision which people can access?
- Can you contribute to our ongoing debate and help us develop a vibrant care and health market in Worcestershire?
- Do you need support which we at Worcestershire County Council might be able to facilitate?

Get in touch...

E-mail us at:
futurelives@worcestershire.gov.uk

or see our webpages at
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/futurelives

And, if you haven't already done so, please register on our
Your Life Your Choice e-marketplace at

http://worcestershire.assistdirect.co.uk

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