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Defining Day Care

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DEFINING DAY CARE

1. Historical Context

The development of day care services within Northern Ireland began in earnest in the 1970s. Initially this form of care was designed to provide sheltered workshops for adults with learning disabilities, but as the concept of day care developed, other user groups began to be catered for, with older people becoming the predominate group.

Most policy statements from the 1970s onwards have advocated a shift from the institution towards care at home and, while not explicitly mentioned within community care policy documents, day care has historically been considered as an aspect of community care and seen as part of a package of domiciliary support that could enable people to remain in their own homes. It has however remained somewhat low profile within the care continuum and is often seen as something of a backwater.

In recent years there has been a refocusing of day services from traditional 'building based' models of service provision to a range of community based services. Much of the most marked developments have been seen in the context of day care provision for adults with learning disabilities where 'attitudes and expectations have been realigned around the ideas of normalisation and the social model of disability'. (Clarke, 2001) This has led to an emphasis away from 'occupation' in traditional centres, towards supported employment in the community. The concept of 'non-buildings' based day care provision which is person-centred and in keeping with the policy of social inclusion has been continuing to gain momentum within services for this user group.

The pace of change within other programmes of care, particularly in relation to services for older people has been somewhat slower and here the more traditional forms of day care often prevail.

2. Towards a Definition of Day Care – The Challenges

Tester (1989) argues that a tighter definition of day care is likely to lead to greater clarity in policy making. Terms such as 'Day Care', 'Day Centre Care', 'Day Services' and 'Day Care Services' are often used interchangeably. He highlights that difficulties in arriving at a definition conveys some of the philosophical and operational dilemmas inherent in providing this form of care. He suggests that terminology such as day 'care' has passive connotations and that the term day 'centre' implies service within a building to which service users must travel to benefit from. It is perhaps for these reasons that Clark (2001) advocates the adoption of the term 'day services'.

Other definitional difficulties emerge in relation to whether the service is being defined from a service user or service provider perspective. Service providers may, for example, be more concerned with minimising risks and providing respite for carers than promoting opportunities for activities, employment or education.

Day care has also been a very neglected domain within both research and policy fields and Clarke (2001) suggests that this is largely reflective of the low priority accorded to this form of provision generally. There is consequently little research-based information to inform the definition debate in terms of outcomes for service users.

3. Looking to the Legislation

References to day care are more implicit than explicit within much of the Health and Personal Social Services related legislation. Within the 1972 HPSS Order for example, day care is not specifically mentioned in defining the duties of the Ministry to provide General Social Welfare, but is arguably included in the reference to provision of ‘facilities (including the provision or arranging for the provision of residential or other accommodation) within Article 15.

Day care services are not featured within the provisions of the Mental Health (NI) Order or the Disabled Persons (NI) Act 1989.

The Children (NI) Order 1995 defines ‘day care’ in respect of children under Article 19:

‘day care’ means any form of care or supervised activity provided for children during the day (whether or not it is provided on a regular basis).

‘supervised activity’ means an activity supervised by a responsible person.

A more extensive definition of day care for children is offered in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001:

‘a service which consists of any form of care (whether or not provided to any extent in the form of an educational activity), supervised by a responsible person and not excepted from this definition by regulations, provided for children, on premises other than domestic premises, during the day (whether or not it is provided on a regular basis or commences or ends during the hours of daylight’.

Both the HPSS Act (NI) 2001 and the HPSS (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (NI) Order also make reference to and seek to define ‘residential family centres’:

‘residential family centre means any establishment (other than one of a description excepted by regulations) at which –

- a. accommodation is provided for children and their parents;*
- b. the parent’s capacity to respond to the children’s needs and to safeguard their welfare is monitored or assessed; and*
- c. the parents are given such advice, guidance or counselling as considered necessary.*

While non-residential family centres are not included within the definitional range, the same definition, minus the accommodation component, could be seen to be appropriate.

The Care Standards Act 2000 does not offer a definition of day care under the Interpretations Article, but defines ‘support service’ as:

‘a service provided by reason of a person’s vulnerability or need (other than vulnerability or need arising by reason only of that person being of a young age) to that person or to someone who cares for that person by:

- a. *a local authority;*
- b. *any person under arrangements made by a local authority;*
- c. *a health body;*
- d. *any person if it includes personal care or personal support.*

A similar definitional range is offered within the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Care Standards Act 2000 (Wales)

'a support service is a service which provides care for adults or children who are vulnerable or in need, either in (care at home) or outwith their home. For care outwith the home the service may or may not be provided in a centre'.

Day care is defined within the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 under general Interpretations (Part 1, Section 22:

'day care setting means a place where persons in need of personal care attend for the purposes of rehabilitation or counselling, but where they are not provided with board'.

The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 also defines 'day care setting' within the Interpretation section (Part 1, Section 2):

'day care setting means, subject to paragraph (8), a place where persons in need of prescribed services may attend for the purposes of assessment, rehabilitation or counselling, but where they are not provided with board or accommodation'.

Paragraph (8) makes provision to except any descriptions of establishment or undertaking, including 'day care setting' from Regulations.

4. SSI Inspections

Within the NI context there has been one inspection of day services for adults with a learning difficulty, 'Inspection of Day Services for Adults with a Mental Handicap/Learning Difficulty in Northern Ireland', DHSS, SSI, 1992. While no definition of day care is offered, four Practice Models of day service practice are identified:

1. Social Care Model
2. Education Model
3. Employment Model
4. Resource Model

A further DHSS Report, 'Day Services in the Nineties', January 1991, which again focuses on learning disability, highlights the multi-purpose nature of day care provision and lists some of the services offered, including arts, crafts, contract work, recreational therapy, work placements and training in daily living skills.

While some 200 SSI Inspection Reports were identified as including a day care element, only two had an exclusive day care focus. One Report focused on value for money (Inspection of Best Value Reviews of Day Opportunities in Dudley Metropolitan Council, July 2001) and the other on recreation and leisure in day services for people with learning disability

(‘Opportunities or Knocks: National Inspection of Recreation and Leisure in Day Services for People with Learning Disability’). Neither of these Reports included definitions of day care.

Other Inspection Reports reviewed were largely descriptive in nature or were focused on delivery of social care services in general, with limited day care focus.

5. Theoretical Insights

Much of the day care literature that does exist uses a definition developed by Carter in 1981 who defines a ‘day unit’ as:

‘a non-profit making personal service which offers communal care and which has care givers present in a non-domiciliary and non-residential setting for at least three days a week and which is open at least four to five hours each day’. (p2)

This definition is however limited in that it does not refer to the service user group served, the types of needs met or the opportunities provided. While the reference to opening hours is useful in precluding luncheon and social clubs, it has perhaps less relevance for the ‘non-building’ dimension of day care which is emerging.

Tester (1989) identifies five key objectives of day care:

- helping people remain independent in the community;
- social care and company;
- rehabilitation and treatment;
- assessment and treatment;
- providing support for carers.

Seed (1988) in an evaluation of day care services for adults with learning disability in Scotland between 1984-1987 proposed seven models of practice:

1. The Work Model – to provide work experience and preparation for Employment.
2. The Social Care Model – emphasising normal living potential and social skills for family and community living.
3. The Further Education Model – provision of continuing education.
4. Assessment and Throughput Model – emphasising the need to channel people on to more appropriate or normal placement.
5. The Recreational Model- to allow the individual to develop a range of interests and activities.
6. The Shared Living Model – to develop a community within the centre and break down staff/member barriers.
7. The Resource Model – to provide access to a wide range of ‘normal’ facilities.

Seed suggests the following objectives of day care services:

- to develop the client's potential;
- preparation for more independent forms of living;
- positive throughput (moving people on);
- the enrichment of client's patterns of living at home;
- to provide social activities and opportunities for mixing amongst clients at centres;
- to provide respite for parents or other carers at home;
- to provide constructive forms of occupation;
- to be a resource for clients, their families and to the wider community.

While Seed's work has a learning disabled focus, a similar range of perspectives can be found throughout all of the literature irrespective of service user group.

In seeking a definition of day care, it is perhaps helpful to consider the reasons why service users attend. Tester (1989) in a study of day care services for older people identified nine key reasons which are outlined in descending order of frequency:

1. Prevention.
2. Social care and stimulation.
3. Developing or maintaining physical and mental skills.
4. Relief, respite or support for carers.
5. Assessment, monitoring, providing individual packages of care.
6. Basic personal care services.
7. Rehabilitation and treatment.
8. Social and psychological support.
9. Advice for individuals.

Clark (2001) highlights the range of needs which day services address:

- for physical care and shelter, and the prevention of deterioration of physical and mental health;
- for companionship and social stimulation;
- for rehabilitation and the teaching of new life and social skills;
- for positive experiences and new achievements;
- for promoting independence, social integration and employment.

Suffolk County Council has adopted the following definition of day services:

'day services are for those people who have been assessed as being frail or at risk and who prefer to continue living in their own home but need some support during the day. Services are designed to improve or maintain quality of life, to promote independence, facilitate friendships, provide social contact and meet individual needs'.

The National Adult Day Services Association has developed the following definition:

'adult day services are community-based group programmes designed to meet the needs of functionally and/or cognitively impaired adults through an individual plan of care. These structured, comprehensive programs provide a variety of health, social and other related support services in a protective setting during any part of a day, but less than 24 hour care. They are designed to serve adults who are physically or mentally impaired and may require supervision, increased social opportunities, assistance with personal care or other daily living activities'.

6. Towards a Working Definition

Tester (1989) argues that any definition of day care needs to identify 'who' it is for, and 'what' it is for against the backdrop of the setting in which the care will be provided. Each of these components is considered in turn:

a. 'Who'

- adults;
- have care needs as a result of physical or cognitive impairment;
- socially isolated;
- at risk.

b. 'What'

- assessment;
- structured programme;
- supervision;
- assistance with personal care or other daily living activities;
- rehabilitation or treatment;
- social opportunities/social inclusion;
- emotional support;
- promotion of educational, training or employment opportunities;
- respite for carers.

c. 'The Setting'

- non-residential and non-domiciliary;
- statutory, voluntary, independent sector;
- some communal element of care;
- combination of 'centre-based' and 'community-based' services.

The definition developed by the National Adult Day Services Association (see above) would appear to offer the most comprehensive and reflective definition of day services and is one which can be applied to any adult service user group. This could perhaps form the basis of the SSI definition in relation to the development of standards for Day Care Centres.

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