

Consultation on the proposed closure of the Surrey Disability Register – outcomes and recommendations

June 2020



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

The Surrey Disability Register (SDR) is a voluntary register managed by Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council with 4,556 members currently. Membership has reduced by more than 70% in the last two years (as a result of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance).

The criteria for registration is to be a resident in Surrey with a disability, however, no proof of eligibility is required nor is there a renewal date for membership.

The benefits for members are:

- Twice yearly newsletter in a range of accessible formats - audio, USB/memory stick and Braille;
- ID/membership card that can support members to get discretionary discounts at some leisure centres, cinemas and independent coffee shops;
- Access to local groups and networks;
- Members' details are recorded on Adult Social Care's LAS system where their information is pulled through to the Vulnerable People's Reporting System, which highlights vulnerable residents in case of emergency, such as flooding, electrical outage.

As a non-statutory service the resource and work involved in maintaining the register is significant and involves four separate teams in the county council. This instigated a review of the purpose and value of the register within an environment of reduced capacity and competing priorities.

The register has deviated from its original intention when it was set up by Customer Services in 2005 to be a key way of engaging with people with disabilities who could help inform commissioning decisions and shape local services. Since that time, ASC has developed a wide range of alternative networks to achieve this engagement outcome and access the views of people with disabilities.

The register has not been used as part of the Covid-19 response in Surrey.

A proposal to close the register was supported by the Adults Leadership Team in November 2019 with the agreement to undertake a consultation with members.

Consultation Method

A consultation of SDR members ran from Monday 27 February to Friday 6 March 2020 seeking their views on the proposal to close the register. All 4,556 members were personally written to and asked to complete the survey in three different ways, by:

1. Completing a paper version and returning it in the pre-paid envelope.
2. Completing the survey online via [Surrey Disability Register](#), or
3. Contacting the Adult Social Care information and advice line on 0300 200 1005 and provide your feedback over the telephone.

Response rate and mode:

- **1,320** completed the paper questionnaire;
- **196** completed the questionnaire online;
- **3,236** individuals didn't reply;
- Approximately **18** individuals telephoned the Contact Centre for help completing the questionnaire. These responses were added using the online version.

This gives a return rate of **28.97%** from 4,556 members with **71.02%** of members not replying to the consultation.

Results of the consultation questions.

Q.1. How useful have you found your membership of the SDR?

Members responded with the following:

Answers	Total	Percentage
Very useful	418	31.67%
Useful	426	32.27%
Neither useful/nor not useful	222	16.82%
Not useful	43	3.258%
Don't use	200	15.15%
Not answered	24	1.818%

Q.2. If you have circled “Very useful” or “Useful” to Q1 what are the most valuable aspects of your membership? (Please tick up to 3).

These totals are based on anyone who selected these options, not just users who selected “Very useful/useful” as they were asked in Q1.

Answers	Total	Percentage
Receiving discounts from membership card	401	30.38%
Newsletter or local information	637	48.26%
Access to local groups/networks	329	24.92%
Being on the Vulnerable People Reporting System	336	25.45%
Don't know	69	5.227%
Something else	91	6.894%
Didn't select any of the options above	409	30.987%

Q.3. How often do you use your membership card to obtain discounts from local shops or services?

This figure is based on everyone who completed this section not just people who selected that they valued the membership card in Q2.

Answers	Total	Percentage
Two or three times a week	32	2.424%
At least once a week	82	6.212%
At least once a month	183	13.86%
Once or twice a year	191	14.47%
Less often (less than once or twice a year)	665	50.38%
Not answered	167	12.65%

Q.4. Are you a member of any of the following local disability organisations? Please tick all that apply.

The following organisations were selected:

Answers	Total	Percentage
Surrey Coalition of Disabled People	137	10.38%
Action for Carers Surrey	155	11.74%
Sight for Surrey	341	25.83%
Surrey Independent Living Council	75	5.682%
Surrey Disabled People's Partnership	55	4.015%
Not a member of any of these	619	46.89%
Not answered	111	8.409%

Notes:

The Sight for Surrey figure is relatively high as people are added to the statutory register for visual impairment (upon formal diagnosis) which the organisation holds on the county council's behalf and then asked if they would like to be included on the Surrey Disability Register.

Q.5. Would you like to give consent and permission to SCC to share your contact details with the intention of become a member, receiving news and information and benefitting from being part of their network? And to which user-led organisation?

Answers	Total	Percentage
Surrey Coalition of Disabled People	350	17.32%
Surrey Independent Living Council	281	13.91%
Surrey Disabled People's Partnership	310	15.34%
Sight for Surrey	166	8.21%
Action for Carers	155	7.67%
Not answered	691	34.20%

Q.6. Do you currently receive support from the county council to help you with essential daily living tasks like getting dressed or eating or moving around safely in your own home and maintain your wellbeing? This is most commonly known as a social care service.

Answers	Total	Percentage
No	1,041	79%
Yes	232	18%
Not answered	273	21%

Q.7. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with the proposal to close the SDR? Please tick only one answer.

Answers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	68	5.15%
Tend to agree	143	10.83%
Neither agree nor disagree	233	17.65%
Tend to disagree	179	13.56%
Strongly disagree	511	38.71%
Not sure	135	10.23%
Not answered	51	3.86%

Conclusions and insight

- Over 70% of SDR members, or 3,236 members, did not reply to the consultation. This is a high proportion, indicating it does not hold value to the majority of members.
- Whilst 52% of respondents preferred the register to stay open, there were also differing views: 17.65% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the closure, 10.23% of members were unclear or unsure and 3.86% didn't answer this question.
- 63.94% of people replied saying that they found their membership of the SDR useful/very useful, with 16.82% saying it was neither useful/nor not useful and 18.40% saying that they either didn't use the register or it wasn't useful to them.
- 30.38% valued the newsletter most of all benefits, whilst 31% of respondents didn't indicate what they valued.
- Access to local groups and networks and being on the Vulnerable People Reporting system were valued the least.
- 8.64% said that they used their membership card two or three times a week or at least once a week, and 50.38% used the membership card less often than once or twice a year.
- Open feedback provided an insight into the confusion as to what the SDR is, or does.
- 25% of members who replied are also on the statutory visual impairment register that is managed by Sight for Surrey on the county council's behalf. This register will continue and is not affected by the SDR consultation.
- 10.38% of the people who responded were members of Surrey Coalition of Disabled People, 11.74% members of Action for Carers, 5.68% were members of Surrey Independent Living Council and 4.01% were a member of Surrey Disabled People's Partnership. 46.89% were not a member of any of these organisations and everyone who responded was given the option of having their details shared with one or more of these organisations and this has subsequently been done.
- 18% of SDR members who responded said they were current Adult Social Care Clients, and 21% did not answer this question.

Recommendation

While there was considerable support for the SDR among those who replied to the consultation, there was no new or compelling evidence introduced at this point to support retaining the SDR. The recommendation is, therefore, to proceed with closing the Surrey Disability Register.

The compelling reason is that all of the benefits from the register are also offered by other local, or national organisations or services. Reducing overlaps and duplication with other organisations will help the county council work more efficiently and effectively and help focus on priority areas and statutory duties. The register is a voluntary register and many other local authorities have stopped managing their versions.

There is, however, a wide range of [support for people with disabilities](#) in Surrey and the county council works closely with many user-led organisations and partner agencies to ensure people are connected, remain safe and have improved wellbeing and independence. The county council commissions multiple charities to provide that support directly to residents. As part of the consultation process over 450 SDR members joined local user-led organisations.

In our response to SDR members we are highlighting a wide range of services and organisations in place and encouraging them to continue to access areas of support that they value.

Our ASC Information and Advice Line will continue to offer information about local support in the community.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Information from consultation response

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Answers	Total	Percentage
Yes, limited a lot	824	62.42%
Yes, limited a little	335	25.38%
No	83	6.29%
Didn't want to say	27	2.05%
Not answered	51	3.86%

Which of these age groups do you belong to?

Answers	Total	Percentage
16-19	13	0.98%
20-24	40	3.03%
25-29	40	3.03%
30-34	33	2.50%
35-39	40	3.03%
40-44	47	3.56%
45-49	47	3.56%
50-54	76	5.76%
55-59	127	9.62%
60-64	112	8.48%
65-69	103	7.80%
70-74	135	10.23%
75-79	107	8.11%
80-84	126	9.55%
85+	248	18.79%
Not answered	28	1.97%

What is your sex?

Answers	Total	Percentage
Female	745	56.44%
Male	535	40.53%
Didn't want to say	10	0.76%
Not answered	30	2.27%

How do you self-identify your sexual orientation?

Answers	Total	Percentage
Bi	9	0.68%
Gay man/Gay woman/Lesbian	9	0.68%
Heterosexual/straight	1011	76.59%
Prefer not to say	134	10.15%
Prefer to self describe	23	1.74%
Not answered	134	10.15%

Are you currently pregnant or on maternity leave?

Answers	Total	Percentage
No	1138	86.21%
Yes	11	0.83%
Prefer not to say	26	1.97%
Not answered	145	10.98%

Which of these groups do you self identify with?

Answers	Totals
White	1,187
Black, African, Caribbean and black British	8
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	16
Other ethnic group	5
Asian or Asian British	12

What is your legal marital or same-sex partnership status?

Answers	Total	Percentage
Married/Registered same sex civil partnership	520	39.40%
Divorced/formerly in a same sex civil partnership	120	9.1%
Widowed/surviving partner from same sex civil partnership	234	17.73%
Never married/registered same sex civil partnership	267	20.23%
Prefer not to say	69	5.23%
Not answered	110	8.33%

179 people didn't wish to give an answer to this question.

Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either: long term physical or mental ill-health issues/disability and/or problems related to old age?

Answers	Total	Percentage
No	967	73.26%
Yes, 1-19 hours per week	128	9.70%
Yes, 20-49 hours per week	52	3.94%
Yes, 50+ hours per week	74	5.61%
Not answered	99	7.50%

254 identified as carers.

What is your religion?

Answers	Total	Percentage
No religion	214	16.21%
Christian	968	73.33%
Muslim	16	1.21%
Any other religion	42	3.18%
Not answered	80	6.06%

asc.engagement@surreycc.gov.uk