

CONDUCTING AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

THE RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF HAFOD Y GEST RESIDENTIAL HOME, PORTHMADOG

1) AUTHOR(S) OF THE ASSESSMENT

Wyn M Hughes, Engagement Manager, Social Services on behalf of the Head of Housing and Social Services Department, Gwynedd Council.

2) PARTNERS

Note all the individuals and groups who need to be included in the assessment process: These could include front line staff, partner organisations, specialist organisations etc.

Gwynedd Council Board – which has made the decision to consult on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home.

The Head of Housing and Social Services Department – who made the recommendation to the Board to consult on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home.

The Head of Provider and Leisure Department – who is supporting the users and staff.

Gwynedd Council Care Scrutiny Committee - which scrutinises the report on the consultation and offers observations before the report is submitted to the Gwynedd Council Board.

3) START DATE

22 February 2011 (the date of Gwynedd Council Board's decision to consult on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home).

4) END DATE

22 October 2011 (the date of the Council Board meeting when a decision will be made on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home).

5) RELEVANCE

You should outline what relevance the policy / service / procedure has in relation to each of the general equality duties and to each of the equality groups. There may not be a relevance to all categories, but if any are noted, then you will need to complete the assessment.

5a) Relevance to the General Duties

All of the General Duties were deemed relevant.

- **Positively promoting equality**

A residential service for older people would be expected to promote equality by respecting the rights and the independence of service users.

- **Getting rid of illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

Each residential care provider follows and conforms to the North Wales Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and Guidelines.

- **Promoting equal opportunities**

A residential service for older people would be expected to promote equality by respecting the rights and the independence of service users.

- **Encouraging good relationships**

During the consultation period, an attempt was made to seek the response of stakeholders and they were promoted to express their opinions and aspirations. The current service provided in Hafod y Gest home has a very good reputation in the local community because of the quality and standard of care provided. This means that the current service has nurtured a good relationship with the local community. The same potential exists for the Extra Care Housing to nurture a similar relationship with the community in Porthmadog. In developing any new project, the Council will ensure compliance with the General Duties and will respect the needs of the users (see 12 below).

5b) Relevance to equality groups

- **Race**

The first language of those who have an interest or who have expressed an interest is either Welsh or English. All stakeholders were of a white British background.

- **Sex** (include transsexual, maternity and pregnancy issues)

Most users were women and the vast majority of staff were also women.

- **Disability**

A number of the service users have various disabilities such as memory problems and conditions such as arthritis which makes mobility difficult.

- **The Welsh Language**

All stakeholders speak / understand Welsh or English.

- **Sexual orientation**

We are not aware that the sexual orientation of any user is relevant to the recommendation and no issues relating to sexual orientation were raised as part of the recommendation.

- **Religion or belief**

We are not aware that the religion or belief of any user is relevant to the recommendation and no issues relating to religion or belief were raised as part of the recommendation.

- **Age**

The recommendation affects Older People.

6) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY / SERVICE / PROCEDURE

Note the reason for the policy and what the Authority aims to achieve through it.

Transparency is essential in the Council's decision making process, taking into account the opinion of the people who are being affected by those decisions. The Council is under pressure to consider the need to transform the service for older people. Extra Care Housing offers alternative opportunities for older people to continue to keep their independence with the assurance that support is at hand should it be required. It has to be explained and demonstrated that it is not sustainable for the Council to maintain a traditional residential care service that requires substantial expenditure to maintain the expected standard, in addition to Extra Care Housing in an area with a comparatively low population. Consideration must also be given to the fact that many residential beds are empty within a 15 mile radius of Porthmadog.

The proposal responds to these two specific factors: The need to promote independence (in accordance with the wish of older people – see 8 below), and the need to provide services that are sustainable for the future.

7) INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

What involvement and consultation exercises were conducted in relation to the policy / service / procedure and what were the outcomes?

- 1. An information pack on the consultation was prepared and distributed, which notes the background and sets the situation in its context.*
- 2. Individual meetings with the service users and families.*

3. *Independent advocacy provision available for service users.*
4. *Meetings with staff.*
5. *Support of the Human Resources Department available for staff.*
6. *Formal and informal meetings with statutory and voluntary bodies and establishments which have an interest in the care sector.*
7. *Hold a dialogue with elected members.*
8. *Share the recommendations submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee and Council Board with the stakeholders (the service users, next of kin, the staff and local Councillors) at the same time as the said information becomes public.*

8) AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

Evidence can be based on local or national data, on consultation, monitoring, staff comments etc.

All research into the older people accommodation field shows that older people wish to remain at home in their own homes. Locally, a piece of work (O Lygaid y Ffynnon, Einir Roberts 2010), confirms this. This is reflected in the results of the consultation with the majority agreeing with Gwynedd Council's intention to provide services to support people to live in their homes. Extra Care Housing offers this option, with assurance that assistance would be available if required. This must be weighed up against the opinion reflected in the questionnaires, namely that the majority wished to keep Hafod y Gest home open.

79.9% were of the opinion that there should be an investment in Hafod y Gest home. 11.3% were in favour of Option 2, namely to invest in developing Extra Care Housing and community services to support people to live at home but to close the existing residential home. No response was received from 9% of those who responded. The results of the consultation are attached - Appendix 1.

9) EVIDENCE GAPS

Note any evidence gaps and how these will be filled.

During the period of consulting on the future of Hafod y Gest home, no information was available about the Extra Care Housing. There was uncertainty regarding the location of the plan and the funding source for it. Although the consultation gave each individual an opportunity to express an opinion, it could be argued that it was not a comprehensive process, as full details about the options were not available. This must be rectified by ensuring that our contact with users is completely clear and transparent as we develop the plan further.

10) WHAT IS THE ACTUAL / LIKELY IMPACT?

10 a) On equality groups

- **Race**

We do not anticipate that the recommendation will cause more concern or will have a more negative impact on one group than another. No matters in relation to race were raised as part of the consultation.

- **Sex**

The recommendation will concern staff and all staff are female except for one male. There is a possibility that they could lose their current jobs.

Support will be available through Gwynedd Council's Human Resources Department.

Also, the majority of the users are female.

Therefore, there is evidence that closing Hafod y Gest home will have more impact on females than males. Certainly, in the short-term, this would be a negative impact.

- **Disability**

For the service users (most of them suffer from a condition that causes disability) the outcome of the recommendation and any subsequent decision by the Council Board could involve them having to move from their home.

This negative impact will have to be balanced against the long-term benefits of the Extra Care Housing and financial implications of maintaining Hafod y Gest alongside the Extra Care Housing. Therefore, there is evidence that closing Hafod y Gest home will have more impact on the people with a disability.

- **The Welsh Language**

The care service in the Extra Care Housing Scheme will be commissioned by the Council and therefore it can be ensured that the service provided will be in the chosen language of individual users. There is no evidence that closing Hafod y Gest home would have an impact on the Welsh language.

- **Sexual orientation**

We do not anticipate that the recommendation will cause more concern to one group than another. No issues relating to sexual orientation were raised during the consultation.

- **Religion and belief**

We do not anticipate that the recommendation will cause more concern to one group than another. No issues relating to religion or belief were raised during the consultation.

- **Age**

For the service users, who are all older people, the recommendation and the subsequent decision of the Council Board would involve all users having to move from their home.

This negative impact will have to be balanced against the long-term benefits of the Extra Care Housing and financial implications of maintaining Hafod y Gest alongside the Extra Care Housing. Therefore, there is evidence that closing Hafod y Gest home will have a short-term negative impact on older people.

10b) The general duties

- **Positively promoting equality**

The recommendation will promote equality positively. Promoting independence and reducing the dependency of service users on carers is central to the Extra Care Housing Scheme. It must be borne in mind that these will be long-term advantages: the consultation shows that closing the home causes concern for residents.

- **Getting rid of illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

In implementing the recommendation, proactive steps will have to be taken in order to ensure that the change happens as smoothly as possible.

- **Promoting equal opportunities**

The recommendation will promote equality positively. Promoting independence and reducing the dependency of service users on carers is central to the Extra Care Housing Scheme. Once again, it must be borne in mind that these will be long-term advantages.

- **Encouraging good relationships**

The Extra Care Housing Scheme increases the potential for users to promote good relationships with each other and with their communities. In implementing the recommendations, it must be ensured that we include and respond to the needs of each individual. This will be outlined in full as part of the work of the Project Team and Action Plan.

11) ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

(More than one result may be relevant)

Outcome 1: No great change

The assessment shows that there is no potential for discrimination or adverse effect. Every opportunity to promote equality has been taken.

Outcome 2: Adapt the Policy

The assessment notes possible problems; the policy should be adapted to remove any problems or better promote equality.

Outcome 3: Continue with the Policy

If there is any potential for negative impact or if opportunities have been lost, reasons for continuing with the policy should be noted clearly.

There is a risk that the recommendation is likely to create uncertainty and cause concern. It is the Council's intention to move towards a service that allows people to live as independently as possible, while offering support according to their needs in order to alleviate long-term concerns. In future, it will be required to avoid the situation that arose as part of the consultation on the future of Hafod y Gest, where there was some uncertainty regarding the alternative arrangements.

Outcome 4: Stop and remove the policy

If the policy reveals illegal discrimination, actual or possible, it must be stopped or changed.

12) MONITORING AND REVIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

The Project Team meets on a weekly basis to monitor the work and the Project Board meets on a monthly basis. Full consideration will be given to the needs of all service users, to the duties of the Equality Act and to the requirements of the Council's Language Plan throughout the process.

13) ACTION PLAN

An action plan, outlining the actions, responsibilities, timescale and review and evaluation processes should be appended.

Should Gwynedd Council Board accept the recommendation, an action plan will be prepared and implemented by the Project Board.

13) DECISION MAKING

This Assessment was accepted and approved by Gwen Carrington, the Head of Housing and Social Services Department, Gwynedd Council, and Gwynedd Council's Equality and Language Unit. It will be submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee and to the Council Board.