

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

**Date of meeting:** 4 June 2019  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Dafydd Meurig  
**Contact Officer:** Mari Wynne Jones  
**Contact Telephone Number:** 01286 679194  
**Title of Item:** To promote independence by increasing capacity, developing services and changing culture within the Occupational Therapy provision.

## 1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is asked to allocate £116,000 one-off resources from the Transformation Fund to finance an Occupational Health Leader who will be responsible for leading and developing the Occupational Health service across the Adults, Health and Well-being Department (for a two-year period).

## 2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The scheme promotes independence and preventative services, which is one of the main principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and which supports priority 6 of the Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-23 - 'Ensure that we have Care services which help people to live their lives as they wish.'

The scheme will be a way of realising the following principles:

- Ensuring the well-being of those who require care and support.
- Our services will focus on people, and give them a strong voice in the decisions made on the support they will receive.
- Services will be provided by means of partnerships and by collaborating.
- Services will attempt to prevent the escalation of people's needs, and endeavour to ensure that the right support is available at the right time.
- Building and establishing single care principles, and experiment with innovative ways of meeting objectives.
- Supporting a change in culture and expand the role of therapists to include therapeutic and enablement work.

Occupational Therapy's role is key to changing culture and developing preventative services that contribute to achieving efficiency savings through reducing the need for domiciliary or residential care. The scheme will enable us to provide accurate and timely advice and support to individuals and will increase capacity to support and enrich the well-being objectives of individuals

in Gwynedd. This will enable us to establish a preventative aspect that focuses on individual objectives.

The scheme will enable us to identify individuals who are deteriorating and at risk of being admitted to hospital and to enable them to return or continue to live independently in a timely manner.

It will enable the development of specific Occupational Therapy support that offers social opportunities, improves occupational opportunities, and deals with challenging behaviours.

### **3 INTRODUCTION**

The Adults, Health and Well-being Department is moving to an approach that places a greater emphasis on health and well-being and preventative work. With this approach, we will see better outcomes for individuals, enabling people to live independently within their communities for as long as possible and there will be less need for intensive care.

The service demand is increasing as the population ages. We are transforming community services to enable more early and preventative responses on a local level for the future.

In order to achieve what matters to individuals, there is a need to experiment with new ways of providing care.

Occupational Therapy has a key role if we are to achieve what matters to individuals and to prevent dependency on long-term care. For example, our work in the housing field shows that a lack of occupational therapy capacity and expertise is one of the main barriers to modifying property in order to ensure that individuals can return home from hospitals and care homes in a timely manner. The role offers various solutions to the traditional ways of meeting the need, and is a key role when considering arrangements to leave the hospital effectively.

### **4 THE REASONING AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

The need to invest in preventative interventions within our communities ensures that we fulfil our commitment to transform care services.

We acknowledge that a mixture of the right skills are required to achieve what matters to the people of Gwynedd. The Occupational Therapy service within Gwynedd Council and the Health Board needs to be reviewed and transformed if we are to achieve our purpose. As a result of waiting lists and an increase in the demand, the current occupational therapy support is not fit for purpose.

It must also be considered that it is very challenging to recruit therapists to work in the Council.

Some of the reasons for the recruitment problems is the lack of professional leadership in the field within the Council; differences in salary levels between the Council and the Health Board and moving the location of the relevant course from Bangor University to Glyndŵr University. The wider scheme includes a proposal to seek to respond to occupational therapists' recruitment problems by developing a programme for trainee occupational therapists.

Supporting staff to attend a part-time course would enable us to invest in the committed workforce that we already have but that do not have a professional qualification, and thereby ensuring that the expertise is developed and remains local. In future, and if resources allow, the aim will be to assess the possibility of developing local therapists by working with local schools and colleges.

In order to ensure a suitable service, a field Leader is required, who will be responsible for transforming and strengthening the Occupational Therapy service within the Department and with the Health Board. The leader's key responsibilities over the next two years are:

- Remodel and integrate the therapy roles between the Local Authority and the Health Board to ensure that existing resources are used in the most effective way and they provide a more person centred service for the citizen.
- Review the professional skills level within the Community Resources teams to ensure that the right skills are available to respond to the demand and the requirements. The practical support of therapists is key for vulnerable people in the community.
- Review joint processes between the Local Authority and the Health Board to reduce duplication and free up front-line employees' capacity.
- Work with the Health Board and the Local Authorities in the North Wales region to review and remodel the provision arrangements of equipment to ensure easy and timely access to suitable equipment to encourage citizens to live as independently as possible within their local communities and reduce the demand on traditional care services.
- Develop the therapeutic element of therapists' role. To provide clear professional leadership on Occupational Therapy matters and ensure consistency across the services.
- Ensure professional supervision arrangements for therapists to meet with professional responsibilities and promote continuous professional development. Anticipate an increase in therapists employed by the Council in future within the community resource teams and the specialist fields of Children with Disabilities, Housing, and Learning Disabilities.
- Establish single care principles as part of the day-to-day work of the

Council and the Health Board. Research innovative work and develop the use of creative technology, techniques and equipment that would improve the experience for the individual, free up care capacity and secure efficiency savings.

- Review hospital discharge arrangements in a timely manner - the input of therapists is key to save admittances to hospital and promote timely intervention.
- Enablement and skills recovery - therapists have a key role in providing timely intensive intervention to work with citizens and care providers to ensure recovery and that they regain their skills; promote independence and reduce reliance on traditional services.
- Support existing staff and promote the recruitment of new workers by ensuring a supervision and development framework.

Without the specialist provision and a fit for purpose Occupational Therapy service, there would be a risk of overservicing and an overdependency on services and expensive traditional solutions. This, in turn, would have an impact on our ability to control the demand and find savings or resources to re-invest in it.

## **5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

If the plan is approved, the recruitment process for the Therapy Leader role will begin immediately. Discussions have already been held with Glyndŵr University and the Health Board with regard to supporting the part-time degree course in order to attract and develop staff in future.

It is trusted that the review of occupational therapy arrangements and the work of changing the culture and establishing new methods of mainstreaming work are achieved within the two years.

As already noted, allowing the budget for the scheme would strengthen our ability to support and realise a number of schemes with the aim of enabling the people of Gwynedd to do what matters to them.

## **6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

### ***Head of Finance :***

I note this is a request for £116,000 of one-off resources from the Council's Transformation Fund. There will be several deserving applications emanating from the Council Plan competing for scarce resources from the Transformation Fund. It is a matter for Cabinet members to prioritise the applications that will make a difference when allocating resources from the Fund. I confirm that

there is sufficient provision to finance the plans that have been presented to Cabinet, and that there is further money available from the Fund for some projects that will come to future Cabinet meetings for approval.

***Monitoring Officer:***

No comments to add regarding propriety.