

Progress Report on the recommendations of the scrutiny Investigation on Supporting the Disabled People of Gwynedd (Wheelchair Service)

Adopted by the Care Scrutiny Committee on 12 September 2019.

1. Foreward

This scrutiny investigation has lifted the veil on the service available to provide wheelchairs to the residents of Gwynedd, both adults and children. The intention was to investigate and see if it is possible to improve the current provision.

2. Introduction

2.1 Following a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Peter Read to the Council meeting on 15 June 2017, the Council determined:

"That the Council refers the question of the suitability of arrangements to provide wheelchairs to the residents of Gwynedd for consideration on the scrutiny programme."

3. Aim of Scrutiny Investigation

The aim of the Scrutiny Investigation, was to answer the following questions:

- 3.1.1 Is there evidence to show that the **individuals who use the services are put at the centre** of the process of assessing and providing suitable equipment, and are they assisted to live their lives in the way they wish to live them?
- 3.1.2 If there is **dissatisfaction or complaints** about the existing service, are they addressed in a satisfactory manner?
- 3.1.3 If needed, how could the **service be improved for the future**?

4. Summary and Update on Recommendations

- 4.1 This investigation looks at a service that is provided by the Health Service in Wales, and there are organisations that specifically exist to scrutinise its work, and to listen to the voice of the Health Service users. Therefore, it is right and proper that organisations such as Community Health Councils in Wales, Welsh Assembly and Welsh Government consider the matters that have arisen through this scrutiny investigation, and act accordingly.

4.2 Additional elements of support are also provided to wheelchair users by other organisations, which are mostly Local Authorities and third sector agencies. We have also researched elements of this extra support and have proposed observations or recommendations where we believe there are opportunities to improve the existing provision.

4.3 Recommendations:

4.3.1 That the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being and the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families refer this report for the attention of the North Wales Community Health Council, and ask them to consider the need to request that the Welsh Government hold a national review of the suitability of the wheelchair provision from the perspective of the service users.

Update: confirmation that the Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing has contacted the North Wales Community Health Council to outline the aim of the investigation and share a full copy of the report and recommendations.

4.3.2 That the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being and the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families refer this report for the attention of the Minister for Health and Social Services at Welsh Government.

Update: confirmation that the Cabinet Member for Adults Health and Wellbeing has referred the report to the attention of Vaughan Gething, the Minister for Health and Social Services at Welsh Government.

4.3.3 That the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee publish its annual report on the performance on the Posture and Mobility Service, in accordance with its policy, so that it can be scrutinised publicly.

Update: confirmation that the Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee publish annual reports in regards of their services.

4.3.4 That the Posture and Mobility Service (PAMS) research the possibility of having an electronic form or referral system that everyone involved with the referral process can follow. If this is not possible, a communication system should be agreed which ensures that PAMS immediately informs the individual and the referee that the referral has been received, and the expected timetable for the provision of the wheelchair or equipment.

**Update on recommendations 4.3.4 to 4.3.12 –see Appendix 1 (page 5):
Update on actions by the Posture & Mobility service**

Gwynedd Adults Health and Wellbeing Department reports that the Posture and Mobility Service (PAMS) have introduced an electronic referral form. This has made a big difference for our Occupational Therapists in facilitating timely requests for equipment, especially during COVID 19. The new system has enabled the department to track referrals easier.

4.3.5 That the Posture and Mobility Service continues to work with other organisations (e.g. GPs, local nurses, occupational therapists in the community) in order to share information about an individual's needs assessments for a wheelchair. This should avoid duplication and the need to hold separate reviews for the provision of other equipment, e.g. shower chairs. This should also speed up the process of providing the necessary support for the service user.

Update: The Adults Health and Wellbeing Department have established bi-monthly meetings with the Posture and Mobility Service (PAMS) to facilitate the process of improving the overall service to the residents of Gwynedd. The aim is to enhance communication and joint working. Gwynedd Council's Occupational Therapists are in regular contact with PAMS and joint visits are conducted.

4.3.6 That the Posture and Mobility Service, the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee and Gwynedd Council (and other Councils if they so wish) continue to collaborate in order to attempt to overcome the existing barrier of having separate assessments for the needs of the individual who requires a wheelchair, and the need to modify the individual's home.

Update: PAMS and Gwynedd Council are collaborating in order to improve the communication path between both organisations, and are conducting joint visits with individuals in order to assess them for wheelchairs.

4.3.7 The outcomes of the new scheme being trialled in south Wales to train some specialist staff in the community to be able to conduct Level 2 assessments (specialist or powered wheelchairs) should be considered. If successful, consideration should be given to rolling it out nationally.

4.3.8 In line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, information and best practice should be shared via the Community Clusters (health and social care workers collaborating on a local level). Information regarding which staff from which organisations are trained to conduct Level 1 and 2 assessments should be shared locally amongst all organisations that support individuals in wheelchairs, in order to speed up the referral process for the benefit of the service user.

4.3.9 In line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Posture and Mobility Service should continue to work in partnership with other organisations in order to support and enrich the well-being of service users.

Update: see 4.3.5

4.3.10 Consideration should be given to training local nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, carers, etc. to monitor the use of specialist chairs and equipment in order to attempt to anticipate problems with the equipment, or to identify whether there is a need to adjust them to respond to the needs of the individual, and promptly inform the Posture and Mobility Service of any needs.

Update: It has been agreed in the bi-monthly meetings between Gwynedd Council and PAMS to have regular training sessions between both services in order to ensure that the process can be improved further. This training will be offered to other Allied health professionals within the Community Resource Teams including District Nurses, Physiotherapists et al.

4.3.11 Local nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, carers, etc. should inform the Posture and Mobility Service promptly if they are aware of defective chairs or equipment that are no longer in use, so that they can be collected and reused by others in need.

4.3.12 As training is already available to carers on the use of wheelchairs, this should be promoted and maximised.

Appendix 1:



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

23/10/2020

Scrutiny Investigation Report: Supporting the Disabled People of Gwynedd (Wheelchair Service)

Update on actions by the Posture & Mobility service

(This excludes recommendations that are outside the remit of the service)

Recommendations

- *4.3.4 That the Posture and Mobility Service (PAMS) research the possibility of having an electronic form or referral system that everyone involved with the referral process can follow. If this is not possible, a communication system should be agreed which ensures that PAMS immediately informs the individual and the referee that the referral has been received, and the expected timetable for the provision of the wheelchair or equipment.*

Action: A new electronic referral form is currently in development and will be moving to the implementation stage shortly with a target date of December 2020. In terms of individuals and referrers, all clients that are identified as requiring an assessment receive an acknowledgment letter that indicates what clinical pathway for which they have been referred, with this being completed according to a timeframe set by WHSSC.

- *4.3.5 That the Posture and Mobility Service continues to work with other organisations (e.g. GPs, local nurses, occupational therapists in the community) in order to share information about an individual's needs assessments for a wheelchair. This should avoid duplication and the need to hold separate reviews for the provision of other equipment, e.g. shower chairs. This should also speed up the process of providing the necessary support for the service user.*

Action: The service proposes setting up a working group with regional partners to identify ways to improve information sharing to remove the barriers identified. Due to COVID-19, the setting up of working groups has been put on hold due to service priorities, but communication has been taking place between partners in terms of support in the current pandemic. A target date of February 2021 has been set by the service, dependent upon the ongoing pandemic response.

- *4.3.6 That the Posture and Mobility Service, the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee and Gwynedd Council (and other Councils if they so wish) continue to collaborate in order to attempt to overcome the existing barrier of having separate assessments for the needs of the individual who requires a wheelchair, and the need to modify the individual's home.*

Action: The service proposes setting up a working group with regional partners to identify ways to improve information sharing to remove the barriers identified. Due to COVID-19, the setting up of working groups has been put on hold due to service priorities, but communication has been taking place between partners in terms of support in the current pandemic. A target date of February 2021 has been set by the service, dependent upon the ongoing pandemic response.

- *4.3.7 The outcomes of the new scheme being trialled in south Wales to train some specialist staff in the community to be able to conduct Level 2 assessments (specialist or powered wheelchairs) should be considered. If successful, consideration should be given to rolling it out nationally.*

Action: The service will engage with the South Wales service to determine the clinical effectiveness of the trial. If the outcome is positive, then this will be discussed with the service commissioner, WHSSC, as to whether this should be a standardised All Wales approach.

- *4.3.8 In line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, information and best practice should be shared via the Community Clusters (health and social care workers collaborating on a local level). Information regarding which staff from which organisations are trained to conduct Level 1 and 2 assessments should be shared locally amongst all organisations that support individuals in wheelchairs, in order to speed up the referral process for the benefit of the service user.*

Action: Linked to Actions 4.3.5 and 4.3.6

- *4.3.9 In line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Posture and Mobility Service should continue to work in partnership with other organisations in order to support and enrich the well-being of service users.*

Action: In line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board works in cooperation and partnership with its Local Authority partners and others in order to improve outcomes for its population.

- *4.3.10 Consideration should be given to training local nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, carers, etc. to monitor the use of specialist chairs and equipment in order to attempt to anticipate problems with the equipment, or to*

identify whether there is a need to adjust them to respond to the needs of the individual, and promptly inform the Posture and Mobility Service of any needs.

Action: Level 1 training is available at multiple venues and dates throughout the year. These are shared with the services main referrers and in addition, the service is able to offer training for teams where enough staff are available to attend.

- 4.3.11 Local nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, carers, etc. should inform the Posture and Mobility Service promptly if they are aware of defective chairs or equipment that are no longer in use, so that they can be collected and reused by others in need.

Action: The service can be contacted in regard of equipment no longer in use or requiring attention. The service reuses and recycles equipment wherever it is safe and effective to do so.

- 4.3.12 *As training is already available to carers on the use of wheelchairs, this should be promoted and maximised.*

Action: As indicated in the finding the training is already in place and available. The Posture and Mobility service continually look at ways to promote this service and ways to engage with service users and their carers to develop the service.