

MEETING	Scrutiny Committee
DATE	26/05/16
TITLE	Transportation Policy - Adults, Health and Well-being Department
PURPOSE	To scrutinise the report and policy in question regarding the procedure of funding transportation across the Adults, Health and Well-being Department
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CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Gareth Roberts

1. Purpose of the Report

Gwynedd Council has identified the need to implement a new transportation policy and transportation arrangements for the Adults, Health and Well-being Department due to:

- The need to respond to the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 which places a duty on us as a Council to promote the well-being of our residents in order to promote and support independence.
- The Department's local aspiration to promote social work practice which focuses on developing the skills and independence of our service users.

2. Introduction

In light of changes to legislation and the financial climate, it will be necessary to adopt a fair and sustainable transportation policy. Changes can of course have some sort of impact on service users and therefore engaging with stakeholders (including service users and their families) will be a crucial part of adopting and implementing the policy.

While the savings programme adopted by the Council notes the need to seek savings in the transportation budget, the main purpose of the changes will be to concentrate on changing our culture to correspond with the core principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Therefore, a robust mind-set and principles for the future need to be instilled, which are driven by:

- The well-being of our service users;
- Delivering positive outcomes for users and their families;
- Anti-risk professional practice;
- Promoting the use of resources within communities, and the resources available to families.

Therefore, the aim of the work programme is to create a new procedure for Gwynedd by:

- Developing a new transportation policy for the Adults, Health and Well-being Department;
- Developing practice guidelines and including the transportation element as part of the Department's assessment forms;
- Setting a clear precedent that distance from a service does not necessarily involve a 'transportation need';
- Reviewing the current situation in terms of the budget spent and the transportation costs/packages across the Department;
- Ensuring and preventing duplication in terms of paying for transportation, for example, ensuring that a service user who receives a Motability allowance does not also receive a full payment for transportation costs from the Council;
- Creating a transportation procedure with our providers regarding their contract/role as providers;
- Identifying methods and good practice in terms of promoting the independence of our service users on transportation matters;
- Establishing a clear balanced vision on transportation for the future.

We will consult with the Corporate Transportation Unit when considering all the possible available options in order to ensure the development of transportation provision e.g. the spare capacity of the Service's fleet vehicles to provide the necessary transportation in light of assessing packages.

3. Relevant Considerations

Forming similar arrangements in other counties has not caused difficulties in terms of attending services, instead the changes have offered service users and their families more flexibility.

There are several positive examples of service users seeking a solution to their transportation issues within their families and the community. Cases were also seen of people using the mobility allowance to fund transportation.

4. Reasons for recommending the decision

It is necessary to ensure that the service provided addresses the needs of our users in line with their needs assessments. At present, it is timely in light of local and national changes, specifically in respect of the Ffordd Gwynedd principles and the focus on enablement, promoting well-being and independence and addressing care and support needs in an empowering way.

Gwynedd's Profile: Our expenditure

The cost of the Department's actual expenditure on transportation was **£531,164**. Below is an analysis of these figures and the budget for 2016/17:

Service Group	Adults, Health and Well-being Department	Internal Provider			TOTAL
	Taxis	Fleet	Taxis	Total	
Older People	126,657	110,237	47	110,284	£236,940
Physical Disability	0			0	0
Learning Disabilities	69,397	96,843	126,663	223,506	£292,903
Mental Health	0			0	0
Housing	1,321			0	1,321
TOTAL	£197,375	£207,079	£126,710	£333,790	£531,164

2016-2017 Budget

Service Group	Adults, Health and Well-being Department	Internal Provider			TOTAL
	Taxis	Fleet	Taxis	Total	
Older People	132,410	106,100	90	106,190	£238,600
Physical Disability	0			0	0
Learning Disabilities	72,577	86,190	93,260	179,450	£252,027
Mental Health	550			0	£550
Housing	1,550			0	£1,550
TOTAL	£207,087	£192,290	£93,350	£285,640	492,727

5. Next steps

There are three possible options to consider:

1. To decide not to change our arrangements. But not changing our practice in this field would bring about financial and cultural implications.
2. To adopt the new policy and review care packages specifically on the grounds of the new transportation policy.
3. To adopt the new policy on the grounds of new packages, re-assessments and annual reviews of packages rather than undertaking a specific review on transportation matters.

In light of the new legislation and in the context of the financial situation that faces the Council, Option 1 is unrealistic and unsustainable. Adapting and changing is necessary in some way or another.

The Department prefers option 3 as it corresponds with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 by building on individuals' strengths, and examining and building on community strengths.

With option 3, the focus would be on the package in its entirety rather than undertaking a specific transportation review. It is considered that Option 2 would require the Department to identify a specific additional resource to realise this task, and could possibly raise unnecessary concerns for service users and their families.

Clearly, the intention prior to adopting a new policy and implementing would require engagement with specific stakeholders, including service users and their families. It must be accepted that adopting changes would not necessarily be easy, and it would be necessary to ensure a clear procedure in terms of engagement to explain and realise these changes by ensuring the understanding of our service users and their families, staff, and internal and external providers.

The observations of the Scrutiny Committee will be of assistance to the Cabinet Member in considering the content of the draft policy for engagement. In addition, discussions have already commenced with the specific Transportation Officer to plan information which outlines the range of transportation available locally.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Transportation Policy