



Executive
14 March 2011

**Report from the Director of the Director of
Housing and Community Care**

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Report back on provision of transport for adult social care
service users – promoting independence**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In July 2010 the Executive agreed to adopt the proposed Eligibility Policy for access to Council funded transport subject to the satisfactory outcome from the public consultation.
- 1.2 The consultation process is now complete and this report highlights the results from the series of consultation meetings and sets out the next steps for implementation of the new policy if adopted.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council adopts the Eligibility Policy for access to Council-funded transport for users of adult social care services. Under this Policy, eligibility will be determined by assessment of a service user's access to existing transport and an assessment of their mobility and ability to travel independently.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Over 750 carers and users were invited to attend one of 4 consultation meetings held at Stonebridge Projects centre. Following requests from users and carers we held a follow up meeting at Kingsbury Resource centre and 2 meetings at New Millennium. A summary of the views expressed at the 7 consultation meetings are attached in Appendix C. All meetings were hosted by the lead member for Adult Social Care and an Assistant Director. Whilst the 7 meetings have been held the consultation period closes on March 3rd 2011 and this report will be updated as appropriate with further views expressed by

service users and carers.

- 3.2 The consultation sessions did not disagree that the policy was fair. The idea that only those who need transport should receive transport assistance was widely accepted as correct. The comments and concerns were focussed around the application of the policy rather than in the detail of the policy itself.
- 3.3 The promoting independence theme of the proposed new policy was gratefully received by many users and carers alike. Positive views were expressed about the wide ranging benefits to a users' life after being travelled trained. One user explained how he no longer use Brent Transport service and is now much happier planning his own journeys.
- 3.4 Both carers and users expressed some concerns and anxieties about the] decision the Council had taken to close learning disability day centres and the misunderstanding that the Council may remove Brent Transport Service.
- One issue carers had was a request that the policy include factors such as users' lack of confidence or bullying when taking into account their readiness for independent travel training. These factors were already within the new policy in '**Stage 3 : Assessment of ability to travel independently**'.
 - Another concern raised was the need to involve trained professionals, eg. Occupational Therapists, in the assessment of client's mobility. This was dealt with in the consultation meetings by Alison Armstrong, Head of Learning and Disability service. She confirmed the multi disciplined approach to the assessment before being returned to her for final decision. This would include taking into account the family's views about user's travel readiness.
 - A minor change to the existing policy was to the wording in the Mobility/Independence chart in Stage 3 of the new policy. The chart suggests that a user with high/complex needs & no capability to travel independently "may require a door to door service". This now has been amended to "**require a door to door service**". This now reflects the concern of 2 carers with regards to the use of the word "**may**".
 - There were significant concerns expressed concerning the safety of service users when travelling independently and the policy has been amended to stress that no service users will travel independently unless it is safe to do so.
 - Service users also requested an adjustment to their travel plans in the event of severe weather and their consequent ability to travel independently. This has been added to the policy.
 - The eligibility policy has been changed to take into account a service users ability to pay for independent travel from their DLA. This change has been made following further officer considerations.

4.0 Current ASC Transport Provision

4.1 There are approximately 460 service users currently provided with transport. Annual spend is in the region of £1.74m or £3,776 per user. The breakdown by service area is as follows:

Service area	No. of users with transport	Annual spend 2009/10	Spend per user
Physical disabilities	75	£ 245,000	£ 3,267
Learning Disabilities	220	£1,170,000	£ 5,318
Older people	165	£ 322,000	£ 1,951
Total	460	£1,737,000	£ 3,776

4.2 The majority of service users are transported in Council minibuses, with 25 users provided with external transport through the Council's Framework Contract with taxi providers.

4.3 The current provision of transport in adult social care has been reviewed and there is evidence that the existing arrangements do not always promote the independence of the service user. Current provision often relates to historical factors – for example certain day care services provide transport to all clients – rather than a reflection of the individual's actual needs for transport and the availability of alternatives to Council-provided transport.

4.4 Furthermore, whilst it may be the case that individuals require assistance with transport, this will not always require the provision of minibuses and taxis. Alternatives may include escorting on public transport or walking, facilitated through independent travel training, which would also help develop the independence and life skills of the individual.

4.5 Therefore, there is a need for the Council to adopt and implement clear and objective criteria for the provision of transport assistance, based upon an assessment of individual's needs in order to access care and support services, and their ability access to other means of transport other than that provided by the Council, either directly or indirectly.

5.0 Principles of the Eligibility Policy

5.1 The Eligibility Policy is based on the following principles:

- Access to transport services should be based on the need to promote independence and to enable service users to remain independently in their home for as long as possible.

- Transport is provided to enable care service users to access community care activities/respite where necessary, and where parents/carers are unable to provide transport for the service user.
- The assessment of need for transport provision by the department requires a separate element (be it only one of the many factors to assess) in the community care assessment; i.e. no service should carry an automatic entitlement to transport provision by the Council.
- The test used in the assessment should be 'what will happen if the department does not provide transport', i.e., are there other ways in which the service user can reasonably be expected to attend day opportunities by making her/his own arrangements to get there
- The provision/funding for transport should **only** be considered if the client has needs categorised in accordance with the Council's Eligibility Criteria which accords to the Department of Health's guidance on eligibility 'Prioritising need'. -).
- Whilst recognising the Council's duty to arrange appropriate care services, the provision/funding of transport is designated a **desirable** service and is therefore only guaranteed as part of a care package where it is clearly demonstrated that without provision of transport the service user would be unable to access appropriate care services.
- Transport should **not** be offered as an incentive to take up a care package.

5.2 A copy of the revised Eligibility Policy and associated eligibility tests is attached at Appendix A. The tests are based upon:

- Whether the client has access to transport. Access to mobility vehicles will be considered as part of the assessment to determine whether it is reasonable to expect the service user with such a facility to make use of it meet the transport need associated with the provision of care services. Similarly, the availability and eligibility for the use of Freedom passes for public transport, and a service users receipt of DLA Mobility component will also be considered.
- Whether the client has difficulties with mobility;
- Whether the client is able to travel independently, based upon an objective assessment of the risks involved, and the prospective provision of appropriate training or other support.

5.3 Once eligibility has been assessed as described above, it will be the duty of Brent Transport Services to arrange appropriate transport where required and agreed by the relevant department in Housing &

Community Care. Directly provided transport services – whether internal or external – will be provided only once other alternatives have been considered and ruled out, and not as a matter of course.

5.4 The range of provision includes:

- Assistance with using public transport, eg travel buddies.
- Provision of transport by parents/carers - supported by payment of mileage allowance if appropriate.
- Independent travel – through referral to the Council’s Independent Travel Programme Manager.
- Existing taxi journey – shared with other clients
- Taxi service – solely for the use of the client
- Transport in Council vehicles, eg minibuses

6.0 Impact on Existing Service Users

6.1 If approved, the new Eligibility Policy will be applied to all new clients considered for the provision of care services, and to existing clients. In terms of the impact upon existing service users, the recent assessments undertaken by Community Care staff provide an indication of those clients who might be capable of transition to independent travel, in accordance with the Policy, subject to specific assessments and given appropriate support and training, as follows:

- Physical disabilities: 40 out of 79 clients.
- Learning disabilities: 50¹ out of 275 clients.
- Older people: 0² out of 165 clients.

In addition, a further 31 clients with Learning Disabilities may no longer be considered eligible for the provision of transport under the Policy, subject to consideration of the availability of Mobility vehicles to them, or their receipt of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance. Finally, it is noted that some 198 clients from the total client group have Freedom Passes for the use of public transport, and further assessment of these clients need for the provision of Council transport will need to be undertaken.

6.2 Given that a specific assessment of service users ability to travel independently has yet to be undertaken, it is estimated that if 45 service users out of the 121 identified above as potentially capable of independent travel make a successful transition, the saving to the Council would be in the order

¹ A further 57 clients already travel independently.

² Further detailed assessment may identify some clients who could travel by means other than Council-provided transport.

of £170K per annum with £127k savings in 2011-12 and the full £170k by 2012-13,

Obviously, the saving will increase if more service users make the transition. It should be noted that some of this saving will be offset by the cost of travel training or other support that the user may require, but this will be minimised by the Independent Travel Programme Manager who will be using existing staff and resources to undertake this work wherever possible.

6.3 For those existing service users who will lose their eligibility for transport under the Policy, their circumstances will be considered sympathetically and it is envisaged that there will be a transitional period of up to 3 months to support them to travel independently or to make use of alternative arrangements following their re-assessment.

6.4 It is proposed that the assessment and provision of transport should be reviewed annually.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Annual expenditure on transport for adult social care clients is in the region of £1.74m. If the Eligibility Policy is not adopted then there is a risk that this cost may escalate as changing patterns of care provision increase the number of journeys that would be required to enable clients to undertake a wider range of activities at a larger number of locations.

7.2 As identified in paragraph 6.2 above, it is estimated that gross annual savings will be at least £170K through the implementation of this policy.

8.0 Legal Implications

Statutory Requirements

8.1 Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 states that:

‘Where a local Council having functions under S.29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 are satisfied in the case of any person to whom that section applies who is ordinarily resident in their area, that it is necessary in order to meet the needs of that person for that Council to make arrangements for all or any of the following matters, namely –

d) the provision for that person of facilities for, or assistance in, travelling to and from his home for the purpose of participating in any services under arrangements by the Council under the said S.29 or, with the approval of the Council, in any services provided otherwise that as the foresaid which are similar to services which could be provided under such arrangements...’

8.2 ‘The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 section 73(14) says that while social services authorities are empowered but not obliged to charge for such transport services, in assessing a persons ability to pay, his/her mobility component of DLA if received must be ignored.’

8.3 Under S.29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948, local authorities have the power to provide free or subsidized travel for people who do not otherwise qualify for travel concessions.

9.0 Diversity/Equality Implications

9.1 The Eligibility Policy focuses upon enabling access to services for individuals with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and older people. The aim is to support the promotion of independence for service users by enabling individuals to move towards travelling independently where this is feasible. However, there will be an impact upon those service users who are currently in receipt of transport who will lose their eligibility under the proposed policy. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix B.

10.0 Staffing Implications

10.1 There are no direct implications for Council staff as a result of these proposals. Almost all clients in receipt of direct Council transport provision are carried in Brent Transport Services vehicles manned by temporary staff provided by agencies. A reduction in the number of clients transported would reduce the number of temporary staff required and would realise an immediate cost saving.

11.0 Accommodation Implications

11.1 There are no accommodation implications.

12.0 Background Papers

- None

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Appendices:

- A. Policy for the Promotion of Independent Travel for Adult Social Care Service Users.**
- B. Equality Impact Assessment.**
- C. ASC Transport Policy Consultation Report.**

POLICY FOR THE PROMOTION OF INDEPENDENT TRAVEL FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICE USERS

Background

Current policy for the provision of adult social care is aimed at promoting the maximum possible independence for the service user. In extending this principle to the Council's provision of transport services, this policy sets the criteria that will be used to assess whether the service user's transport need can be met best through independent travel arrangements or whether Council provided transport services are necessary.

Principles

In general, this Policy is based on the assumption that service users will travel independently to take advantage of care provision, except where assessment shows that this is not possible, and is based on the following principles:

- Access to transport services should be based on the need to promote independence and to enable service users to remain independently in their home for as long as possible.
- Individuals who are assessed and successfully travel trained will only travel independently if it is completely safe for them to do so.
- Transport is provided to enable clients to access a range of community activities/respite and where parents/carers are unable to provide their own transport.
- The assessment of need for transport provision by the department will be a separate element in the community care assessment; i.e. no service should carry an automatic entitlement to departmental transport provision.
- The test used in the assessment should be 'what will happen if the department does not provide transport', i.e., are there other ways in which the service user can reasonably be expected to attend day opportunities making her/his own arrangements to get there.
- The provision/funding for transport should **only** be considered if the client has needs categorised in accordance with the Council's Eligibility Criteria and Fair Access to Care Services (FACS).
- The provision/funding of transport is designated a **desirable** service and is **not** therefore guaranteed as part of a care package.
- Transport should **not** be offered as an incentive to take up a care package.

Process

There are 4 stages in the process for assessment of eligibility for the provision of assistance with transport and the identification of appropriate transport as follows:

- Access to existing transport
- Assessment of mobility
- Assessment of ability to travel independently
- Identification of appropriate transport provision for those eligible

Stage 1: Access to existing transport

Clients will **not** normally be eligible for transport if:

- They have a mobility vehicle which they drive themselves. In this instance there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect that the service user will use that vehicle in order to travel to the location of the care service/activity.
- They have a mobility vehicle of which they are not normally the driver themselves. Similarly, there will be consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect that the service user will use that vehicle in order to travel to the location of the care service/activity.

Clients with the following will only be eligible for transport if they are assessed at Stage 3 as **not** capable of independent travel:

- Freedom Pass (and an appropriate public transport route is available)
- Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance where this can adequately meet the cost of travel to meet their assessed social care needs.

Stage 2: Assessment of mobility

An assessment will be made of the client's mobility. This will involve assessing issues such as:

- Ability to walk outside (including slippery/icy weather conditions)

- Requirement for wheelchair/ other walking aid
- Ability to get in and out of property
- Ability to get in and out of vehicle
- Risk of falling without support
- Ability to bear weight to transfer
- Whether mobile but at a risk when mobilizing due to uncontrollable movements
- Ability to use stairs, manage gradients, steepness of stairs in home, safety, energy levels

Clients will be categorized for this purpose as follows:

- No mobility problems
- Limited mobility problems
- High/ complex mobility problems

Some clients may need a weather plan put in place to ensure their safety during harsh or icy weather conditions. This may require a temporary return to BTS or direct payments covering this period.

Stage 3: Assessment of ability to travel independently

This assessment considers both physical and social reasons that enable or prevent the client from travelling independently. This will include:

- Extent of the mobility problems identified in Stage 2
- Availability of family/ carers
- Communication difficulties (for example ability to order taxi or use public transport)
- Psychological factors eg mental health, loss of confidence, agoraphobia
- Experience or risk of harassment
- Any other factors affecting personal safety

The assessor will determine whether the client:

- Is capable of travelling independently
- Requires some training, support or assistance that will enable them to be capable of travelling independently in the near future
- Not capable of travelling independently

Stages 1 to 3 will determine the eligibility of the client for some form of transport or transport assistance. Assuming the client is eligible under Stage 1 (access to existing transport) then the eligibility will be determined as follows:

		Mobility problems		
		None	Low	High/complex
Capable of Independent travel	Yes	Not eligible Use public transport Walk if < 1km Use concessionary pass	Not eligible Use public transport Walk if < 1km Use concessionary pass	Eligible May require door to door service
	Potentially	Eligible Directly-provided transport as last resort	Eligible Directly-provided transport as last resort	Eligible May require door to door service
	No	Eligible Designated pick-up points near home	Eligible Designated pick-up points near home	Eligible Require door to door service

Stage 4: Identification of appropriate transport

Once eligibility has been assessed as above, it will be the duty of the Adult Social Care to make appropriate arrangements for transport. Directly provided transport services – whether internal or external – will be provided only once other alternatives have been considered and ruled out and not as a matter of course.

The range of provision includes:

- Assistance with using public transport, eg escorts
- Independent travel – referral to the Council's Independent Travel Programme Manager

- Existing taxi journey – shared with other clients
- Taxi service – solely for the use of the client
- Transport in Council vehicles, eg minibuses

The assessment and provision of transport should be reviewed on a pre-determined basis, eg at the annual review, by the commissioner in consultation with the transport provider.

Where clients move from Children's to Adult Social Care services, then their needs will be reassessed by Adult Social Care in relation to the new services required.