

Cheshire West & Chester Council

The Future of Transport for users of Adults Social Care

30 October 2013 – 24 January 2014



Foreword

It's a great success story that our residents are living longer and healthier lives but like many areas across the country this places greater demand on our care services. We also face the challenge of a reducing budget that will continue to decrease over the coming years. In this context, we need to make sure that we are making the best use of the resources that are available to maintain quality services which address the needs of our communities.

Our response is to give individuals and their families' greater choice and control over their care. We are moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach that is neither personal, flexible nor affordable.

This document invites you to give your views on proposals for changes to the way we support and fund transport for users of adult social care. The people who use these transport services are mainly people who are older or who have learning disabilities or a physical disability.

We think it is in the interest of service users and taxpayers to move away from a position where the council has often funded and provided transport needs for the majority of service users receiving community care. We believe a new and more personal approach is required where individuals will work with the council to identify their transport needs and agree suitable alternatives to current provision. This will mean the council will fund transport for users of adult social care only in exceptional circumstances where there is no suitable or appropriate alternative.

We believe that the challenges we face can only be addressed by taking your views into account. I'd encourage you to have your say so Councillors can take into account all your views before we make a decision early in 2014.



**Councillor
Brenda Dowding**
*Executive Member for
Adult Social Care and Health*



Mark Palethorpe
*Corporate Director
Strategic Commissioning*

What is the document about?

The following document invites you to give your views on the changes we are considering in relation to the funding and delivery of door-to-door transport for users of adult social care. The people who use these transport services receive their care in the community and are often older adults, or who have learning disabilities or a physical disability.

What are you consulting on?

We are particularly interested in understanding your views on:

- 1. Current approaches to adult social care transport services;**
- 2. The principles behind any changes we are proposing;**
- 3. A change in practice where the majority of service users fund their own transport needs rather than current practice where council provides and funds door-to-door transport services;**
- 4. Suitable alternatives to current transport services are identified.**

We are also separately consulting on our approach to transport for children and young people but recognise the need to take a coordinated approach.

Your views will be considered prior to a final decision being made by Councillors in March 2014.



How do I get involved?

You can share your views on these proposals until **24 January 2014**, by

- completing the questionnaire accompanying this document and returning it in the addressed envelope enclosed or:
- by completing the questionnaire online at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/consultations_and_petitions/council_consultations.aspx
- e-mailing your comments to **commissioningandcontracts@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**
- contacting us by telephone on **0300 1237048**
- attending a drop-in event
(Consultation from 3.00pm – 7.00pm):

Ellesmere Port Civic Hall,

Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 0AZ
12 November 2013

Cheshire County Sports Club,

Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1PR
19 November 2013

Frodsham Community Hall,

Fluin Lane, Frodsham WA6 7QN
22 November 2013

Winsford Lifestyle Centre,

Winsford, CW71AD
27 November 2013

University of Chester Academy,

Shipbrook Road, Northwich CW9 7DT
02 December 2013

Malpas Victoria Jubilee Hall,

High Street Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8NN
09 December 2013

What help with transport is currently available?

For many users of adult social care services, support with transport is needed to enable the same level of access that the majority of residents often take for granted.

The subject of this consultation is the **door-to door transport funded by the council**. This is provided for 428 people to get to and from day centres on a council-run passenger fleet of cars and minibuses. The Council also fund taxis for people who need individual transport to places they regularly attend. This costs around £1.7 million per year. Existing council policy does not oblige the Council to fund this service stating that we will only provide and finance transport in exceptional circumstances where there is no suitable and appropriate alternative way for the service user to travel to their care and community activities. **It is proposed that the council works with new and existing users of this service to identify suitable alternatives and in line with existing council policy only fund transport in exceptional circumstances.**

Why are you proposing these changes?

The Council's budget is reducing while demand for care services is increasing. As well as ensuring our services are affordable we don't think that current transport is as flexible and tailored to the individual as it could be. We think the following six principles will help guide our decisions on any potential changes to transport

- To minimise costs of transport to service users and taxpayers.
- To provide truly personalised transport services that are tailored to individual needs and circumstances;
- To ensure suitable alternatives are in place for the majority of service users that will no longer have their transport needs funded by the council;
- To work with service users to ensure suitable alternatives are affordable, accessible, environmentally friendly and safe;
- To ensure provision and funding is available for the small number of service users that have no alternative to council funded transport;
- To fully consider the views of service users and the wider community before making any final decisions.

What other transport services are available?

The Council is committed to identifying alternative provision through individual discussions with service users. A range of other services are also available including:

- **Concessionary travel:** This is a scheme which allows free travel on local bus services for senior citizens and people eligible through disability, after 09:30 Monday to Friday and at all times weekends and Public holidays. There is also a discounted Railcard which can be used to purchase discounted rail travel for senior citizens and people eligible through disability.
- **Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payment (Mobility Component):** this is a financial allowance paid by the Department of Work and Pensions. People can qualify for this benefit depending on the degree of their mobility impairment. People qualifying for Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component can qualify for a leased vehicle under the Motability scheme in exchange for their allowance. Disability Living Allowance will be now known as Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- **Blue Badge:** this scheme is used by residents and gives free and dedicated parking close to services for drivers and passengers with mobility-related disabilities, or who are blind. Currently there are 17,498 blue badges users. People can apply through the council for a blue badge and this is valid for 3 years.
- **Community transport:** these are schemes that the Council supports to transport people who are without private transport or who are unable to access public transport to make their journey. There is a usually a small charge for each journey which varies depending on the scheme. Examples include:
- **Dial-a-ride and Plus Bus:** A door to door transport scheme for people who find using public transport difficult. All the minibuses used are wheelchair accessible and bookings are taken the day before the passenger wishes to travel.
- **Voluntary Transport Scheme:** this is a scheme where a group of car owners each volunteering a little of their time, are able to help people, their neighbours and friends with transport;
- **Independent Travel Training:** Travel training provides tailored and practical help in travelling by public transport, on foot or by bicycle. Travel training aims to help people travel independently to access work, education, to other key services, or simply for leisure.
- **Direct Payments:** For the small number of service users that require door to door transport and who may require an escort and there is no suitable alternative means of travel, the Council will finance this provision via a direct payment. This is a cash payment direct to the service user and will enable them to purchase appropriate transport with support and guidance from the council.

When will these changes be introduced?

The executive will make a decision on the consultation in March 2014. This will enable adequate time to consider the views expressed in this consultation.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 867 670

email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk