

Scrutiny Review - Service Based Transport Minutes 15th October 2008

In attendance:

Cllr Bull (Chair), Cllr Butcher & Cllr Gorrie

1. Apologies

Pam Moffat, Haringey Disability Forum

2. Urgent Business

None notified.

3. Declarations of Interest.

None received.

4. Scoping report

Agreed: The scoping report was approved by the Panel and will be submitted to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed: The minutes of the last meeting (31st July 2008) were approved by the Panel.

6. Initial Project documentation

The Panel had asked to view original project documentation so that service based transport could be assessed in the context of its stated objectives. The Panel noted that there were a number of shortcomings to this report:

- Financial data provided in the report to justify opting out of centralised control by the JTPU was insufficient
- There was no service data to substantiate the move to service based transport and no baseline data to assess future service developments
- The Project description only related to Learning Disability services

Although the decision for Adult Social Care to move to service based transport was taken by a previous Director of Social Services, the service recognised and acknowledged the shortcomings in this report.

The Panel noted that shortcomings in the original project documentation have contributed to the failure of the service to provide adequate monitoring and evaluation data to the review. The Panel felt that a tighter initial project initiation process should be developed in the directorate.

7. Research Governance

The Panel heard that the planned consultation for the review (with service users, carers and staff) is required to be assessed and approved by the Research Governance Panel. This is a new statutory requirement in which all research, consultation and service assessments involving vulnerable adults in Adult Social Care services has to be assessed in relation to ethical and research standards.

It was reported to the Panel that the application to the Research Governance Panel was considered and agreed on the 26th September 2008. As a consequence the planned consultation can now proceed. Questionnaires are currently being designed, agreed and piloted with respective services. It will be necessary to report back to the Research Governance Panel on completion of review.

8. Development of Service Based Transport – Adult Social Care

A presentation was made to the Panel by Adult Social Care. This presentation highlighted the policy context and local drivers for the development of service based transport and outlined the main service improvements that this has brought.

A number of service managers were present and were keen to emphasise the positive developments that service based transport had brought to day care. These can be summarised as thus:

- The development of locally managed transport service has been critical in helping the authority to meet national policy objectives, such as Valuing People. Service based transport has helped to modernise services, extend choice and promote independence.
- One key benefit of service based transport is that it is responsive to the needs of service users and carers. The flexibility and adaptability of the new passenger transport has enabled the service to cater for the individual needs of service users. In particular, improved transport has significantly improved the opportunities service users have for accessing a broader range of services.
- The new transport system and the increased access to community and mainstream service this has brought, has helped service users to feel less confined to the day centre and less institutionalised.
- As a consequence of passenger transport services being devolved to Adult Social Care from the centralised service (JTPU), this has brought greater control to service managers, particularly in being able to manage transport costs.
- A brief consultation with similar services in 5 other boroughs found that most operated within a centrally managed transport system and wished to exert more local control over passenger transport services, as experienced with the service based model.
- Drivers and escorts are now part of the day centre staff, a development which has brought considerable improvements in the continuity and consistency of services that clients receive.
- The service also noted that as staff in the new service based model of passenger transport are peripatetic, this had minimised the need to use

agency staff. All staff are now trained to the day centres standards and are familiar with the needs of service users attending

- The service based model has been in operation for 18 months and although evidently successful and welcomed by service users, carers and staff it should be recognised that the model is still being developed. The service is trying to assess how greater use can be made of vehicles at evenings and weekends and how the service could work more closely with Haringey Community Transport Service.

Members also discussed the service report which was submitted to the Panel and raised a number of issues with service representatives. These are highlighted below:

- Panel Members noted that there was an absence of monitoring data within the report. This represented a serious shortcoming for without it Members were unable to fully assess the nature of service based transport or the impact this had upon day care centre services. In particular, there was no evidence presented in the report to substantiate how the new model of passenger transport had improved day opportunities for service users, despite this being a key objective for the new transport service.
- The Panel also noted the paucity of financial information within the report; there was not enough detailed information and some elements of the financial information provided were unclear. Members were particularly keen to see more financial data given that the new service based model of transport was intended to deliver a more cost effective service. Given the lack of monitoring and associated financial data, Members indicated that they were in no position to establish if this new model of passenger transport service was cost effective.
- The service acknowledged that the report did not contain as much substantive data as it would have liked, particularly financial data. In part this was due to the incomparability of the service based transport model with the previous centralised passenger transport service. Under the old centralised service, Adult Social Care was simply recharged as a proportion of the overall cost for all council transport services. Under the new model of transport services, there was now an element of budgetary control.
- The Panel indicated that it was critically important that the service develop systems to collect operational data and to maintain more detailed financial monitoring of the transport service as these were central in developing evaluative data. The Panel emphasised that if the new model of transport provision is successful as the service suggests it was important that the service generate such evaluative data to:
 - Support ongoing internal (i.e. scrutiny) and external (i.e. CSCI) service assessments,
 - Future-proof the model to prevent arbitrary changes to the service in the future,

- To determine whether other services would benefit through developing this model of transport provision across the borough.
- The Panel also questioned the service on the global demand or capacity of the transport service and the key drivers that influence this.
 - It was explained that the all service users are assessed by a Social Worker under the Fair Access to Services criteria.
 - There are a limited number of places at day centres which clearly influences demand for transport.
 - A new day centre is due to open in 2009 which will impact on demand for passenger transport services.

Agreed: That the service provides further financial information concerning the operation of service based transport at day centres in particular; budgetary increase recorded from 2005/6 to 2008/9; component cost pressures driving 2008/9 budget.

Agreed: That the service provides briefing note explaining the recharge system within the old centralised passenger transport service (JTPU) detailing how service costs were calculated.

Agreed: That the service keeps a 'transport diary' for a period of 1 week to provide a snapshot of the nature and volume of transport usage at respective day centres.

Agreed: That the service provides a geographical analysis of where service users are located in the borough for respective day centres.

9. Open Panel Discussion with service users, carers and staff

In total the meeting was attended by approximately 40-50 people. These included service users, carers and staff from local Day Centres. Panel Members were keen to hear the views of all those attending and devoted the first part of the meeting to an open discussion about the impact of service based transport. The following highlights the main issues to arise from this discussion:

The Chair emphasised to all those present that the purpose of the meeting and the review itself was to assess what impact the new model of passenger transport service (service based transport) has had within day care centres and not about whether transport should be provided.

Service users

- Service users emphasised how important the day centre was to them in terms of day care services, opportunities for socialisation and the respite it provided for their carers. In this context, safe and reliable transport to the day centre was perceived to be critical in them being able to enjoy these life enhancing benefits and that they were very thankful for this service.
- Service users attending the meeting on the whole, were very appreciative of the transport service to and from day centres. It was indicated that the

new transport system was reliable, punctual and much more comfortable than the previous centralised service. The reliability of the new transport service gave service users peace of mind.

- A number of service users indicated that they had previously used Dial-a-Ride to access day centres. However, Dial-a-Ride proved to be too unreliable and too inflexible enough to allow service users to access day centres in that it was difficult to book transport, bookings could not be made more than a day in advance and the system lacked capacity. The new service based transport system had given additional transport capacity and more flexibility to allow service users to get to day centres.
- A number of service users from more than one day centre also indicated that the new transport system had increased and broadened opportunities for them during the day. Having access to transport services during the day had for instance enabled day centre users to go to the park, attend local and central London museums and go to local events such as car boot sales.
- There was a difference of opinion among some service users as to whether the development of service based transport had extended the time at which some service users could spend at the day centre. Some indicated that the flexibility of the new transport system had enabled them to stay at the centre for longer, whilst others indicated that this had had little impact, with attendance restricted to 11am through to 2pm.
- Service users noted that the new driver/escort role had improved the level of care that was provided on the transport. A number of service users indicated that they were helpful and provided support from their home all the way to the centre.

Carers

- Some carers noted that the new service based model of passenger transport was better as it was more flexible. One carer noted that they could now vary the pick-up and drop-off times of their daughter which was helpful for their own needs.
- Some carers were questioning as to why the bus did not always arrive on time. Day centre managers responded by suggesting that by offering a flexible transport system it was not able to always give concrete times for pick-up or drop-off. There were also unforeseeable traffic problems which made difficult to rigidly stick to specific drop-off and pick-up times.
- A small number of carers indicated that the journey time for their relatives was still unacceptably long. One parent indicated that the journey time for their son was 90 minutes which was a long time to spend on transport each day. The service responded that it was aware that journey times for some service users remained unacceptable long, but these long journey times were now the exception within the new service based transport

model. Further improvements were expected when the new fleet of vehicles were delivered.

- A number of carers indicated that under the old centralised passenger transport service the level of care provided by drivers/ escorts to service users was not always that consistent. Some carers indicated how difficult it was to have their child returned to their care in a poor state (i.e. personal hygiene not maintained). Carers noted that new role for drivers/escorts had helped to develop the level and continuity of care and that the instances of children being returned to them in a poor state had reduced. Similar concerns were raised concerning the degree to which escorts/service users engaged with service users on the journey.
- Carers also raised the issue of emergency cover and maintenance of the vehicles now that they are managed locally. Service managers reported that there was a Service Level Agreement with the Ashley Road depot relating to governance issues around the vehicle which included: emissions compliance, regular maintenance checks and ensuring that the vehicles are fully compliant with statutory regulations.

Day Centre Staff

- A day centre manager indicated that the new service based transport system was much cheaper and more flexible than the old centralised passenger service. The additional flexibility of the new transport service had helped service users to access urgent medical appointments and also used to help them to visit relatives to help them maintain their social networks.
- There were a number of drivers attending the meeting who were keen to emphasise the improvements that service based transport has brought to their role at the day centre. One driver indicated that in the previous centralised transport service, it felt as if they were just a number. However, within the new service based transport model, the driver felt that they were part of the day centre team; their new role enabled them to work more closely with service users and other day centre staff.
- Drivers also indicated that the journey on the bus is much more participative for service users within the service based transport. As this model has dedicated drivers and escorts, activities (such as quizzes) can be planned to make the journey more stimulating and enjoyable.
- A day centre manager indicated that the new service based model of passenger transport was more adaptable to service user's needs. Previously, service users who lived out of the borough (but were still the responsibility of LBH) did not have access to transport services as the old centralised system could not go out of borough.
- One Community Centre Manager (Irish Centre) indicated that they currently only have access to service based transport for 3 days a week

and it would be helpful to service users if this was extended to 5 days per week.

- Day centre manager also indicated that the new transport system was more responsive to needs of service users and their carers. The example was given of where the drop off for a service user was changed as late as 4pm to respond to the needs of the carer. It was noted that the routes were often changed to vary pick-up/drop-off times to suit the needs of individual carers.

10. Service visits and dates of future meetings

The Panel agreed that these could be arranged via email with respective services after the meeting.