

CABINET - 29 JANUARY 2013

Day Opportunities and Transport Strategy Consultation

Report by Deputy Director, Adult Social Care

Introduction

1. This paper provides feedback on the public consultation which took place from 1 June to 31 October 2012 in Tier 2 and Tier 3 services providing day opportunities for older people and people with a physical disability. The proposals are to introduce transport charges in Tier 2 services and increase charges in Tier 3 services for attendance and transport.
2. Tier 2 services are provided by small and medium sized voluntary sector organisations in small local venues such as village halls or community centres. Tier 3 services are the 8 larger resource centres providing support to people with higher needs. Seven of which are run by the County Council internal service and one by Leonard Cheshire in Witney. *The relevant Tier 3 services are listed in Appendix 1*
3. On 6 March 2012 scrutiny committee received a report on the Day Opportunities and Transport Strategy, which detailed Social & Community Services commissioning intentions in regard to 3 Tiers of day service provision for older people and people with a physical disability, including transport.
4. The report discussed the need for sustainable services and the introduction of charges which better reflected the cost of providing services, although not the full cost. A high percentage of people using the day services are not eligible for social care support but may prefer to have access to the service and pay for it.
5. Full consultation was required and scrutiny committee was asked to review the results of the consultation, consider any changes to the proposals and comment on ways forward.

The Proposals Consulted on

6. Tier 2 services
 - Introduce daily transport charges of £5 for a return journey.
7. Tier 3 services
 - Increase the attendance charge (from £4.18 per day to £15.00 per day) for a 5 hour day (10am-3pm).
 - Introduce the option of a 3 hour day for £9, (11am to 2pm)
 - Increase the transport charge from 82p to £5 for a return journey
 - Offer of additional subsidised services to support health & wellbeing such as basic foot care, massage and seated exercise classes.

8. It is important to note that these charges only apply to people who do not meet the criteria to receive services under Fair Access to Care Services which is the criteria against which support is allocated. People who are assessed as having Critical and Substantial needs under Fair Access to Care , and do not have alternative means, will continue to have their care funded by the Council via a personal budget. For these people a charge applies against their Support Plan, so they are effectively already paying towards their day service. Therefore these proposals are to extend this charge to people who do not have a personal budget. In Tier 3 services approximately 30% of current users are Fair Access to Care eligible, however all service users have been encouraged to seek an assessment if they are uncertain of their eligibility. Basic information and guidance on Fair Access to Care eligibility was made available in each centre for all users. The locality teams have been made aware to support any additional resource planning should demand exceed capacity; however the number of people requesting the assessment is low. Some people will have enquired through the Social & Health care team but they are not reporting increases. Tier 3 centre managers have recorded 6 expressions of interest by people whom they have supported to contact their locality team accordingly.

Consultation – Tier 2 Services

9. The consultation took place from 1st June to 31st October 2012. Each service user was sent a questionnaire with an explanatory letter. The questionnaires were distributed by the local centres who worked with people on any queries they had.

Consultation results – Tier 2 Services

10. Approximately 150 questionnaires were sent out and 73 responses were returned, which is a high level of response.

Table 1: Number of responses from centres

Centre	No of surveys returned	Centre run by:
Bromsgrove, Faringdon	5	u/k charity
Bullington Community Club	1	Age UK
Christchurch Centre	1	Age UK
Grove	4	Independent charity
Hinton Waldrist	7	Age UK
Long Hanborough	4	Independent charity
Marston Court	14	OSJ
Eynsham	7	Independent charity
Cotteslowe	1	Age UK
Oakwood House	8	Age UK
Shipton on Cherwell	2	Age UK
St Francis Court	10	Age UK

Not Identified	9	
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- 57% of respondents that stated their age were aged 75-90
- 29% that stated their age were aged 90+

Responses to questions about changes to the cost of transport.

11. Of those who responded:
- Just over half (52%) said they would continue to use the transport at the proposed cost.
 - Under half (44%) said they would not reduce the number of days they attend if the cost increased to the proposed level.
 - Under half (44%) of those that stated they would not reduce the number of days they attend only attend one day a week.
 - Less than 1 in 5 (19%) said they would want to find alternative transport e.g. asking a friend or relative

Table 2: Numbers of responses to questions

Response	Changes to the cost of transport.		
	Would you continue to use the transport service if it cost £5?	Would you change the number of days you attend if the transport cost £5?	Would you want to find alternative transport? e.g. asking a relative or friend?
Yes	33	25	14
No	38	32	52
N/A	2	16	7

Analysis of comments on surveys

12. In addition to the answers to the "closed" questions reported above, 37 people gave their views on the survey in the "general comments" box. There were various comments but the main ones relating to key themes are listed below:

Issue	No. of comments
Comments on not wanting/able to pay in advance	18
Expressing concern about the rise in cost	17
Concern that would not be able to afford it	14
Comments on attendance at the centres being very important for social contact	9
Suggestions to phase the implementation of charges more gradually or to levy a lower cost	6
Expressing concern about the impact on carers	2
Concern that it will isolate people living in villages	2
Suggestion that this charge should be means tested	1

13. It must be noted that transport is a major proportion of the cost for attending one of the Tier 2 services and that whilst there has been considerable feedback from people and the centres themselves that they welcome

transport still being provided increasing the charges, as shown above, may impact their attendance patterns.

14. Many of the Tier 2 providers organise their own transport and it is thought that this might happen in even more cases.

Consultation – Tier 3 Health & Wellbeing Resource Centres

15. The consultation took place from 1st June to 31st October 2012 and involved:
 - People who attend the centres
 - Families and carers.
 - Staff and volunteers
 - The general public and friends of local centres.
16. We engaged with people through a survey, focus groups with service users and families in the centres, public meetings and through local contact.
17. Each service user was sent a questionnaire with a letter which explained why we were undertaking the consultation and other information, which included who to contact for help, some useful questions and answers about the proposals and details of the proposed additional services.
18. Staff at the local centres discussed and clarified queries from service users but did not support people to fill out the surveys to avoid any risk of the findings being influenced by staff. Local volunteers were made available in the centres to support people to complete the questionnaires and the survey was also available on the County Council public website.
19. Fifteen focus groups were facilitated by local and senior managers, two in each centre run by the internal service and one in the Witney centre run by Leonard Cheshire. These events took place in June and gave people who use the services and their families the opportunity to discuss the proposals, give their views and for officers to share useful information such as advice on FACS eligibility and support to complete the questionnaires. These meetings were minuted and a copy of the questions and answers from each centre was made available to service users, families and carers.
20. Three public meetings were facilitated by local and senior managers in the local centres, two evening ones in Bicester and Abingdon on 11th and 17th July and one in Oxford on Saturday 14th July.
21. Throughout the consultation local managers talked with service users and families, recording and answering queries where possible, and forwarding them to the engagement team and managers for responses as appropriate. These were also included in an overall Question and Answer document, which was made available for all stakeholders in addition to local ones coming out of the focus groups.
22. In addition to these events:
 - Information and email links to the County Council consultation pages were sent to County Councillors

- Staff and volunteer briefings took place in all the centres
 - Integrated Transport Unit staff attended briefings
 - Friends Associations had briefings
 - A Unison briefing took place
 - Updates for Council staff and associated colleagues were provided
 - Information and email links to the County Council consultation pages were sent to related organizations such as Local Involvement Network , Age UK, Carers Forum, Oxfordshire Advocacy and Broker organisations
23. A member of the engagement team also carried out a number of face to face and telephone interviews with centre users in September to explore the themes emerging from the survey returns. 7 interviews were completed, 4 with people who use the services and 3 carers. Although this is a relatively low number the responses concur with the survey and focus group feedback.
24. In early September the local and senior managers held meetings in the centres to outline the feedback in order to share with people the results up to then and talk them through the next steps regarding decision making.

Consultation Results - Tier 3

25. 830 surveys were posted and 461 were returned. Therefore over 50% of surveys were received back, a high level of response. In comparison, the Social Care User survey is sent out annually by the Directorate and a typical rate of return is 31%. The number of people using each centre is listed in Table 1 on page 6 of this report.
26. There was a good return rate from all centres with the highest return from Bicester and the lowest from Abingdon. 80% of respondents were aged 75 to 90. 69% of respondents were women and 31% are men.

Table 1: Response rates from each centre

Centre	No of Service users who received the survey	No of surveys returned	% returned
1. Abingdon	136	62	45%
2. Banbury	78	43	55%
3. Bicester	129	84	65%
4. Didcot	94	50	53%
5. Oxford Options	119	58	48%
6. Wantage	81	51	62%
7. Wallingford	73	44	60%
8. Witney	120	69	57%
Total:	830	461	Average 55% return

Responses to questions about increase in the attendance charge

27. Of those who responded where the question was applicable to them i.e. non Fair Access to Care eligible:
- Over two thirds (70%) said they would continue to attend at the proposed cost.
 - Just under two thirds (65%) said they would not reduce the number of days they attend if the cost increased to the proposed level.*
 - Three quarters (75%) said they would not be interested in the offer of a shorter day.

Table 2: Numbers of responses to questions:

Question/ response	Would you continue to attend at the proposed cost?	Would you reduce the number of days you attend?	We are offering half day sessions between 11am -2pm for £9. Would you be interested in this.
Yes	291	125	98
No	124	236	296
N/A	48	102	69

Note: In response to the question about whether people would continue to attend a relatively high number (102) ticked N/A on this question. What is meant by NA on this question is more open to interpretation than on the other questions - it would include people who were only attending 1 day a week and therefore could not reduce further without stopping attending altogether.

Responses to questions about increase in the transport charge

28. Of those who responded where the question was applicable to them i.e. non Fair access to Care eligible:
- Over two thirds (70%) said they would still use the transport at the proposed cost.
 - Over two thirds (69%) said they would not reduce the number of days they attended at the proposed cost.
 - Less than 1 in 5 (17%) said they would want to find alternative transport e.g. asking a friend or relative.

Table 3: Responses to transport questions:

Question/ response	Would you continue to use the transport service if it £5?	Would you reduce the number of days you attend if transport cost £5	Would you want to find alternative transport? e.g. asking a relative or friend?
Yes	241	95	55
No	104	209	268
N/A	118	159	140

Interest in additional service and support

29. People were asked to indicate their interest in a list of subsidised activities that might be included in the centre programme.

- Over 200 people indicated interest in garden centre visits (236), countryside visits (223), boat trips (219) and pub trips (211).
- Over 100 people indicated interest in hairdressing (139) and podiatry (123).
- Less than 100 people indicated interest in Sunday lunch club (94) and ten pin bowling (85).

Analysis of comments on surveys

30. In addition to the answers to the "closed" questions reported above, nearly 200 people gave their views on the survey in the "additional comments" box. There were various comments such as "I don't use transport" but the main ones relating to key themes are listed below:

Table 4: Summary of comments

Issue	No. of comments
Expressing concern about the rises in prices	23
Positive comments about the increase in activities	19
Comments on social contact being very important	16
Will reduce number of days	16
Do not think the increased activities are important and/or would like them to be optional rather than have price increase	11
Promoting phasing in	8
Expressing concern about the impact on carers	7

Calls/Letters of complaints

31. Approximately 15 calls from people who had received the survey were taken during June. Most of the calls expressed concern that a decision had been made on the changes and that they were being implemented immediately. People were reassured on the process of consultation, decision making and encouraged to return the questionnaire.
32. Nineteen letters of complaint were received and responded to in writing and one personal meeting was requested and held with a family member.

Focus groups, Public meetings and General Comments

33. The local focus groups were well attended and people gave feedback that these were useful and constructive; however the public meetings were less well attended, particularly in the City and Abingdon.
34. Throughout the survey feedback, the focus groups and public meetings some general themes were consistent:
- The centres and staff are held in high regard by their users, carers and local communities as they are seen as essential to staying well, living independently and supporting carers, many of whom are above retirement age themselves.
 - Families and Carers value the respite and have confidence that loved ones are well cared for at the centres and are concerned that they will not be able to manage if they cannot afford to use them.
 - People recognized that the charges need to increase but felt the proposed increase is too high and will be cost prohibitive for some.

- Many people suggested a staged implementation over 12 to 24 months would assist.
 - People felt that the charges should have been reviewed every year to avoid this level of increase.
 - Fair Access to Care and finance assessments have been offered and some will take this up but others felt this was intrusive on their privacy.
 - Oxfordshire County Council Integrated Transport drivers are appreciated as very helpful and supportive but need more vehicles and drivers in some areas to avoid long runs and short days.
 - People are concerned that if people cannot afford to come to the centres what will happen?
 - The improved service offer and the options for a shorter day is appreciated by some.
 - There were also a number of general comments about ensuring maximum use of building and monitoring attendance.
35. In the Witney centre, which is run by Leonard Cheshire, people had concerns about having a bigger increase in attendance charges as they currently only pay £1.30 for attendance as opposed to the £4.18p that Oxfordshire County Council charge in the other seven centres. However their current transport charge is £1.00 so the transport increase is fractionally less.

Face to Face and Telephone Interviews

36. It was decided to carry out a small sample of face to face and telephone interview to explore individual feedback in depth. Of the seven people interviewed:
- 5 people said they would keep attending
 - 2 said they may have to stop or reduce their days.
 - 3 people said they knew of people who were planning to reduce or stop.
 - 1 person said they hoped to increase their days despite the charges
 - A common comment was about needing to attend, “not attending is not an option despite the increase”
 - The carers strongly advocated the centres in terms of the vital respite they provide, knowing the person was well cared for and centre staff were praised.
 - All people interviewed said attending the centre was their main or only source of social contact (beyond their carer)
 - 5 people used and relied solely on the county council transport provided.
 - The most commonly described benefit of attending the centre was of social contact.
 - 3 people commented on the excellent food at the centres but one said more should be done about desserts for people with diabetes.

Online and Public Consultation

37. From 1st June to 31st August the online consultation was directed at service users, families, staff and associated groups such as Age UK. However from 1st September the consultation was opened up to the public on the council website and extended to 31st October.

38. There were 50 responses to the online consultation. 9 from the initial consultation that ended on 31st August and 41 from the subsequent consultation which ended on 31st October. All comments expressed opposition (sometimes very strong opposition) to the increased charges. Many of the comments overlapped with those on the questionnaires and other forums and indicated that the responses were from the General Public and one City Councillor.

Service and Community Impact Assessment

Issue	No. of comments
Expressing concern about the rises in prices	50
Comments on social contact being very important	15
Expressing concern about the impact on carers	14
Potential impact on other services	9
Potential impact on people's ability to live independently	8
Puts viability of centres at risk	8
Concern that the monitoring of people's health and wellbeing would be lost if people cannot get to centres	5
Promoting phasing in increases	4
Concern about additional pressures on people's income - utilities' prices rises, benefit cuts, pension cuts.	4

39. As part of the consultation a Service and Community Impact Assessment was produced and made public on the website. There have been no direct comments on this document however there are themes that have been identified in the Service and Community Impact Assessment that have been picked up in the responses.
40. A key theme is of the ability of people with certain requirements and needs to access transport to services and the choices they face. There are many community transport schemes and volunteer arrangements for people but for many who have wheelchairs or need greater levels of support many of these schemes are not suitable. Therefore ensuring that transport is still available for people is key to addressing needs.
41. The other theme is isolation and the ability for people to still access services in the rural parts of Oxfordshire or perhaps in those built up areas such as the City. Ensuring that there are a range of services and continued transport provision, which complements the public transport provision and other local facilities, is key to ensuring fair access to services.

Conclusions – Outcomes of the Consultation

42. It is apparent that the Tier 2 and Tier 3 services are highly valued by the current users, their families and carers and play an important role in the overall prevention and ageing successfully agendas. They support and enable carers, many of whom are above retirement age. They reduce social isolation and in addition the Tier 3 centres provide health and wellbeing support and monitoring to people who may live alone, therefore enabling people to live at home longer by reducing the likelihood of admission to hospital, residential or nursing care.

43. The Tier 3 centres have developed local partnerships to support community use and improved services for users and carers through shared use of buildings. Over the next 18 months they plan to increase shared use to support best use of resources and develop accessible local community services. The current and proposed partners include Guideposts, The Alzheimer Society, The Stroke Association, County Council and Health services such as the Blue Badge team, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. It is anticipated that this should improve local access and encourage people into the buildings who may not otherwise have been aware of them.
44. At the March scrutiny committee the idea to consider a waiver scheme was put forward. Waiver is a term used in the Fairer Charging process and is currently intended to apply after a financial assessment has been completed. If a person is assessed as needing the Tier 3 service but the charges are cost prohibitive, and not attending would be particularly detrimental to them, this could be taken into consideration and potentially result in a reduced charge. However further work would be required to develop this and agree appropriate procedures, which could passport people accordingly.
45. There is an obvious tension in how best to fund the Tier 3 centres and ensure a programme of continuous improvement and development so that they remain an attractive and vibrant resource in their local communities. There are risks in increasing the charges; however the current rates are not sustainable. Whilst the current charges only represent a fraction of the actual costs even with the proposed increase the County Council will still be subsidising the attendance and transport costs significantly. It is estimated that the actual cost of attendance is at least £30 per day and the actual transport costs are £15 per person for a return journey so the subsidy by the authority is significant. However as preventative services they reduce potential expenditure on more expensive services such as residential and nursing care or hospital admissions, particularly as they support people with higher needs. They provide support to family carers. They reduce loneliness.
46. The income of any increases should support development of the Health & Wellbeing model and assist with future efficiencies.
47. The Council recognizes and supports the importance of sustaining these services so based on peoples feedback and the concerns raised about the level of increase it is proposed that the charges are introduced gradually over a phased two year period commencing September 2013.

Financial and Staff Implications

48. The approximate current customer profile of these services is:
- 30% are Fair Access to Care eligible customers with assessed care needs
 - 40% are non Fair Access to Care eligible customers with assessed care needs, which are moderate or low.

- 30% are self-funding customers without an assessed care need
So these proposals directly affect up to 70% of current users.

49. The future income is calculated to include possible reductions in attendance, as indicated in the feedback, and the figures are based on 50 weeks delivery per year of the average current attendance in internal resource centres and an average attendance in The Elms, Witney. We have taken a very pragmatic view on the numbers we are estimating will attend on a daily basis in order to minimise the risk as far as is practical. It is important to note that the figures are indicative and not definitive at this stage.
50. Gross current expenditure on direct delivery of Tier 3 services is £3.5 million. The income projections listed below are modelled on a phased introduction of the proposed increased charges.
51. Current position - 2012/13 (based on actual current attendance)
Internal Resource Centres
Current charge of £4.18 for attendance and 82p for a daily return journey on Oxfordshire County Council transport.
Income £127,600 attendance and £20,000 transport. (Total: £147,600)
Witney Resource Centre, current income £1,236
Overall Total Income: £148,836 (4.2% of gross expenditure)
52. Phase 1 of Charges from September 2013 (assuming a possible 20% reduction in attendance when new charges are introduced)
Internal Resource Centres Charge
April to August 2013: Current charge of £4.18 for attendance and 82p for a daily return journey on OCC transport.
Sept 13 to March 14: £7.50 for 5 hours and £4.50 for 3 hours plus £5 for a daily return journey on OCC transport.
Annual Income: £146,400 attendance and £104,900 transport. (Total: £251,300)
Witney Resource Centre income £4,900
Overall Total 2013/14: £256,200 (7.2% of gross expenditure)
- Phase 2 of charges from April 2014 to March 2015
Internal Resource Centres Charge
£10 for 5 hours and £6 for 3 hours plus £5 for a daily return journey on Oxfordshire County Council transport.
Overall Total: £413,300 (11.7% of gross expenditure)
- Phase 3 of charges from April 2015 to March 2016
Internal Resource Centres Charge
Charge of £15 for 5 hours and £9 for 3 hours plus £5 for a daily return journey on Oxfordshire County Council transport.
Overall Total: £ 524,800(14.8% of gross expenditure)

The phased charges are consistent with the Service & Resource planning assumptions for day services.

Summary of the Proposals

53. Tier 2 Services

- Introduce the transport charges of £5 per return journey from September 2013.

54. Tier 3 Services

1. As of September 2013 introduce increased transport charge of £5 per return journey.
2. Phase the implementation of increased attendance charges commencing September 2013.
3. As of September 2013 increase charge to £7.50 per person for 5 hours and £4.50 per person for 3 hours.
4. As of April 2014 increase charge to £10 per person for 5 hours and £6 per person for 3 hours.
5. As of April 2015 increase charge to £15 per person for 5 hours and £9 per person for 3 hours.
6. Further work should be carried out on options for reduced charges where the costs are too prohibitive.
7. Introduce a payment scheme which reduces the need to collect cash at the local centres.
8. Ensure any future increases are reasonable and service users are made aware of them well in advance of implementation dates.

RECOMMENDATION

55. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposals set out in paragraphs 53 and 54.**

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Background papers: Consultation Responses

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