

OPTION: TRANSFORMATION OF DAY SERVICES AND DAYTIME PROVISION

BUDGET SAVING: £2,000,000 to £2,500,000 (depending on option)

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

Currently, Wirral Council provides a number of Day Centres which support people with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health difficulties. The Council is exploring ways to deliver an effective, efficient in-house service that can remain competitive, in terms of quality and cost. All of our Day Centres at the moment need substantial investment to varying degrees to bring them up to an acceptable quality standard.

This option will involve the complete transformation and improvement of day services; which will result in investing in some centres to make them modern, fit for purpose and suitable to provide the best possible support, but would also mean the Council providing fewer centres. The potential for Social Enterprises is also being explored.

Whilst this proposal may result in the closure of some centres, individuals will still be able to access day services if they choose to do so whilst others, through a personal budget, may choose other ways to receive support. The demand for day services in the voluntary sector may increase as people exercise greater choice through personal budgets. The project to transform day services is developing a service model based on the needs and priorities of service users, with a particular focus on employment needs.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

The Council currently operates six in-house day centres for people with physical and learning disabilities, three day centres for people with mental health needs and six day services offering “work type” placements for people with a disability. These have close links with their communities, operate increasingly personalized services and carry out a range of trading activities including catering and sale of plants and produce.

The model of operation needs to evolve further to meet national expectations and changing needs. The policy of offering people Personal Budgets has changed the profile of service provision. It is increasing demand for flexible support packages, which has in turn reduced demand for traditional long term day care. There is evidence that service users often attend more than one day centre and “mix and match” provision. Young people who are making the transition from children’s to adult’s services are not choosing to attend day centres. Council run day centres have not been maintained to market standard and have sometimes been seen as less flexible and innovative than alternative types of provision.

There is also evidence of an increasing demand for the “work type” placements delivered in six of the council’s day services. These currently offer the equivalent of around 130 full time places a day to service users and are anxious to expand the provision to manage demand.

The following factors have been taken into account to develop options to deliver a modernised service:

- The predicted demand for any future service. This has been based upon an analysis of current levels of occupancy of the day centres, future need in terms of the population of young adults coming through the transition process and the choices they are making about what type of day provision to access. This demonstrates that around 33% of the places currently available are not being used. Given the drive towards more personalised services this is likely to increase in coming years and there is a need for the department to

consolidate its provision at the same time as ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the learning disabled, physically disabled and mental health “populations”. Based on this analysis it will be necessary for the department to ensure sufficient capacity to support 312 people with physical and learning disabilities and 36 people with mental health needs on a daily basis.

- Having sufficient capacity to meet high dependency needs. As highlighted above, there is a significant minority of service users with profound disabilities who will continue to need specialist centres.
- Where services are located. Any new model of service provision has to be flexible enough to meet individual needs and take into account the increasing emphasis on services based on a locality model, nearer to where people live.
- The level of capital investment in the current provision which would be required to bring centres up to a modern standard. Full condition surveys have been carried out on all buildings and it has been established that although some centres are in a much better state of repair than others, the cost of basic reparation to bring all buildings up to an acceptable standard would be £1.5m. This estimate covers only the basic repairs needed and does not include any level of improvement.
- The need to deliver savings over three years as part of the council’s budget strategy.

Option 1

a) Close one large day centre and consolidate Mental Health provision into one centre.

b) Continue to consolidate current day centre provision and retain as an in-house service

c) Continued development of the Social Enterprise Network on a limited basis

Option 2

a) Close one large day centre and consolidate Mental Health provision into one centre

b) Continue to consolidate current day centre provision and explore the feasibility of all remaining day care provision to be run as a social enterprise

Either option is based upon certain assumptions which may change. The closure of one large centre and the consolidation of mental health services will impact upon usage of remaining centres. An impact assessment and evaluation will need to be carried out to fully assess the impact upon the feasibility of moving towards a wholesale move to a social enterprise model

If the recommendations are not agreed, the Council runs the risk of providing services at its Day Centres that people will not use. This will result in additional financial pressure as resources will be locked into empty buildings rather than being reinvested into supporting people in the community.

With regard to the social enterprise, the risk is that the Council will miss the opportunity to modernise the service in line with current best practice. This will result in the Council not being

able to meet the aspirations of people with disabilities for work based training and employment opportunities.

IMPACT

Day Centres

1. The closure of one large day centre and the consolidation of mental health services will result in a saving of £2 million over three years but will include a reduction of staff.
2. There will be a resale value to the Council if the sites of the former day centres are sold.
3. There are significant implications for staff arising from these proposals. Posts will be lost and full consultation with staff and trade unions will be undertaken. In addition there are significant skills development issues to be addressed with remaining staff as the service moves into its new model.

Social Enterprise Network

1. It is anticipated that the creation of a social enterprise network will generate additional efficiencies within the day services budget and these will form part of the plan to commission this service.
2. There will be significant implications for staff working within these services as they move forward into a new organisation.

All of the options for modernising day services involve the closure of Council run buildings with the resultant risk to staff employed. Whilst management has been covering vacancies with agency staff there is still a potential impact on up to 82 staff directly employed by the Council.

MITIGATION

The department has already engaged “Skills for Care” to undertake an analysis of the skills required within the workforce and a developmental programme will be implemented.

Specialist Human Resource advice will be sought to ensure that TUPE implications are fully understood and there will be extensive consultation with staff and unions as the Business Plan is developed.