

**CONSULTATION REPORT:**  
**Fairness of Service Provision Policy**

## **Background**

- 1.1 On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Social Care, Health and Well-being Cabinet Board authorised officers to consult members of the public and other stakeholders for 90 days on the Fairness of Service Provision Policy.
- 1.2 The Policy sets out the Council's proposals for the future provision of adult social care. Set against a background of increasing demand for our services and economic pressures requiring budgetary savings, the provision of good quality and sustainable social care support remains a priority of the Council.
- 1.3 However, in doing so it is necessary to review what services are provided and how we deliver them, whilst taking into account the social care resources available when undertaking an assessment of individuals' needs.
- 1.4 When commissioning services, the Council will make a determination as to what interventions can best meet a person's identified assessed needs.
- 1.5 Sometimes a person may wish to access service(s) that are more costly than the service(s) identified by the Council as available and capable of meeting their assessed needs and agreed desired outcomes. In these cases, the person will be offered, through the use of Direct Payments, the opportunity of accessing a more expensive service than the services identified by the Council.
- 1.6 In all cases the Council, following a Financial Assessment, will fund a service that meets the eligible assessed needs of, and agreed desired outcomes for, the person, or will provide Direct Payments at a level which it estimates to be equivalent to the reasonable cost of securing the provision of that care and support, and a person will be asked to contribute towards the cost of that service solely in accordance with regulations made under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

## 2.0 Introduction

2.1 A range of engagement and consultation activities have taken place in order to help inform the Policy, including:

- Overarching public consultation
- Stakeholder consultation
- Formal written responses

## 3.0 Consultation objectives

- To provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views
- To find out if people agree or disagree with the proposals and the reasons for this
- To provide a mechanism for people to make comments and suggestions
- To provide a mechanism for people to suggest alternative proposals
- To ensure that the consultation was available to as many stakeholders as possible
- To ensure that the consultation was available in a format so people could understand

## 4.0 Overarching public consultation – Methodology

4.1 To help ensure that the consultation was as widely available as possible, people could submit their views by four mechanisms:

- **Online** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council's website. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves, but were asked to indicate why they were interested in the Draft Plan and their postcode. The questionnaire was live from 24<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019.
- **Paper Questionnaires in public buildings** - consultation packs were made available in the three Civic Buildings and within CVS. The consultation packs included a poster and copies of the Draft Policy in various formats in Welsh and English, which outlined the proposals along with a supply of self-completion questionnaires, and a post box for completed questionnaires in Civic Buildings.

The questionnaire was a replica of the online version and responses were entered into 'SNAP' (our online consultation software package) for analysis.

- **Email** - The email address [ccu@npt.gov.uk](mailto:ccu@npt.gov.uk) was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Corporate social media accounts** – the Council's corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts were also monitored for feedback.

#### 4.2 **The consultation was promoted via:**

- The Council website homepage – via the 'top tasks' and 'top visited' areas and a dedicated web page - Have your say <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1615>
- Adverts/posters on TV screens in the Quays, Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre
- The Council's corporate social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter
- The Council's corporate staff newsletter 'In the Loop'. The purpose of this was to encourage staff to give their views and as an additional way to raise awareness of the consultation amongst residents as a significant number of staff live in the county borough
- Details of the consultation were also promoted via Community Voluntary Service and Carers Service Newsletters, Social Media and Webpages

### 5.0 **Overarching Public Consultation – Responses**

A total of 9 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period. All were completed in English with no Welsh responses. 8 of the responses were submitted online, with 1 paper questionnaire received.

The following provides a summary of the feedback from the questionnaire responses. All percentages shown in this section are relative to the total number of completed questions as not all respondents completed all questions.

#### 5.1 **About the respondents**

Of the 9 responses:

- 2 (25%) stated that they are service users

- 3 (38%) stated that they are a carer for a service user
- 4 (50%) stated that they are a member of staff at a service

*(NB. for this question respondents were asked to select all of the categories that applied to them, some selected more than one answer; therefore the percentages in brackets total more than 100%).*

## 5.2 Age

Age range (years)	Number	% of respondents
16 - 24	-	-
25 – 29	2	25%
30 - 39	1	13%
40 - 49	-	-
50 – 59	1	13%
60 – 74	2	25%
75 – 85	-	-
Prefer not to say	2	25%
Total	8	100%

## 5.3 Gender

4 (50%) respondents were female, 2 (25%) male and 2 (25%) preferred not to say.

## 5.4 Nationality

3 (38%) respondents described their nationality as Welsh, 2 (25%) as British, 1 (13%) as English and 2 (25%) preferred not to say.

## 5.5 Ethnic origin

5 (63%) respondents described their ethnicity as White British, 1 (13%) as Indian and 2 (25%) preferred not to say.

## 5.6 Sexual orientation

5 (71%) respondents described themselves as heterosexual, and 2 (29%) preferred not to say.

## 5.7 Disability

3 (38%) respondents reported having a disability with 3 (38%) stating that they did not have a disability and 2 (25%) preferring not to say.

## 5.8 Welsh Language

5 (63%) respondents reported having little or no knowledge of the Welsh language, while 3 (38%) reported as being Welsh learners.

### **5.9 Religion**

2 (29%) respondents reported as being Christian, 1, (14%) stated any other religion, 1 (14%) preferred not to say and 3 (43%) respondents reported as having no religion/beliefs.

### **6.0 How respondents feel about the proposals**

#### **How easy or difficult do you find it to get information about what social care and support you can have?**

5 respondents (56%) stated it was fairly easy to get information, 1 (11%) stated it was fairly difficult, 1 (11%) that is was very difficult, while 2 (22%) stated don't know. Although the numbers are small the majority of respondents found it easy to get information.

#### **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed policy?**

2 respondents (22%) strongly agree, 3 (33%) tend to agree, 2 (22%) strongly disagree, and 2 (22%) stated don't know. Again, although the numbers are small the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed policy.

### **6.1 Do you think that the policy would have a positive or negative impact on any of the adult care sector?**

4 respondents (44%) stated positive, 2 (22%) stated negative and 3 (33%) stated don't know.

### **6.2 How important is it for the Council to consider the resources it has available to support the most vulnerable residents and reduce overall dependency on social services?**

5 respondents (63%) stated it was very important, 1 (13%) stated fairly important, 1 (13%) that it was not important at all, and 1 (13%) stated don't know.

## **7.0 Social Media and Email Responses**

7.1 During the consultation a number of posts were published on the Council's corporate Twitter (@NPTCouncil and @CyngorCnPT) and Facebook (Neath Port Talbot CBC and Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot) accounts to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage people to respond. These posts were monitored for comments on the draft policy proposals.

7.2 Of the comments made on posts about the draft policy consultation, the following issues were raised via Facebook:

- Comments regarding taking away from the most vulnerable
- Suggestion to save money by cutting council staff salaries
- Help needed in applying for benefits e.g. PIP
- Stop spending money on speed humps and green bags
- That the council only wants to pay the bare minimum for adult services
- That the consultation is a tick box exercise / lack of information

## **8.0 Consultation with other stakeholders**

8.1 To ensure that the consultation was accessible to as many stakeholders as possible it was raised as an agenda item at a number of Third Sector forum meetings, and two public meetings were held for service users, carers, family members and the wider public.

### **8.2 CVS Forums:**

- 10<sup>th</sup> June – Strategic Forum
- 13<sup>th</sup> June – Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Forum
- 20<sup>th</sup> June – Older Persons' Council

### **8.3 Public Events:**

- 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 – Trem Y Mor Respite & Day Service, Aberavon.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 – Bespoked Enterprises, Neath Abbey.

## **9.0 Formal / Written Responses**

9.1 One formal response was received from the Older Persons' Council:

### **Response from the Older Persons' Council**

- The general consensus of the Older Persons' Council is that the policy is not easily understandable, given that it is a relatively complex subject and recognising that the proposals are driven to a large degree, and defined by legislation, In particular the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, as well as budgetary constraints.
- There are a couple of issues that the Older Persons' Council members see as potential concerns.
- Our understanding is that the Direct Payment option should be available, promoted and offered to everyone as part of the assessment process in order to provide greater flexibility and individual tailoring of any potential care package offered. Your proposal, however, seems to indicate that this option is only available if the service required by the potential user, costs more than the Council assesses their need to be, but not available if the cost is the same. Clarification is needed on this particular issue, recognising that there is a potential issue with recruiting appropriate Personal Assistants for those who would like to take advantage of this particular service option.
- The other issue of concern to members of the Older Persons' Council, was, whether potential service users are being made fully aware, at an early stage in the Assessment process, as to what level of care and support they are entitled to and should expect to receive, and the full range of options available to them.

## **10.0 Petitions**

10.1 The Council received no petitions relating to the Draft Policy.

## 11.0 Council Response to the Consultation

11.1 The Council response to comments received is summarised below.

<b>Comments or questions raised on SNAP Survey and formal responses</b>		
<b>Getting information about social care and support</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>
1	It seems to be very hit and miss what service is available depending on which social worker or social work team you get allocated to. I still think the outcomes focus is lacking but it is improving amongst practitioners but I don't think the public understand what outcomes focussed work means in practice.	All social care practitioners receive training on outcomes focused assessments. As it becomes more embedded in practice we expect to see greater public awareness.
2	Have you asked people who would use it?	An extensive consultation took place using various means to obtain stakeholders' views.
3	My sister in law attends bespoke in Neath. Today during her yearly review, we were told there will soon be no place for her there as there is nothing for her to do anymore. She can go to Glyncorrwg or Ystradgynlais. Really we live in the centre of Port Talbot. Is this how a 58 year old woman gets treated by her local government? I'll let you sort it before I go to the media on this issue.	Assessments and reviews are outcomes focused to ensure that individuals receive the care and support appropriate to their needs. We are also placing more emphasis on people remaining in their own communities longer by utilising community based assets.
4	The information on the website is not straightforward, social services give missed responses. When one tries to contact someone only phone contact available, unless having direct case worker, it seems to be very time consuming process in trying to find/contact correct person. For those who prefer emails than calls, almost	The website content is being reviewed and updated to ensure it is easier to find current information. Assessments for individuals and carers take into account circumstances so that any care and support offered takes full account of assessed needs and desired outcomes.



	impossible to find who to contact. It may take many months to get a response. When finally things get rolling, some of the Social workers are not too supportive to the issues Carers find important, and instead get too hanged up on little things they consider “important” to service users, without even having the correct knowledge of the situation. It feels at times that as carer I “battle” the people who supposed to support me in my job! At times it feels like they “conspire” behind my back and disregard my opinion – although to my face they say something different, in practice later on, they take actions contradicting what they said. I feel they do not support me.	
5	Not always clear who to ask.	As we progress towards a single ‘front door’ this should improve for people making contact with social services.
<b>Do you agree or disagree with the proposed policy?</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>
6	I agree entirely with this policy. I think in those instances where someone wishes to have a service which is more expensive than what the council provide it makes sense to offer the monetary value the council would ordinarily pay and let individuals use that to go towards the cost of other services. This would be in line with the community assets focus and would improve choice and control over social care as outlined in the act. I would actually extend this to assistive technology and equipment from occupational therapy. We know that there are waiting times to get equipment so it makes sense that if the	The Direct Payments Policy is also being reviewed to ensure flexibility of service provision is promoted.

	authority is going to pay for that anyway why not give people a direct payment to purchase it directly themselves? We talk about empowering people a lot and I think we as an authority should do everything we can where someone has identified an opportunity that would meet their needs more effectively to let them cut through the red tape and just go and buy it and get on with it instead.	
7	You need to apply ISO standards or do research into the effectiveness of ISO standards.	We developed easy read versions and also held public events to discuss the proposals.
8	Bias to certain disabilities.	The policy aims to promote fairness of service provision according to individual assessed need.
9	I am not sure what to think. I find that all services are tailored to people who do not care much for themselves and their health. For someone who would like to support their loved ones with healthy option, such a thing does not exist.	The policy aims to promote fairness of service provision according to individual assessed need.
10	Priority should be the needs of those individuals, often the most vulnerable in the borough who already have limited quality of life. Also the constant changes in service over the last 5 years, together with constant "review" by nurses, carers, social workers, etc. is very upsetting for very ill people. Why is yet another very upsetting review needed for these very ill people?	There is a legal requirement to undertake care plan reviews.
<b>Do you think that the policy would have a positive or negative impact on any of the adult care sector?</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>
11	I think it would be broadly positive. If it encourages the growth of community based assets, cuts down some of the waiting times and empowers people to take	No response required.

	ownership and control over meeting their own outcomes then that's all to the good isn't it? I think the other positive is that it would encourage us to be bolder in encouraging people to think about how their needs can be met rather than just channelling people through existing services.	
12	ISO standards etc. NB you need to proof read these surveys beforehand.	We developed easy read versions and also held public events to discuss the proposals.
13	I think that policy should be design to support more the family members who take upon themselves to care for their loved ones. If that means that the unhealthy lifestyle the cared for person lead up to that point (which attributed often times to their situation) requires changing to more healthy one to support the service user's health, then it should be no issue. I see that many "supporting" service providers have very old and unhealthy ways, for example eating too much sugar, not enough veg, ready food microwaved, all laden with sugar, heavy sauces etc, and cake with each meal!! That usually is provided in respite too!!! What chance to conscious people who care for their loved ones have to maintain the healthy diet at respite times, when their healthy choices are undermined by Social Services workers who do not have any knowledge of the relationship and reasons, etc, they think they do a right thing, while in fact damaging the hard work the carer may be putting into the care.	The care and support needs of individuals (and support needs of their carers where applicable) receive will be based on person centred assessments.
14	Policy is cost driven, rather than CARE driven, for people who desperately require care and a quality of life.	Assessment are person centred which takes account of the individual's needs and circumstances, ensuring that services are proportionate to need.

<b>How important is it for the Council to consider the resources it has available to support the most vulnerable residents and reduce overall dependency on social services?</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>
15	It is essential that we end the culture of dependency exists in some parts of social services but also our own internal culture of channelling into existing services. Regardless of the financial difficulties the council is experiencing we have a duty to be a place that encourages, enables and empowers rather than being the white knight that tries to solve everyone's problems. We should be encouraging people to consider their own resources and how they can use what they have to meet their own needs with our support rather than expecting us to do everything. Resources are limited but even if they weren't I think it's still important that we encourage people to take responsibility of their own lives. Of course there are people who will need more help and it's important that we use resources responsibly in those instances but for others we need to start having different conversations and expecting people to work with us rather than letting them expect us to do everything and pay for it.	No response required.
16	Strange wording for this question. Consider the resources – very important! Reduce etc – how can that be done if people need social services – only by increasing their problems. You need to investigate ISO standards – ASAP.	No response required.
17	Look after the vulnerable adults in the community.	The policy aims to promote fairness of service provision according to individual assessed need.

		Assessment will be person centred which takes account of the individual's needs and circumstances, ensuring that services are proportionate to need.
18	I think that council should let people decide what they want to do – if they chose to go without social services, and rely on the help of family, it is their choice. It is strange how service users are described as “capable” of making their own choices when that suits social services, and the same person then is “not capable” of making their own choices, when the social services say so. The family is always the best source of support for the loved ones in need, the system should be designed to support the needs of family/service users as and when “required” and only if required, unlike right now, often times forced upon the people who do not wish that assistance, or that type of assistance. It becomes a policing issue, people do not feel free to take care of their loved ones and fear the social services! That is wrong approach – you need to offer the assistant, not force the assistance.	No response required.
19	The needs and requirements of the most in need of support in the borough should be prioritised above other services in a borough that wishes to consider itself a “Labour” caring authority.	No response required.
<b>Public Consultation Meeting held at Trem Y Mor</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>

20	Parent noted that social worker did not know that policy was being updated.	All social workers were briefed regarding the changes to the policies, with consultation at team meetings. All social workers will be issued with the policy if agreed.
21	Parent stated that copies of both policies should have been sent out to people.	Copies were given out at council day centres. Letters were sent to all service users which provided a link to all documents online. Paper copies were also made available at civic centre receptions and CVS offices.
22	Why does my son need another assessment, he has what he has for life that is never going to change!	Most have a review annually by law. The reviewer (Social Worker or Community Well-Being Officer) will look at individual circumstances and care and support to determine outcomes are being met.
23	Do you have a social worker for us all?	All will have a social worker or Community Well-Being Officer allocated for a review.
24	Where are all the staff coming from, you are giving us reason to be worried!	People were offered to stay behind to discuss any issues on an individual basis.
25	You can't get hold of a social worker and they can't return your calls, you get a review if you're lucky!	People were offered to stay behind to discuss any issues on an individual basis.
26	What is the criteria?	The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out criteria against which people are assessed.
27	It is a misconception that we have an annual review and sometimes we are not aware is it even taking place. What is the timescale of getting a copy of the review?	People were offered to stay behind to discuss any issues on an individual basis.
28	It is hard work caring for our kids, how will my son/daughter get anywhere if I am not well? Social Workers visit and they don't know the legislation, I asked what the responsibility is, is it the person or the Council's budget? The reply was both. You should be there for carers as well, we have to fight for everything!	People were offered to stay behind to discuss any issues on an individual basis.

29	The emphasis is about taking things away.	It's not about cost cutting, wording in the policies will need to be amended to clarify this. The Act is very clear if there is an assessed need the Local Authority has a duty to meet that assessed need. Eligibility criteria is set by Welsh Government.
30	So you will have to employ more social workers, can't you just send a letter to ask if our circumstances have changed? I haven't seen a social worker for five years!	We can't send letters out as we must legally undertake a review.
31	There is a lack of access to social workers when transferring to Adult Services, if you are just about managing then its ok.	There is a Pathways to Adulthood Team and Route 16 Team in place which seeks to ensure a smooth transition between services.
32	We have a Direct Payment package of 128hrs per week, my son lives next door. If the financial costs (care) is more than residential placement am I expected to meet the extra cost for my son to live at home which is his choice. I know I'm very lucky and it is costing a lot of money which is why he should be reviewed more.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
33	It's my son's human right to live at home, it is more expensive for "X" to live at home than in a care home.	No response required.
34	My mother has had an assessment which was carried out by a social worker and an occupational therapist, my mother has advanced dementia, they asked her questions which she doesn't know the answers to.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
35	We don't trust anyone anymore, couldn't you put someone on your Committee who doesn't have anything to gain?	The purpose of the consultation is for the public, families and those that receive services is to help inform our policies.
36	Carers Coffee Mornings would be an ideal place to air our issues.	Policies were taken to Carers Coffee Mornings to discuss.

37	How will you be implementing the Act?	We are already implementing the Act.
38	Going back to social workers we have to go through lots of layers, some don't have a clue and can't always reach one urgently.	Each team has a duty social worker so there will be someone to contact if support is needed.
39	Who can we contact if social worker is off sick or on holiday?	Each team has a duty social worker so there will be someone to contact if support is needed.
40	How many social workers do you have?	Between the teams there is around 100, being a mixture of social workers and well-being officers; they have an average caseload of around 25.
41	My child mysteriously fell off the list when she was 12, she has had no contact with a social worker.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
42	What is the role of Community Well-Being Officer?	We have around 20 community well-being officers the difference being is that social workers are registered and have a social work degree. CWO's are very experienced people that work in Adult Services.
43	When is the respite policy being reviewed?	This will be in the late summer and there will another 90 day consultation around that policy.
44	Will a holistic assessment ignore those with dementia?	No.
<b>Public Consultation Meeting held at Bospoked</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comment:</b>	<b>Council response:</b>
45	If we are getting something now will we be losing it?	Legislation requires that we re-assess and review. We cannot promise that there will be no changes, however if changes occur they will be done in conjunction with all involved.



46	When do assessments take place?	When the next assessment or review is due it will be undertaken in line with new policies.
47	Who, where and when does the assessment take place, my last assessment was 2017.	You should be reviewed annually by a social worker or a community well-being officer.
48	Will the reviews be done in-house?	Yes.
49	I challenged an assessment, if I don't comply told that services will be suspended. Saying one thing and writing something different.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
50	Parents raised concerns regarding social work assessments and social workers recording what they think – not being fully aware of needs. Social Workers need to listen to carers as well as the service user.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
51	I downloaded the document online, it sounds like the Local Authority will only offer the service that they can afford – Direct Payments – I don't want a PA.	Sometimes a person may wish to access service(s) that are more costly than the service(s) identified by the Council as available and capable of meeting their assessed needs and agreed desired outcomes. In these cases, the person will be offered, through the use of Direct Payments, the opportunity of accessing a more expensive service than the services identified by the Council.
52	Details need to be put out in the open to families [referred to a 2016 report re Domiciliary Care], there was a lack of staff training, it is hard to challenge an assessment. All services should be treated independently.	Noted that could not comment on report as it was written many years ago and it hadn't been read by those in attendance. The report mentioned was not relevant to the consultation.
53	We need to comment on the here and now, the law is changing all the time and we are trying to meet new needs – technology is not being used enough. NPT provide marvellous care.	No response required.

54	My 2 brothers use Direct Payments to attend Polestones and we have had choice.	No response required.
55	We haven't seen our social worker in months, when we phone up we can't get through.	It was not possible to comment on individual cases. All people were offered to stay behind to discuss individual concerns on a one to one basis.
56	Our children enjoy coming to day service - you are stressing the service users out when you send them home with letters.	We did not intend to distress anyone. We issued copies of the policy to people attending day services so that we could inform and provide information to as many people as possible.
57	I have difficulties in contacting staff because they are working part time.	All teams have a duty officer, if you need to speak to someone urgently then please ring the duty officer.
58	When someone is assessed and if a carer can only do "X" amount of hours, how can that be over ruled?	The Local Authority would establish what a carer can and wants to do, then look at other services in the community. If there was an unmet need then the Local Authority would have to meet that need. An adult does not have to look after another adult.