

Redirection of Resources from Day Care - £1.5m

To help fund the demand pressures in priority areas services it is proposed that reductions are considered in **adult day care**. This is an areas where there is now relative over-investment compared to services targeted at those with higher needs levels. There is also excess capacity in the system and in some areas a traditional, poorly targeted approach to provision. If the proposal is agreed by members, a consultation exercise on the modernisation of day care will be undertaken and reported back to members. This would involve a level of service reduction and the externalisation of remaining day centres, and would include the option of reducing funding for some voluntary sector day care that is “walk in” rather than being focussed on people with assessed social care needs and over which there are now questions of affordability.

The exact balance of savings would be considered in conjunction with the feedback from the consultation process and reported back to members for a decision.

A summary of the issues is set out below:

- The model of Day care is generally “traditional”, a view confirmed by the recent SSI inspection of Older People’s Services
- Demand via Assessment and Care Management referrals for traditional Older Peoples day care is relatively low resulting in a high vacancy rate. The service is seen as less relevant to the needs of current community care clients compared to home care. This demand is expected to fall further as current users are reviewed against the revised eligibility criteria agreed for home care as part of the 2002/3 budget process, which will in time be applied to all service users. However, savings can only be realised by closing centres due to the fixed cost characteristics of Day Care.
- The model of Day Care in Physical Disabilities is also a traditional and relatively expensive building based approach which could be reprovided as a more effective lower cost community project that better delivers modernisation objectives around promoting independence and inclusion.
- Following the changes to homecare eligibility the balance between investment in home care and day care is now potentially misaligned in comparison to other Inner-London authorities.
- The department invests a significant sum in funding voluntary organisations to run day centres for specific ethnic groups. The places in these centres are often predominantly allocated on a self-referral basis rather than on the basis of assessed community care needs. Although this type of service has a role to play in the prevention agenda, the level of funding of this model of care needs re-examining in the context of day care modernisation and other expenditure priorities.

- For historic reasons a significant number of users of day care services do not have assessed community care needs or are at the low risk end of the needs scale which under revised eligibility criteria does not qualify people for a community care service.
- In terms of supply side strategy, the provision of Day Care (and Respite Care) should be moving to a model in which the Social Services Department commissions and care manages services provided by specialist independent sector providers. As such the remaining in-house providers should be externalised, which, it is expected, will also contribute to longer term efficiency savings.

Overall, it is considered that a £1.5m reduction (equivalent to around 20% of the overall day care system cost) would be achievable within the overall context of modernising services, enabling these resources to be redirected towards more effective social care interventions.

The final approach, if agreed would involve a balance of savings from the following:

- A level of reductions in centres balanced with some reprovion in under-capacity centres, community projects and some withdrawal of services for those without significant community care needs.
- A reduction in social services funding voluntary sector “walk in” day care facilities
- Externalisation of all remaining in house direct social care provision
- Efficiency savings achieved by modernising remaining provision.

Risk analysis – Day Care Modernisation and savings

As the users who would cease to access a service will be in the low risk band this is preferable to other savings strategies, and will enable higher level priorities to be funded. However the following risks still need to be considered:

- reduced capacity of early intervention and prevention services for people in low categories of risk leading to increased pressure on intensive social care and health services
- partnerships with other agencies may be undermined
- user dissatisfaction and hostile opposition to closures
- implementation complexities leading to delays/overspend pressures
- establishing any agreed reprovion in time for closures
- reduction in community resources with knock on impact to exclusion and poverty agenda
- reduced performance in some key performance indicators relating to numbers of people helped to live at home