

National Assembly for Wales

Cross Party Group on Community Transport

25 September 2013

Present: Eluned Parrott AM (Chair), Rebecca Evans AM, Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM, Paul Harding (Eluned Parrott AM), Jacqui Sullivan (Eluned Parrott AM), Alex Phillips (William Powell AM), Will Griffiths (Welsh Liberal Democrats office), Wayne Lewis (Cwm Taf Health Board), Hattie Woakes (North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum), Betsan Caldwell (CTA Wales)

1 Welcome and Apologies

Eluned Parrott opened the meeting by asking members to introduce themselves around the table, and thanked everyone for their attendance. Apologies had been received from Darren Miller AM, Bethan Jenkins AM and Ed Bridges (RVS & Older People's Commissioner).

2 Election of Chair and Secretariat

Following new National Assembly for Wales rules, there was a requirement to elect a chair and secretariat for cross-party working groups. Eluned Parrott AM was nominated and elected as chair, and Betsan Caldwell as secretariat.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the January meeting were agreed as accurate. Betsan Caldwell updated the group on the implementation of the Regional Transport Services Grant as at minute 3.2. She explained that CTA Wales had been working closely with the Regional Transport Consortia on the CT element of the grant, including the Live Kilometre Support Grant (LKSG) element which differs in each region. CTA Wales had also submitted a definition of eligible CT services to the Welsh Government led implementation group which had been accepted. This focussed on the provision of generic CT services operated on a not-for-profit basis. Betsan also said that more recently, CTA had been working on the CT sections of the four draft Regional Network Strategies, which had to be submitted finally to Welsh Government by December.

4 Health Reconfiguration and Access to Health Services

- 4.1 At the January meeting, Eluned Parrott had flagged up that proposed changes to the way that LHBs are delivering services over the next few years are likely to cause knock-on effects for the transportation of patients and could cause increased demand for CT services. She therefore welcomed Wayne Lewis, Transport Lead from Cwm Taf Health Board to talk about access issues.
- 4.2 Wayne began by explaining that he had a background in both health board management and WAST patient transport, which gave him a rounded perspective on the issues. He informed the group that the focus on non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) had begun with the Griffiths Review (2010), commissioned by the then Minister for Health and Social Services Edwina Hart, which recommended establishing 4 pilot projects, including one in the Cwm Taf LHB area. Non-emergency patient transport provided a vital service for thousands of patients across Wales, with well over 1.4 million journeys undertaken every year, enabling patients to access outpatient, day treatment and other services at NHS hospitals.
- 4.3 The aim of the review had been to ensure that NEPT was better managed and more citizen focused, allowing more time for rehabilitation and treatment, streamlined processes for admissions and discharges, efficient use of resources and improved procurement and leasing arrangements. The Minister was particularly keen that there should be greater utilisation of the voluntary sector as only 7% of journeys were undertaken by the sector at the time.
- 4.4 Issues identified included:
- Differing interpretations of transport eligibility criteria.
 - Incongruent hospital appointment system and transport booking system
 - Wastage within the system, such as the high level of aborted journeys.
 - Confusion over responsibility for transport booking
 - Limited service planning
 - Spare capacity within Local Authority and Third Sector
 - Lack of information about what alternative transport is available
- 4.5 Wayne explained that there had been much work undertaken in the last year on the revision of the transport eligibility script, which determines patient mobility categories. This has been based on the 'Patient Need Assessment' model in Scotland, and the work is on its 9th iteration currently. The revisions are being trialled at the 4 call centres around Wales, including the Tŷ Elai centre in the Cwm Taf LHB area, and CT members are also monitoring any increase in journey requests as a result.

- 4.6 As part of the pilot work, Cwm Taf had realised that there was very little joined up working between the health sector, Local Authorities and the community transport sector. Wayne had then successfully bid for funding to establish the 'Transforming Transport' project, based upon the access needs of a fictional patient called Mavis, which is leading to a more fully integrated approach to NEPT in the region.
- 4.7 A consultation had been running recently on the 'South Wales Programme' which outlines options for the future provision of a small number of hospital services – consultant-led maternity and neonatal care, inpatient children's services and emergency medicine (A&E) - for people in South Wales and South Powys. These proposals cover 5 LHB areas together with WAST and leans towards an East-West approach to service delivery rather than the current North-South.
- 4.8 Rebecca Evans AM queried the role of public transport, and Wayne said that the document includes a greater focus on public transport in getting people to health services, as well as relatives wishing to visit patients. She also asked about engagement with older people, such as through the Office of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and Wayne added that this had been done at a more local level through appropriate voluntary groups.
- 4.9 Wayne noted that there was a plethora of initiatives and working groups currently underway, and that there was a concern that there could be overlap and lack of joined up working. Hattie Woakes mentioned that the individual RTCs had taken a considerable time to work together in a more collaborative and productive manner, and Eluned Parrott agreed that the footprints of Social Services, Regional Transport Consortia and LHBs were very different, and that this was leading to different and complex partnerships developing. Change should be based on rigorous assessment of patient need rather than the availability of funding.
- 4.10 Betsan mentioned that there were potential issues regarding the greater involvement of CT in the delivery of gap filling services, which seemed to be an inherent expectation. These included the capacity of the sector to undertake additional journeys, as demand nearly always outstripped supply, and longer term sustainability due to annual funding rounds, which led to perceptions of risk for potential commissioners of services.
- 4.11 Eluned Parrott drew the discussion to a close by thanking Wayne Lewis for his presentation and group members for their contributions to the discussion.

5 Topics for Future Meetings

- 5.1 As the previous discussion had been substantive, it was decided that item 5 (Bwcabus) would be deferred to the next meeting. Suggestions for other topics included the implementation of the RTSG and the new Regional Network Strategies,

the CTA's 2013 State of the Sector report (due for completion in November), monitoring expectations of the CT sector in terms of gap filling services (particularly to health services or in response to reduced public transport routes) and scrutiny of the Minister regarding the CT actions in the report on Integrated Transport published earlier this year.

6 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7 Date of Next Meeting

No forward date was given, but would be arranged at a later stage.

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