REPORT TO: **Health Halton Policy and Performance Board**

DATE: **11th November 2008**

REPORTING OFFICER: **Strategic Director, Health & Community**

SUBJECT: **Update Report on Travel Policy & Procedure relating to Social Care Services**

WARDS: **Borough-wide**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Board with an update on the impact of revisions to the Travel Policy & Procedure for the Health & Community Directorate.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Members note and comment upon the update to the Travel Policy and Procedure.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 On 25th July 2008, Executive Board Sub Committee approved amendments to the Travel Policy and Procedure in the following areas to:-

- Promote a range of travel options available to adults over the age of 18 who access social care services:-
    - with an update on the concessionary travel pass which can now be used nationwide,
    - with information on the Blue Badge Scheme
- Place emphasis on reducing air pollution and encourage the use of sustainable resources by promoting the use of public transport.
- Include an Eligibility Quick Practice Guide (Appendix 1 to the report), which professionals may detach and take with them on visits in assessing transport provision, to ensure consistent practice across all service areas.
- Introduce a criteria for the single occupancy use of taxis or other LA provided transport and to ensure that has Panel subjected the costs of sole occupancy for approval, as part of the care management process

3.1.2 Executive Board Sub Committee Members also approved amendment to the charges set for transport contained within the policy, which were previously approved by full Council on 5th March 2008 and Executive Board Sub Committee on 20th March 2008, as summarised below:

Financial year	Charge per trip (one way)	Maximum charge per day	Maximum charge per week
2007/08	50p	£2.00	£8.00
2008/09	£1.00	Not applicable	£10.00 (or £23.00 if service users received higher rate

			DLA (Mobility) £46.75 per week for 2008/9)

3.1.3. Linkage to the mobility component to set a maximum was considered reasonable as any service user who receives the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) benefit does so to assist them with the additional costs of transport due to their disability. This benefit is excluded from income when assessing charges for Domiciliary/ day care.

3.1.4 The increase in charges from 50p per trip to £1.00 per trip (£2.00 return) was approved given:

- Previous consultation responses
- Demonstrable improvements in service quality from two surveys conducted in 2007/8
- The need to cover a greater proportion of the service/petrol costs
- The considerable investment in new vehicles
- Assumed budgetary savings targets/ budgetary constraints and to enable HBC to continue to provide services at previous levels;
- As a result of benchmarking of charges. Halton's charges were significantly cheaper than its neighbours who have similar levels of deprivation but who charge more than £1 per trip**.** St Helens, Tameside, Warrington and Wirral Councils charge between £1.12 and £4.42 per journey. For example, St Helens Council charges £1.12 per journey and Warrington £1.50 per journey.

3.1.5 Health Halton PPB and Urban Renewal PPB also supported the revisions to the Travel Policy, Procedure and Practice and noted that in November 2008 a review would take place on the proposed changes to the Travel Policy and Procedure, including an assessment of the impact of charges.

3.2 <u>Update</u>

3.2.1 A number of initiatives across the Borough have sought to promote independence and a range of travel options available to Adults through one off events:

- Warrington and Halton Disability Awareness day 6th July 2008,
- By Transport Coordination/ Travel Trainers at day centres, following up on responses to passenger surveys (nine service users surveys indicated an interest in travel training, three of which have now been travel trained). This Department has also supported the application process for concessionary travel passes.

and ongoing initiatives such as

- The Community Bridge building Initiative, where travel training is essential to enable service users to access a range of cultural, leisure and employment opportunities in their area.

3.2.2 Halton BC now has 1,940 disabled person concessionary passes in circulation in the Borough. The number of disabled person passes has increased by 193 alone this financial year to date.

3.2.3 Service user satisfaction also remains high as shown by two recent surveys in March 2008 and a detailed Health & Community Client Transport passenger survey conducted during September 2008 for a representative sample of service users, as detailed in Appendix 2. Charging was voluntarily raised by a small number of clients, who generally thought that the £1 per trip charge was acceptable, although any higher charge may cause financial difficulties. This finding was in line with the previous survey in February 2007 when of those surveyed who thought that charges should be made for transport services, 74% of whom indicated, that they thought it was reasonable to ask people to pay £1.00 a trip up to a maximum of £4.00 a day.

3.2.4 Some "good news stories" by the Community Bridge Building Service, which was established as a project in January 2007, are detailed in Appendix 3. To date seven staff have been trained by Transport Coordination's Travel Trainers, who have then cascaded this training and travel trained 50 service users; 19 of whom were supported to get a bus pass.

3.2.5 Appendix 4A and 4B details transport usage by each referring social work team from December 2007. Currently on average 361 service users receive transport services each month. The Community Bridge Building team in promoting independence and the greater use of public transport has lead to a reduction of Local Authority provided transport for Mental Health (MHT) and Physical and Sensory Disability (PSD) service users in particular. Transport Coordination have analysed the reasons for cancelling a transport service, and reported that no service users have cancelled service due to the £1 cost per trip.

3.2.6 Appendices 4C, 4D and 4E analyse current transport services user mobility benefits and average weekly transport charges paid. 32% of total service users receive the Disability Living allowance (DLA) mobility component at the higher rate of £46.75 per week as shown in Appendix 4C. The average weekly number of journeys by each service user referring team and the number of free trips above the maximum charge set is shown in Appendix 4D. Service users average weekly charges is shown in Appendix 4E. 37% of service users pay up to £2 a week. No service user currently pays more than £14 per week for transport services.

3.2.7 A parallel review of operational practice in 2007 also revealed high usage of sole occupancy contracts costing £103K in 2007/8. Operational Services are currently reviewing and assessing service users under the new criteria for transport with the costs of sole occupancy transport subject to approval as part of the care assessment process.

3.2.8 Five complaints on the increases to transport charges have been received from service users (representing 1.4% of the current total transport service users). In the main service users are generally satisfied with the current service, consultation (as stated in 3.2.3 and Appendix 2) revealing that service users thought the £1 per trip charge was acceptable.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Revisions to the Draft Transport Policy, Procedure and Practice have lead to the promotion of a range of travel options and greater independence of service users, ensured a fairer and more consistent approach to the provision of transport services, achieved efficiency savings and the levels of charges do not appear to have caused undue hardship to service users, or reduced demand for day services.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In 2008/9 £92K of income is forecast to be received from charges.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

An effective transport service supports the independence of vulnerable children and young people on transition for young people with disabilities.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton in accessing services.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposal promotes a range of travel options available to people, by encouraging and supporting independent travel, as well as managing financial resources effectively and ensuring value for money.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposal would maintain and develop the Local transport network, meeting the needs of residents in Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Legally, increases to charges can be justified if we can demonstrate that future provision needs to be more cost effective. The Local Government Act 2003 includes a general power for best value to charge for discretionary services i.e. those services that the authority has the power, but is not obliged, to provide. Guidance is issued under the power in section 93, which states charges are limited to cost recovery. The Department of Health's fairer Charging Policies for Home care and other Non- Residential Social Services

Guidance, Sept 2003, state that where Councils charge for non-residential services, flat rate charges are acceptable.

3.2.9 It is inevitable that a small number of service users, families and carers will not support increased charges for transport and there is a risk that some service users may refuse to pay. However, to date 99.9% of service users have paid the charge for transport. In instances where service users do not pay and accrue a debt, existing debt recovery processes are administered to recover the debt. However, every effort will be made to encourage service users to travel independently and to apply for benefits and concessionary bus passes they are entitled.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

TRAVEL POLICY, PROCEDURE & PRACTICE

ELIGIBILITY QUICK PRACTICE GUIDE

Use of public transport to access services

For individuals who are able to travel independently or are able to be supported to travel independently, options such as the Travel Training initiative, public transport, use of concessionary travel passes and use of the Disability Living Allowance (Motability component) should be discussed with them.

Fleet transport / multiple occupancy of a vehicle

In order to use fleet transport or any other multiple occupancy vehicle provided under contract by the Council (including taxis and volunteer driver vehicles) the individual must be eligible to receive transport in accordance with Sections 1.4 and 3.1 of this Policy. To reiterate, the individual:

- Should be unable to travel independently.
- Does not have access to personal transport or lives with a carer/family member (ie, someone who is not paid to provide care) who has personal transport but is unable to transport them to/from the service due to employment or other caring commitments, illness or incapacity.
- Does not have a motability vehicle.
- Cannot gain access to other voluntary or private transport that is available.

Single occupancy

In addition to the indicators for transport funded by the Council above, to qualify for single occupancy of a taxi or any other vehicle provided under contract by the Council, the individual must have:

- A high level of challenging behaviours requiring a Level 2 risk assessment and a risk management plan to manage safety, which specifies why a single occupancy taxi/vehicle is necessary.

Important:
When an assessment or review is carried out for services, an assessment for transport services should be undertaken at the same time and presented to Panel. For single occupancy taxis/vehicles to be used, Panel must approve that the above criteria has been met. The Level 2 risk assessment must be supplied to Transport Co-ordination along with the Transport Request Form.

APPENDIX 2- TRANSPORT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

- **Passenger Consultation on Transport - March 2007**

As a result of recent customer surveys, we can report that positive results were received as follows:
- 96.6% happy overall with transport;
- 97.6% said that vehicles were suitable;
- 89.0% reported transport is punctual
- 98.9% said staff wear their ID badges
- 98.9% said that drivers / passenger assistants are courteous and helpful
- 3.8% said if a free travel pass was provided they would be able to use public transport to/ from day centre.
- 10.5% of service users responding said they would be interested in receiving information on independent travel training (90% responded to this question).

Source: Survey form posted out to all current registered service users, 58% returned.

- **Passenger Consultation on Transport - September 2007**

A detailed Health and Community Client Transport passenger survey was carried out at a number of Health and Community facilities during the week beginning 29th September 2008. Transport Co-ordination Staff carried out the 'face to face' survey.

The results of which are as follows:-

1. **Completed Questionnaires**

Centre	**Number of clients surveyed**
ILC	7
Pingott	5
The Coach House	12
Bridgewater	26
Oak Meadow	4
Totals	**54**

2. **Quality of the Vehicles Operated.**

From the sample of clients, there is a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the vehicles being used, as 100% of respondents agreed that the vehicles operated were suitable for their needs.

3. **Punctuality of transport**

The majority of clients also indicated that they are satisfied with the punctuality of transport with 86% of clients stating that there arranged transport was always on time. However 24% stated that there were occasional delays mostly as the result of traffic congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge. No client mentioned problems with persistent unreliability.

4. **Convenience of transport provision**

Again the vast majority of clients indicated they were either satisfied with the times of pick up and drop off of their transport. Four clients attending the Bridgewater Centre did state however that their transport on Mondays provided by the HBC Fleet tended to operate later (due to traffic conditions), and therefore picks up after 4pm on a regular basis. This results in a later drop off at their homes, which in turn causes problems with care arrangements at the home address).

5. **How courteous and helpful are drivers / assistants**

All the clients surveyed expressed their satisfaction with the quality of care offered by drivers and assistants on their transport arrangements. A lot of the clients clearly have a good rapour with the drivers and assistants.

6. **Staff wearing correct identification**

Again the vast majority of clients stated that the drivers and assistants carried the correct identification at all times.

7. **Overall user rating of transport**

Finally the majority of users were either satisfied or very satisfied with their transport provision. Some quotes of users include:-

Client A from the Independent Living Centre who stated:-

"Transport is very good; I would struggle to get to the ILC if the transport was not there!"

Client B stated:-

"My transport is ok, I would not change anything"

Charging was voluntarily raised by a small number of clients, who generally thought the £1 per trip charge was acceptable, although any higher charge may cause financial difficulties.

Client C stated for example:-

"£1 per trip is not bad but other things are going up, so it may be difficult to manage!"

Client D stated:-

"£1 at the moment is okay while my husband is working. But if we are on a budget we would have difficulty in paying."

Client E stated:-

"£1 is good value for money, as the journey would cost more on the bus!"

Client F stated:-

"Ideal and perfect - £1 a trip is good value, especially when travelling from Hough Green to Bridgewater for £1"

Client G stated:-

" I could travel on the bus with my concessionary travel pass free of charge but I like the convenience of a door to door service, and don't see why I should be charged for this".

APPENDIX 3- COMMUNITY BRIDGE BUILDING TEAM STORIES RELATING TO TRAVEL TRAINING

The Community Bridge Building Team was established as a project in January 2007 as part of the Health & Community Directorate, providing a service to all people with Physical and Sensory Disabilities, Mental Health Problems, Learning Difficulties and Older People. The service is also offered to a small number of carers and a pilot scheme is being offered to three people aged 16-18 as part of transition from Children's to Adult services.

The service aims to ensure that people with disabilities have the chance to be fully involved in all activities and services in their area. This is done in two ways:

- Working with individuals to identify areas or services with which they would like to engage, and providing real practical support to help them to do this. Examples of this include such things as gaining employment, travelling to local shops, going to a sports centre, going to college or attending a church.
- Working directly and in detail with the all mainstream services to see what barriers there are to people with disabilities in using their services, to build the capacity of these services to support people with disabilities

Use of public transport and travel training provision plays a key role in maintaining independence and well being of service users.

- *" J was referred to CBB by the CMHT for support to identify community activities for which he had an interest in. Prior to commencing with CBB, JF spent a lot of his time within the family home feeling quite isolated from the outside world. J lacked in confidence and motivation, and had lots of anxieties around using public transport, which would enable him to access the community. J wanted me to support him in this area first, so he could then focus on his interests. J wanted to pursue voluntary work, swimming at the local leisure centre, and art classes at the learning centre. Over a period of a few months J has been successful in achieving these goals with the support from myself. J has said he could not have done this without my personal support, and he is really pleased he is doing the things that he enjoys. J now has a bus pass and is travelling around independently, and he has also got a Halton Leisure card so he can get discount when he accesses his chosen leisure interests. J is very enthusiastic doing his chosen interests; his confidence, motivation and self-esteem are continuing to develop all the time. He has gone from sitting in the house most days of the week on his own, to socially interacting with others in the community doing the things he enjoys".*

- *"T was referred to CBB in April. T has chronic back pain, arthritis and diabetes and when first referred had become socially isolated since becoming unemployed and the break up of his marriage. Initially T was reluctant to go out but after some encouragement things began to progress. With the support of CBB T got himself a Halton Leisure Card and now goes swimming once a week. He also applied for, and received, a bus pass. T is interested in digital photography and using computers and CBB were able to find a local group who run a drop-in centre where T can learn more about his interests while at the same time socialising. This has also been a good for T and since joining the group he has become a lot more outgoing and happier*"

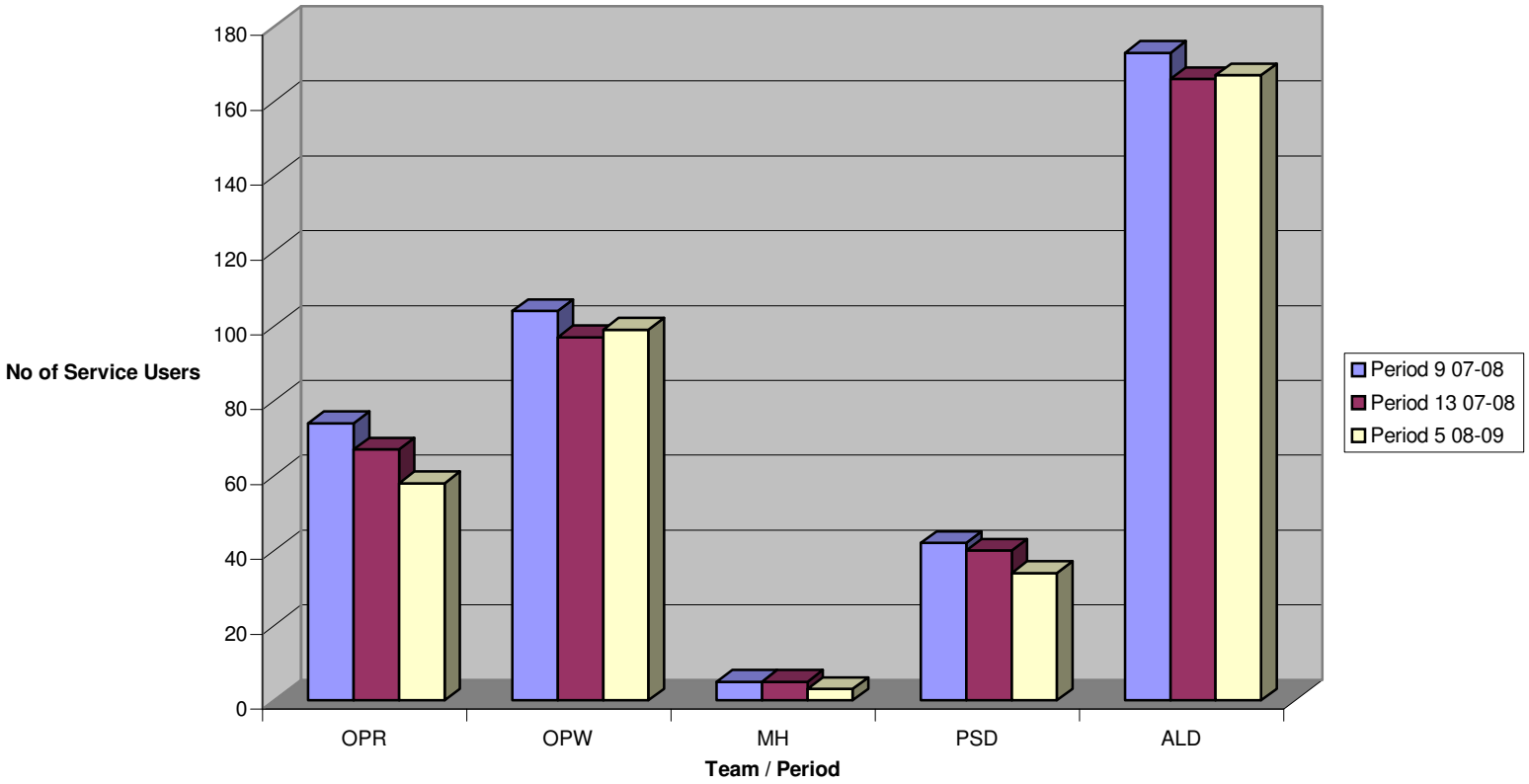
- *"P was referred to Bridge Building from Halton Day Services. P has a mild learning disability and spends four days each week doing various activities organised by day services. However, the one-day that P has no activities was a problem for him – he was bored and in the past had spent the day drinking. P likes physical activities but had been unable to organise anything for himself. After discussing options with P he decided he would like to use a local leisure centre to get himself fit. It was suggested he get a Halton Leisure Card and a bus pass. With support P got both a leisure card and a bus pass and began using the leisure centre almost immediately. With the minimum of support P was able to access the leisure centre and he now does this independently on the day he has no other activities, moreover, he uses the leisure centre if any of his other activities are cancelled. Since P began using the leisure centre it has been noted how much happier he is. P says he feels fitter, has lost weight and is keen to continue with his new healthier life style. CBB keep in touch with P to monitor how things are going but to date P has not needed any extra support and seems to be taking full advantage of his new found independence"*

- *"A young lady with learning difficulties was looking for voluntary work and could not find an appropriate placement working with children; she also needed to understand the value of money. We contacted many children's nurseries until she was eventually given an interview, which she attended, with my support. She was successful in obtaining voluntary work one day a week with the option to extend this if she wanted to, we also carried out travel training to ensure that she was able to arrive at the placement safely and arrive home afterwards. She also went for an assessment to enable her to attend a course at the adult learning centre to understand the value of money, which she is under taking at present".*

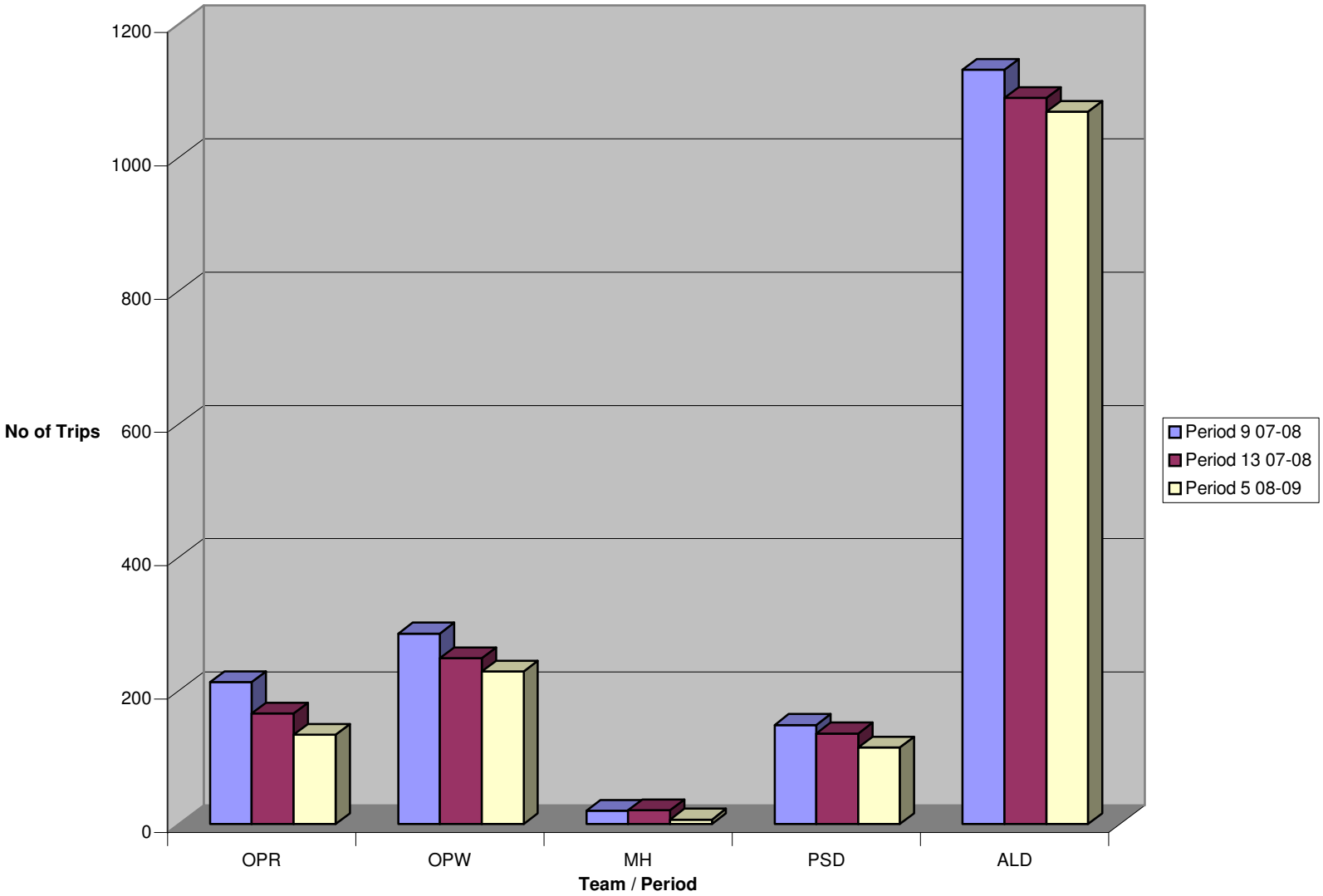
- *"A client with mental health problems was attending the mind centre five days per week; she was interested in doing an access to social work course at the college but lacked the confidence to do this herself. I supported her to attend for an assessment and she enrolled on the full time course at Runcorn campus. The college agreed to provide additional support. This lady normally travels around the local area via community transport but this was fully booked so I provided travel training from Widnes to Runcorn and return. She was also interested in voluntary work but has put this on hold as she has such a busy lifestyle, she no longer attends the Mind centre and has made many friends".*

APPENDIX 4 – - ANALYSIS OF SERVICE USERS BY TEAM RECEIVING A TRANSPORT SERVICE

Appendix 4A - Numbers of Service Users Charged for Transport Service by Referring Team

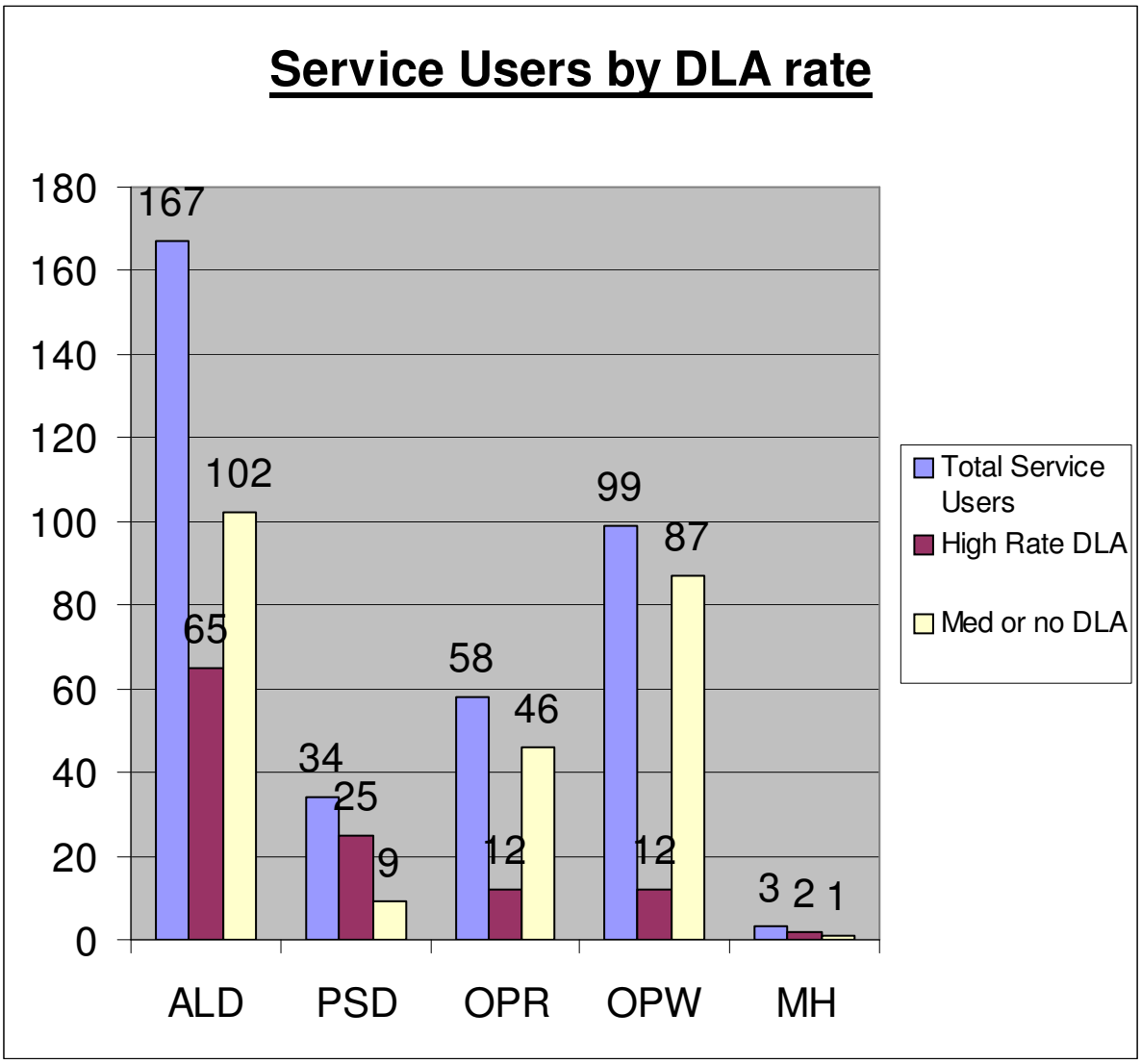


Appendix 4B - Number of Passenger Trips by Referring Team



Appendix 4C – An analysis of DLA Mobility Components by Team for Current Service Users

	Total Service Users	High Rate DLA	Med or no DLA
ALD	167	65	102
PSD	34	25	9
OPR	58	12	46
OPW	99	12	87
MH	3	2	1
TOTAL	**361**	**116**	**245**
		32%	**68%**



Appendix 4D – An analysis of service users weekly journeys within the maximum thresholds depending on DLA Mobility benefit

Service users will be subject to a maximum charge of either £23 or £10 respectively.

Number of transport service users affected by limit

£10 maximum	No of service users	No service users within the cap	No service users trips above the cap	Average number of journeys
OPR	49	49	0	2.60
OPW	86	82	4	2.43
MHT	2	2	0	3.00
PSD	14	13	1	3.47
ALD	105	82	23	6.59
	256	228	28	

£23 Maximum	No of service users	No service users within the cap	No service users trips above the cap	Average number of journeys
OPR	9	9	0	2.60
OPW	13	13	0	2.43
MHT	1	1	0	3.00
PSD	20	20	0	3.47
ALD	62	62	0	6.59
	105	105	0	

Appendix 4E - Analysis of Service Users Weekly Charge for Transport

An analysis of service users paying an average weekly charge in £1 increases

	No of Service Users
Average cost per week	
Up to £2	**134**
>£2 <£3	**19**
>£3 <£4	**66**
>£4 <£5	**5**
>£5 <£6	**35**
>£6 <£7	**5**
>£7 <£8	**35**
>£8 <£9	**11**
>£9 <£10	**36**
>£10 <£11	**4**
>£11 <£12	**8**
>£12 <£13	**2**
>£13 <£14	**1**
Total	**361**