

SAVE AUTISM SERVICES HARINGEY: *people with autism and learning disabilities matter*

### ***Haringey backs down on plans to slash care packages***

## **Budget cuts are not ‘inevitable’**

**Last week**, Haringey Council leader Claire Kober rejected demands for a ‘complete rethink’ of proposed cuts to the adult social care budget, insisting on the ‘inevitability’ that the burden of Council’s deficit would fall most heavily on the most vulnerable residents of the borough. (Letter to Lynne Featherstone, MP, 30 January)

**This week**, Cllr Kober proclaims that ‘maintaining our investment in care packages is the single most important way we can support vulnerable adults to live independent lives’ (<http://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/care-package-funding-be-protected-haringey-council>, 3 February)

As families and carers for people with autism and learning disabilities, we welcome Haringey Council’s decision, ahead of next week’s Cabinet meeting on the budget proposals, to back down on its plans to cut spending on care packages by £5.7m. We also welcome Haringey’s abandonment of the absurd proposal to implement ‘reablement’ programmes across the range of adult social care. The Council has come to recognise that these plans were inappropriate, unworkable and probably also illegal. So far so good.

But we are concerned that part of the proposed saving in spending on adult social care is to be made up from the Better Care Fund established to improve coordination between local authority care services and the NHS, as required by the new Care Act. This may result in attempts to cut care packages for people with complex needs currently provided by the local Clinical Commissioning Group.

We even more concerned at Cllr Kober’s insistence that the Council is ‘unable to reverse other proposals’ and her reiteration of the Council’s commitment to enforce closures of day centres and other cuts in staffing and services.

People with disabilities can generally achieve greater independence only through particular forms of support: the greater the degree of disability, the higher the level of support that is required. Closing specialist day centres and cutting vital support services and replacing experienced staff with unskilled workers will reduce independence and diminish the quality of life of individuals and their families and carers.

As families and carers for individuals with what the council recognises as ‘critical and substantial’ social care needs, we never accepted that the cuts in care packages were ‘inevitable’ and we do not accept that the Council is ‘unable to reverse’ its plans to close vital day centres and other services. This week, Haringey rescinded its cuts on care packages; next week it can reprieve the day centres.

[www.saveautismservicesharingey.co.uk](http://www.saveautismservicesharingey.co.uk)

