

Letter from Dr Hilarie Williams (Gedroyc) to Chair of Clinical Commissioning Group (16 December)

Dear Dr Tang,

Following on from my previous letter to you in 2013, I want to bring to your urgent attention, proposed developments in Haringey Council's services for adults with learning disabilities and autism. These give rise to serious concerns about the potential impact on health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults. In considering these, it is essential to bear in mind that local authority social services are only provided to those with critical and/or substantial needs.

Since I wrote to you, a group of us from the voluntary sector have met regularly with local authority and CCG officers in order to help in planning strategic services and meeting statutory requirements, while providing them with (much needed) perspectives on issues that are key to supporting adults with autistic spectrum conditions. Unfortunately, this Autism Working Group has not been productive and we feel that we have merely served to help tick boxes rather than encountering any genuine spirit of engagement. We have been dismayed to learn – by sheer chance via the council website – of local authority proposals for major cuts to adult social services that would impact severely on many autistic and learning disabled people and their families. Haringey council's argument for these cuts has been hedged about with various claims about care models and community support that have no evidence base. They are frankly derisory, and offensive to anybody with experience of directly supporting this exceptionally vulnerable group, or of the reality of living in Haringey in the 21st century.

Further details of our concerns can be found in the attached letters. They have been sent to the council by representatives of the Haringey Learning Disability Partnership Board, and to the leader of the council by Autism Working Group members. I am sure that you and your fellow GPs will appreciate how the proposals are liable to have a deleterious effect on the health and wellbeing of profoundly disabled people without there being any credible proposals to offset that. As a former GP, a parent carer, and a trustee of a local voluntary sector organization that supports people with learning disabilities (Kith and Kids), I foresee serious fall-out for NHS primary care and adult mental health services, if the council's proposals go ahead. That, of course would mean disastrous fall-out for patients. I urge you to take this matter up with the local authority as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Hilarie Williams (AKA Mrs Hilarie Gedroyc)