

Haringey 3 year plan consultation contribution from a Learning Disabled resident of Haringey and Member of Haringey People First self advocacy group.



You will note the picture includes the holding of a red Learning Disability Partnership Board communication card. This represents a firm NO to the proposed cuts, especially to 3 out of 4 day centres and 25% cut in social workers. The group feel very strongly about the affect these cuts would have on fellow clients and wanted to represent the many of those that do not have the ability to communicate for themselves, This red No card is being held up for them so that they can be included in this consultation and so that their voices can be heard.

Dear Councillors and those considering Haringey's 3 year plan proposal.

Some of the below content has previously been sent to Beverley Tarka (Interim Head of Adult Social Care), Zina Etheridge (commissioning manager) and Michael Murphy (interim head of the LD community team in Haringey), Beverley was the only one that had the grace to respond as an

individual despite each e-mail asking each of them to provide answers on their own input into the drawing up of these proposals. Disappointingly, Beverley only chose to answer a small percentage of the questions to the clients she is paid to represent. I hope that as the letter was formed by me supporting the clients to get their feelings and thoughts onto paper that others will choose to actually listen to all of the questions and find the answers that are obvious to us and in so rejecting the drastic proposals being considered currently on the most vulnerable in our society.

The members of the group feel let down by council management/councillor's and MP's and those responsible for drawing up this proposal. They asked me what the persons high up in LD service management and provision have done to represent the deep concern and cuts in services that this year 3 year proposal plan represents. They wanted to know what BT/ZE and MM's input was into the drawing up of these proposals, they all presumed that their first reaction would have been one of worry and concern, just like us. They want to feel that as they are protectors and key holders to the vital services they receive, that they have represented them, their first reactions surely could not have been, "wow, this is going to be great for the learning disability community".

As we have not received adequate answers from our first point of contact on matters like this. Please detail what you have done to represent the community you are employed to safeguard and provide life opportunities for in terms of what did you do to try and stop un person centred proposals like closing 3 out of 4 day centres and reduction in social workers even being put into the proposal in the first place?

As referred to by Beverley Tarka at the last PB on 10-12-14 when discussing the important and vital role advocacy played in consulting with Whitehall Street residents when that service was in the process of being "reprovided", the local authority knew how traumatic this change would be for residents, as with the life altering cuts potentially being imposed on clients now and so in response to this the council organised multiple consultations (at least 3 for this single building consultation) events supported by independent advocates as well as 'one to one' advocacy to support residents to have their voice's heard at separate and convenient times for those individuals. Group events are especially difficult for those with LD to contribute to which is why at PB's we break up into groups where individual time can be spent with the client. As Beverley mentioned at the last PB, this is very much similar except on a dramatically bigger scale. With this in mind then, **will the same vital/necessary independent advocacy/need be provided to each and everyone of those day centres clients on a one to one basis in order to make sure that those being affected by these proposals get the opportunity to have their input into this process.**

At the time, Haringey Mencap had to produce easy read literature for the Whitehall St consultation with clients, in the interest of making information available to everyone despite their level of need, **will the local authority be making an accessible easy read version of their 3 year plan proposals unedited and what that will mean for clients so that they can be empowered to understand these changes and subsequently have their say on their own lives and their services?**

Elif spoke to me about how when she moved to Enfield with her mother she lost all her friends overnight as she no longer accessed Markfield Friday Night and Haringey services, she still feels the impact of this now. She said the clients in the day centre's have been mixing and socialising together for years and years, if they do not see each other in **their** day centres, when will they see their friends. Many of them will lose life

long friends overnight. **What will you do to ensure that this does not happen?** These services are not luxury add ons, not one single client has had any control on whether they have a learning disability and these services offer opportunities that the society we professionals operate freely in cannot. e.g. choice, inclusion and accessibility.

In considering the proposal comment.

“ The overall aim of the service re-design will develop a range of integrated health and social care community services that will support social inclusion, ensure that people are treated fairly and will enable people to access mainstream community activities wherever possible, enabling them to lead full and active lives in their communities. “ page 13

Where is the evidence for this fantastical statement. As mentioned at the last HLDPB on the 10-12-14, there is a presumption by council professionals that the Haringey we live in will be able to absorb and provide opportunities for these clients now potentially left with no day service provision. The work of Haringey People First in terms of disability hate crime, transport and the media, already show you that the society we live in is not inclusive and filled with opportunities for people with LD. Everything has to be fought for. Please actually listen to those that have to operate in society and deal with the lack of accessibility and inclusion for those with a LD.

The big society being promoted currently is words on paper, nothing more than an ideological fantasy.

With this in mind Haringey People First members have asked **what extra/new/additional money and services will the council provide to make sure that people are able to access day time activities, opportunities and that ability to make friends?**

One of the recommendations on page 12 makes reference to *“improve the availability of day centres and befriending opportunities for local people”*

How can this be dared to be written into the plan when it has been clearly stated that ¾ day centres are proposed to be closed. Also how does it dare to say that decisions will improve the opportunities of befriending when such proposals directly work in reducing opportunities to maintain friendships, please note the voice of Elif, an actual former Haringey resident on the affect a family decision to move out of borough had on her. The situations are directly comparable. Overnight, people’s social networks of support and friendship could be scrapped.

Also, can you please advise why the HLDPB E-mail that was sent to all members of the HLDPB to form their consultation response on has no reference to 3 out of 4 day centres possible being cut as detailed by Beverley Tarka at the former mentioned partnership board meeting, for those that are able to read and absorb information it would be more valuable for us to be consulted on all of the proposals as opposed to those that have been selected for highlight.

Question 3 states that given the financial challenges, what do you think of our objectives and plans for adults as set out on pages 10-13.

The group reject in total commitment that any proposals to cut services for vulnerable residents of Haringey should be overwhelmingly rejected. There is no justifiable fiscal or moral argument which can justify any sanction of the proposals to remove Day centres that provide vital, essential, accessible, appropriately staffed and places of friendship for the vulnerable residents of Haringey. We also fully reject any plans to cut social workers who are the frontline key holders and safe guardians of these services for Haringey Residents.

Your time and effort in answering these questions from Haringey Learning Disabled Clients and including their thoughts and feelings for consultation on these cuts proposals is greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

Mark Heath on Behalf of Haringey People first member (did not want name included)