

Letter from Robin Lomas to local councillor

10 December 2014

Re: Cuts to services for adults with learning disabilities

Dear Councillor Blake,

I have been shocked to see the new round of cuts proposed to services for people with learning disabilities in the Borough.

For many of the people receiving a day service, the closure of 'building based services' will mean yet more hours isolated at home with a family carer, who is getting older and less able to meet their needs. There are a limited number of places for people to engage in meaningful activities in the community - you can only go to the cinema or the cafe or the swimming pool so many times in a week. There is no work available for those who have some capacity to engage with supported work activities. Can you imagine what it is like for a young adult to spend day after day in a succession of 'leisure activities' with a paid carer, who is working for a minimum wage with little, if any, training or support?

A significant proportion of adults with learning disabilities, currently attending a day centre, will have behaviours which make outings very difficult. They may suffer extreme anxiety if they do not have a familiar routine to follow each day. Waiting each morning to see if a carer is going to arrive to take them out, will be extremely stressful. Who will co-ordinate the activities for these people? Presumably this burden will fall on a family carer and if it proves to be beyond them, who will know or care if a very vulnerable adult remains trapped at home?

I understand that this is a cost-cutting exercise brought about by Government imposed cuts in budgets and that it is very difficult for the Council to provide services for disabled people without adequate funds, but I beg you to re-consider these proposals for the sake of these very vulnerable people, who have to depend on others for their care and quality of life.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Lomas