

### Extract from: Future of Day Care & Transport Arrangements Consultation

#### Prepared for: Luton Borough Council

#### 1 Executive summary

Luton Borough Council is looking to modernise day care in the borough by offering older people and adults with other care needs, more personal choice and activities. In order to accomplish this there are five proposals being suggested, these are:

- To relocate the older persons' day care service currently provided at the Stopsley Day Centre to the sheltered housing unit at Colwell Court.
- To relocate the older persons' day care service currently provided at the Milan Day Centre to Dallow Learning and Community Centre.
- To relocate the „SKY' learning difficulty support service currently provided at the Milan Day Centre to other suitable day care facilities.
- To develop the St. Monica's Day Care Centre into a specialist dementia day care unit.
- To restructure the staffing arrangements within the Council's day care service to suit these proposed new arrangements.

Additionally, there is the potential to review the current Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) which is a key enable for Adult Social Care customers.

BMG Research was commissioned by Luton Borough Council (LBC) to consult with users of the day centres and tenants of Colwell Court about the proposals and the review of the PTU. The research was carried out in August and September of 2011 with BMG qualitative moderators visiting each of the potentially affected day care centres and conducting depth interviews and small group discussions with customers. In total, 86 customers were involved in the consultation. In addition, around 10 family members and friends of customers were also consulted.

#### 1.1 Overview

Generally, there are three schools of thought on the proposals:

1. The proposals will occur, whether agreed or disagreed with by customers and they will have to get used to it;
2. The pragmatic view: let's see how it goes and we'll adapt as needs be; and
3. The dislike/fear of change, particularly to a set routine that currently works for an individual's needs.

Within each of these, retention of the familiar would assist with customers' ease at any proposal going ahead, be that staff; location; peers or standard of food provided.

## **1.2 Current provision**

Overall, customers are extremely happy with the current provision they receive at day centres. Staff are viewed as helpful, kind and friendly and many view them as family. The quality of home-cooked meals (at Milan, Stopsley and the Afro Caribbean centres) are particularly praised, as is the opportunity to socialise with friends and be involved in a variety of activities. The exception to this is at St. Monica's where some customers feel there is limited activity for them to be involved in. Others are disappointed at no longer being able to participate in activities previously available, such as English classes, arts and crafts and day trips.

## **1.3 Relocating Stopsley Day Centre to the sheltered housing unit at Colwell Court**

Stopsley customers are not attached to the building and therefore would be agreeable to relocation to Colwell as long as their staff, activities and quality of food remained the same. There are some concerns over transport, particularly in regards to any potential cost increase due to longer journeys, however most feel the Council would address this issue.

Stopsley residents who took part in the consultation were more likely to object, fearing the loss of a community facility, particularly for the elderly in an area perceived to have a growing number of elderly residents.

The majority of Colwell Court residents have significant concerns about the proposal, these include:

- Security issues;
- Perceived incurred costs for the residents;
- Changes to the food they currently receive;
- The disruption and mess of an extension, as well as the loss of their personal space in building it;
- Insufficient facilities for an influx of users (particularly toilets and car parking);
- Loss of provision of activities they currently receive; and
- Current lack of staff to deal with the increase in customers.

Most Stopsley customers would like the opportunity to visit Colwell before a final decision was made and this is something that Colwell residents would also welcome. Colwell Court residents are also keen that they would not receive increased rents/costs to accommodate the relocation. All would like to be kept informed by personal letter.

## **1.4 Relocating the 'SKY' learning difficulty support service to other suitable day care facilities**

An individual needs assessment would have to be conducted for each SKY customer to relocate them to the most appropriate day centre. Ensuring disruption is kept to a

minimum in terms of retaining the familiar and adhering to set routines is key to ensuring a smooth transition for SKY customers. For the majority, returning to Bramingham would be the most viable relocation as this was where customers used to attend. Frequent and consistent reassurance of the changes would need to be provided to customers by family and SKY staff.

Careful consideration and management would be required where SKY customers are proposed to be relocated to older person's day care services. This is due to overtly sexual and violent behaviour that individuals with learning difficulties can display that would be difficult for some older person's day care customers to comprehend and/or tolerate.

### **1.5 To relocate the older person's day care service at the Milan Day Centre to Dallow Learning and Community Centre**

None of the customers of the Milan Day Centre are happy with the proposal, with the following concerns being cited:

- Dallow was seen to be too small and noisy;
- Individual dietary requirements would not be met in terms of religious and cultural beliefs in regards to food preparation;
- Toilets would be shared with other centre users, including children;
- Fear that current staff would not be retained;
- Perception that Council funds are unfairly dispersed and this is the reason for their relocation;
- That the prayer facilities may not be adequate at Dallow; and
- Dallow is too far to access from their homes (for those that walk to Milan).

It is important to note that some of the cited concerns of customers replicate the views of Milan Centre staff even though the majority have never entered the Dallow Learning and Community Centre. Allowing Milan customers to view the facilities at Dallow would assist in any potential relocation. Similarly, addressing staff concerns would also help.

### **1.6 To develop the St. Monica's Day Care Centre into a specialist day care unit**

There remains confusion as to how this proposal would directly affect current customers. The preference for most is to remain at St. Monica's. However, a few customers feel unstimulated and would prefer to have more activities either at St. Monica's or by relocation.

If customers were to be relocated, family members would like the same days they attend St. Monica's to be retained at the day centre they are moved to. They would also like to view the proposed new centre prior to their relative being relocated.

### **1.7 Potential transport changes**

The vast majority of customers who use LBC's PTU rate the service and the staff highly. In the main, respondents stated that the transport arrives on time and collects them on time. Some state there are delays which they dislike, but others are pragmatic stating

these are beyond the control of the unit (previous customer not being ready on time, traffic congestion etc).

There are some specific service delivery areas that require improvement, particularly where it is provided by A to B transport and not the PTU. These are:

- Consistent staff approach towards customers, ensuring happy, friendly and helpful attitudes are expressed. Engaging with customers and their families is key;
- Ensuring that requests for changes to collection (such as not required on X day) are provided to the appropriate staff;
- To liaise with families and home care service provision to ensure that collection and drop-off times do not overlap with other service provision which can lead to customers not being able to access one or other service; and
- Where possible, provide customers with set times so that they, and their families, can plan their days and routines with more ease.

In regards to the potential changes, customers are open to being collected earlier but the majority do not favour later collections to go home. There are a number of reasons for this, but the primary factor is a reliance on routine in order to cope with individual needs such as medications; family commitments and home care service provision. Many customers have day to day chores and activities they need to accomplish that require them to visit shops, doctors and dentists during working hours so a later collection time would not make this possible. For some, staying at a centre for longer periods of time was not agreeable due to lack of activities they can participate in the centre or because they feel they would tire too easily.

Customers at the Afro Caribbean day centre and younger family members of customers were most likely to approve the potential changes. Older family members and customers of Chaul End were most likely to disapprove.

Any potential changes, further consultation or actual changes should be communicated via personal letter.