



Haringey Local Government Branch, 14a Willoughby Road, London N8 0HR
Tel: 0208 482 5104/0208 482 5105/0208 482 5106/0208 482 5107 or 0208 489 0000 Ext. 3351/3320
Fax: 0208 482 5108 Minicom: 0208 482 5109
Email: abs1@haringeyunison.co.uk

UNISON COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS TO CLOSE PROVIDER SERVICES IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Introduction

UNISON opposes these cuts and we are also restating our opposition to all compulsory redundancies.

Due to the importance of these services and the scale of the cuts, all decisions relating to the closures should be made by the relevant council committee, not by managers.

Personalisation

We are concerned about the way in which personalisation appears to have been used to justify some of the closures, alongside the need to make financial savings. The Equalities Impact Assessments for the closures of the day centres, residential homes and the Home Care service all state the following:

“In line with the Putting People First programme, the Council is committed to delivering personalised care through self-directed support, with the aim of ensuring that vulnerable adults have greater choice, control over their care, and over their lives. The proposed changes are designed to respond to the changing needs of older people, people with learning disabilities and those with mental health needs by providing more cost effective, individualised care and support packages, with the aim of ensuring they are able to live more independently in the community.”

Management should not try and confuse two separate issues. We are facing the decimation of services that are provided for some of the most vulnerable people in the borough. This has nothing to do with the transformation of social care. Users and carers affected by these closures have expressed major concerns about the fact that these services will no longer be available, and have made clear that they would like them to continue. We do not understand how they are being given more choice and control if the services they want are being taken away.

If these services are being closed because of cuts in central government funding, then management should be clear about that, and should refrain from trying to put some kind of “positive spin” on the situation by making tenuous links to personalisation. We sincerely hope that management do not believe that personalisation provides an opportunity to get rid of in-house services, and that the budget situation has provided a convenient excuse for making cuts that would have otherwise been difficult to get through. Personalisation should not be about ceasing to provide in-house services, particularly if those services are what people want. Rather, it should be seen as an opportunity to develop in-house services and make them more responsive to people’s needs – to, in effect, “personalise” them.

The current government has published a document called *Think Locally, Act Personally* in which it states that it wants all service users to be on an individual budget by 2012/2013, with direct

Appendix 6

payments being the “preferred” mode of delivery. The key point here is that direct payments cannot be used to purchase in-house services, so this is clearly part of the government’s plan to eradicate

public services, or at least reduce them to an absolute minimum. It would be extremely concerning if this council was contributing to this process and using budget cuts as an excuse to do so.

Also, it is very concerning that personalisation is being used to develop a market in social care services. So far, the evidence is that this has often created a privatised and unregulated care market offering low quality services and poor working conditions for staff. With the decimation of in-house services in Haringey, there is a risk that this will happen here. It is very difficult to see how this will give greater choice, control and independence in a positive way to service users.

We would be grateful for further details of how management think that these closures will contribute to the personalisation of social care in Haringey.

Residential Care Homes

Whitehall Street

This provides both long-term residential and respite care, and carers and residents are extremely concerned about the loss of this service. In particular, carers of service users who attend the respite service are extremely worried about what will replace it. They rely on this service to give them a break from their caring responsibilities, and this enables them to carry on in this role. They are concerned that the level of respite they receive will reduce, which could cause them serious difficulties and could affect their ability to continue as carers.

Carers value the continuity and consistency of service that they receive from this home and they are concerned about standards in the private sector. It is also unclear what services are going to replace Whitehall Street, and there does not seem to be any details about this, which is a concern for both staff and parents/carers.

There have been references made to Whitehall Street being an “institutionalised” setting, although no information has been provided to support this claim. This sounds rather insulting, and ignores the fact that the service provides high quality care that is valued by parents/carers. The home is rated as “good” by CQC. The home used to be split into three distinct units, which enabled a more person-centred approach to be taken. However, in 2009 management turned the whole building back into one big unit; this could be seen as a move towards “institutionalisation”, but it was a management decision so it seems rather unreasonable to be now describing the service in these terms.

Residential Homes for Older People

As with all the other staff groups we spoke to, the main concerns that staff in these services had were for the residents. They were particularly concerned about where the residents are going to go and the effect that the proposals are having on them now. They are becoming extremely anxious and upset, and some of them are trying to pack suitcases because they think they have to leave. Staff have worked extremely hard to build up relationships with them, to develop their confidence and self-esteem, and to improve their physical and mental health – all of this will be lost. The impact of moving home on older people’s health and wellbeing can be severe, and management need to take this into consideration.

Chris Taylor

Assistant Branch Secretary/Adults and Culture Convenor

UNISON

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE COMMENTS CAN BE FOUND IN THE CABINET REPORT FOR 19 JULY 2011 CABINET MEETING AS WELL AS THE SERVICE CONSULTATION REPORT FOR 19 JULY 2011 CABINET MEETING.
--