

**Consultation on the future of Respite Services**

**Summary of responses received**

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## **1 Consultation approach**

- 1.1 Relatives and carers of Kentish Road service users were invited to a meeting that took place at Kentish Road on Monday 7 July 2014. At the meeting, they were advised that Cabinet would be considering a proposal to hold a public consultation on the future of respite services, including Kentish Road respite service. A staff briefing was held on the same day at Kentish Road. A copy of the presentation was posted to relatives after the meeting.
- 1.2 Cabinet considered this proposal and approved a public consultation on the future of Respite Services on 15 July 2014 and this ran from 24 July 2014 to 23 October 2014. The consultation was covered by local media, including the local newspaper (Daily Echo) and local radio (BBC Radio Solent).
- 1.3 The schedule of meetings was published on the council's website and relatives and carers of Respite Service users were sent this by post with an invitation to attend. Staff were briefed so that they could give information about the proposals and the ways in which to respond. The schedule of meetings is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.4 A consultation document including a questionnaire was published on the council's website, where it could be downloaded, and was made available at all of the consultation meetings and from staff at Kentish Road. The consultation document is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.5 Six meetings for relatives and carers were held at Kentish Road on 7 August 2014, 10 September 2014 and 6 October 2014. Meetings were held on these days at 2pm and 6pm, to enable as many people as possible to attend. Representatives from Choices Advocacy and, or, Carers in Southampton attended these meetings and were able to support relatives, as required.
- 1.6 The format of the group meetings consisted of a presentation given by the Interim Head of Adult Services followed by a question and answer session. Notes of these meetings were taken and these are attached to Appendix A.
- 1.7 In addition to the six meetings held at Kentish Road, two public meetings were held at the Civic Centre at 6pm on 8 August 2014 and 22 October 2014. These meetings covered the proposals regarding Kentish Road along with separate proposals for the future of day services and the future of a residential home, Woodside Lodge. A verbatim record of these meetings, chaired by the Director of People, was made and this is attached to Appendix A. The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care also attended these meetings, along with representatives from Choices Advocacy (both meetings) and Carers in Southampton (the second meeting).
- 1.8 In addition to the above, a meeting for carers was hosted by Southampton Mencap (carers' lunch); two meetings were held with the council's partners and care providers; and meetings in public were held at Consult and Challenge (Spectrum Centre for Independent Living) and Southampton

Healthwatch. These meetings included the proposals for respite services along with those for day services and Woodside Lodge. Notes from these meetings have been placed in Members' rooms and are available on request.

- 1.9 Several briefings were also held for Members of the council and the consultation and proposals were considered at a meeting of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) on 11 September 2014. The minutes of this meeting are available online at <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=2852&Ver=4>
- 1.10 A dedicated email address was publicised on the council's website and at all of the meetings outlined above. Everyone who attended the meetings was invited to respond to the consultation in the way that best suited them, including a direct invitation to phone or write to the Interim Head of Adult Services or a member of the project team, whose contact details were included in the presentations.
- 1.11 Independent advocates from Choices Advocacy worked separately with the service users of respite and were able to record the views of 28 of its current service users, where appropriate.

## 2 Questionnaire responses

- 2.1 45 questionnaire responses were received related directly to respite services. The majority were received by users of respite services, two responses were from carer's of individuals who uses respite services. 28 of the responses were received from services users with the help and support of independent advocates. Ten responses (22%), from all completed questionnaires agreed that the way the council provide respite services should be reconsidered.
- 2.2 A small number of questionnaire responses contained questions. These requests have been summarised and the councils response is, as follows:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Council's response</b>
The council requires more provisions like Kentish Road not fewer of them.	The council agrees that provisions such as Kentish Road are incredibly valuable. However the council believes that the way in which facilities like respite are provided has potential to be improved. This is why we are consulting with you and asking for how we might improve this valuable service, we are not consulting with you about whether or not respite services should be provided.
Individuals want a choice over what respite service is provided.	Changing the way respite is provided will allow all service users and their

	families a choice over how they receive respite. By changing the way we provide respite services we will be increasing the choice service users have not reducing it.
Concern that transport links to services will be lost.	The council believes that choice over services are imperative to ensure everyone is receiving the best care possible. This is why we are promoting choices such as direct payments. This means service users and families can prioritise what's important to them and therefore ensure services of greatest value to them are retained.
A number of responses suggest that people would prefer more time using respite facilities.	Through the take up of different services via direct payments people will be able to receive the service they really want as they will have a higher level of control over their own service.
People who receive services are not always in a position to manage their own finances which direct payments would require.	Direct payments do required a managed approach but this is not required to be the service user themselves. They are able to receive support from relatives and carers in this matter and are also able to, if they wish, use some of their finance to buy help to manage their direct payment.

2.3 From the responses received a number of themes emerged of areas respondents felt were of particular importance. These are summarised as follows:

- Undoubtedly the biggest concern expressed via questionnaire responses was the potential loss of friendship that may come as a result of changes in the way respite care is provided.
- Staff are a valuable resource and their skills cannot be lost. They know individuals and their care requirements very well.
- Transport to and from respite facilities are very important. Without this respite is not a viable service as it becomes inaccessible.
- Locations for respite are required on both sides of the city.
- Service users often struggle with change and this proposed change will have a big impact on them and take them time to settle into a new routine.
- The service is currently overstretched and therefore this provision should have capacity increased.

- A number of individuals also raised concerns that current decoration within the building could be improved.

### **3 Written responses**

- 3.1 In addition to the questionnaire responses, 13 letters and emails from those who had links to respite services were received. The respondents included relatives of service users, carers of services users, social workers and managers contacting on behalf of service users as well as local voluntary sector groups.
- 3.2 The majority of responses were strongly in favour of ensuring respite facilities are retained as they are viewed as a valuable service. A number of people expressed concerns about where alternatives may be sourced from should Kentish Road facilities not be provided in their current state.
- 3.3 One respondent raised concerns with the manner in which the consultation had been conducted. The concern continued to explain finding materials on the council's website had been difficult. The respondent queried whether the consultation has been publicised well enough. The Council's response to this is that the consultation was listed on a dedicated page on the council's website. The consultation was also covered in the Daily Echo and by BBC Radio Solent.
- 3.4 Another respondent raised concerns that the council had not been clear about the alternatives that the council would provide. They felt that more information was required to allow those who would be affected by any change to make informed decisions. During the consultation process the council explained that earlier consultation exercises had highlighted the importance of working with service users and families to develop a range of alternatives which were co-produced. In order to facilitate this, co-production sessions ran alongside the consultation as a valuable source of information and ideas. Sessions which raised awareness and explained alternative options such as shared lives and direct payments were also organised by the council.
- 3.5 Concerns were also raised that following the consultation the council should ensure they interact with those affected by the changes to ensure that their needs are being met. The council's response to this is that any service user who is eligible to receive services is entitled to a statutory review of their needs. As a minimum these reviews must be carried out annually, although the frequency of review will depend on the level of need and risk, and will be agreed with the individual and/or their carer.
- 3.6 A couple of responses made reference to the fact that recent refurbishments had been made to Kentish Road and responses expressed concerns that this money could now be considered to have been 'wasted'.

- 3.7 A few responses made reference to other alternatives which currently exist such as arrangements like Shared Lives. While generally the use of Shared Lives was considered positive, concerns were raised about maintaining friendship groups and a social network.
- 3.8 One response raised concerns that respite provisions equal to Kentish Road does not exist within Southampton. In order to help those effected by any potential change understand alternative options that exist, new initiatives such as Southampton Information Directory were explained. The council also explained that social workers and care managers are good sources of information for what is available locally.
- 3.9 Two responses received suggested that those carers who currently benefit from the provision of respite services at Kentish Road should be required to volunteer. They suggest that this volunteering suggestion would reduce costs of staffing within Kentish Road.
- 3.10 The majority of responses were clear that respite facilities do not just bring benefits to the service users. They feel that the benefits brought to the carers are just as valuable and if such services were to be removed both carers and service users would suffer as a result.
- 3.11 Another theme of concern from respondents was that current transport provision surrounding respite services are very good. They feel that this is an element of respite which cannot be ignored as without it respite services do not exist as they are not accessible.
- 3.12 One respondent raised concerns that should the take up of personalised care options increase, in particular direct payments, that the finance team may not be able to cope with the demand. They suggested that at current levels payments were not always accurate.
- 3.13 One response was clear that they fully supported the council's consideration to look at alternatives in the way care is provided. They stated "we strongly support the council's decision to modernise the way they provide services. All disable people should be enabled to live their lives more independently with personalised services".

#### **4 Meetings held at Respite Services**

- 4.1 Notes from the meetings are attached to Appendix A.

#### **5 Public meetings held at Civic Centre**

- 5.1 Notes from the meetings are attached to Appendix A

## **6 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

- 6.1 The minutes of this meeting are available online at:  
<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=2852&Ver=4>