

Have your say on proposed changes to residential care and short breaks (respite care) for people with learning disabilities in Leicestershire

19 February – 15 April 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the council making these changes?

The proposals that the council is consulting on have been developed as part of a review of services. The review has confirmed that some services are operating inefficiently and will not be able to meet the changing demands of people who need access to a range of services in the future.

How do the proposals meet the requirement that the council has to provide services in all areas?

The Care Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to ensure there is adequate provision of services, this does not mean that the council has to provide it directly and the majority of residential care is bought from the Independent Sector. If proposals are agreed we would have 3 short breaks services located in the county to meet demand. As the use of Smith Crescent is low (less than 38 per cent), the people who are currently making use of these services could be supported at the other 3 services, which are purpose built. There is an overall reduction of 3 short break beds across the county but with improvements associated with the reconfiguration at Hinckley, the access to beds that can be used by the people who need them will increase the number available

Why are you planning to turn the residential home at The Trees into short breaks when occupancy rates at the other short breaks services is 70 – 75 per cent?

As part of the consultation we are asking to meet with people who make use of short breaks in Melton, Wigston and Hinckley. Currently people tend request booking at the weekend rather than during the week, and the average occupancy shows the rate across the whole year rather than the range. We want to find ways to incentivise usage at non-peak times and want to work with people who use services to find ways to do this.

Why have you upgraded the services when you are proposing to close them?

We have had to keep services to a certain standard as they are people's homes and we have a responsibility to maintain them. This is also required as part of the registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who is the regulatory body for residential care homes.

Why have the vacancies in the residential homes not been filled?

Councils are measured on how many people are supported in residential care, as efforts are made to find alternatives to support people in the community, the number of people needing/ wanting this type of service is reducing.

Residential care is increasingly becoming an option for people with much more complex needs along with physical needs. The properties included in the proposals were all built some time ago, are dated in terms of their facilities, and their layouts are not particularly accessible for people with complex physical and sensory disabilities. There has been some interest in the vacancies at The Trees, however other more suitable options have been chosen for people to move to.

Are you closing all long terms residential care beds provided by the council?

If proposals are agreed the result will be that the council will no longer provide any long term residential care.

How long will the changes that you are proposing be viable?

The Care Act sets out responsibilities for Local Authorities which is to ensure that there is sufficient provision of services which meet peoples' needs locally. We therefore need to continually assess what services we have available and what the people of Leicestershire need. We know that in the short to medium term, we need to provide short breaks as there is limited supply in the Independent Sector. If that changes, we will need to review our position.

Are you going to make people homeless?

No. The council has a continued responsibility to support people. Individuals would be supported to find alternatives that are suitable in meeting their needs. The homes will not be able to close until all individuals have moved to suitable alternative accommodation.

The services that are available are excellent quality from the council; can you guarantee that people won't be worse off by receiving a poor quality service from the independent sector?

The council is committed to ensuring that individuals continue to get the level of quality of support they receive now. The majority of people who are supported in residential care are within the independent sector.

Leicestershire County Council's Quality & Contracts team have officers who check independent residential care homes contracted by the authority to make sure they offer a safe and effective service. They visit each home on a regular basis to make sure required standards are adhered to and will work with home to make any improvements if required. They are the point of contact from the council for each care home.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the national regulatory body responsible for residential care homes and all homes are registered with CQC. They inspect and rate residential care homes and members of the public can use their inspection reports and ratings to help them understand the quality of care.

Individuals will continue to receive an annual review carried out by a Social Care Worker to check that the services that are being arranged are still meeting their needs, and make any changes.

If a member of the public/ relative is worried about the care and support being provided in a residential care home they can speak to the manager of the home. If they are still not happy they can contact the council and / or CQC directly.

Can people who want to continue to live together do so?

If the decision is made to close The Trees and Hamilton Court, each individual will have a detailed assessment which will identify options available and determine suitability of those options. The assessment process will consider any friendships and relationship people have now, how these can be maintained alongside opportunities to build new relationships.

Will you look for alternatives for the people being supported/ where will people go?

This can only be done once a decision has been made, after consultation and after going back to Cabinet in June 2018. Individuals will be supported to find suitable alternatives and each individual would be supported with their transition. People may want to move into another residential home, or there may be other services such as Extra Care Housing that are more suitable. This will be better understood through a detailed assessment for each individual. We will need to consider any friendships and relations people have a look at ways to maintain these.

Are you going to tell the residents?

This will be considered on an individual basis, considering how individuals understand, retain, weigh up information and communicate feedback. Things that will be considered will be timing and messages, and how the person can be best supported through change.

We are exploring ways to ensure that individuals' views are incorporated into the consultation e.g. through the use of advocacy support provide feedback on the proposals. If the proposals are agreed by Cabinet in June, individuals will be supported with a transition plan to ensure their move, and communication about the changes, are managed and supported in line with their needs.

Where are people going to live, why are you not able to tell families where their relatives are going to live?

The council are committed to finding suitable accommodation and support for individuals with social care needs and recognise that this is not a quick process. Thorough assessment and planning work is required by a social care worker, involving the individual, staff and families who know the person well. No decision has been made yet therefore it would not be appropriate to carry out this work before a decision is made.

If a decision is made to close the services, each individual will have a detailed re-assessment of their support needs and preferences. This will also consider transition arrangements for each individual, important friendship groups within their current service, location and whether an alternative type of provision would be more appropriate to meet their needs. Staff and families involvement will be critical to the success of this work.

Why can't you wait until people are ready to move?

We recognise that this would be ideal however change is unlikely to be instigated by individuals so this is likely to take an indefinite number of years and does not help address the need for suitable and accessible short breaks provision.

The approach we will take to support people in their transition will ensure people feel ready to move. The homes will not close until each individual has been supported to move to a suitable alternative.

What about bookings (for Short Breaks at Smith Crescent) that have already been arranged?

Existing bookings will be honoured. Once the consultation has closed, we will consider feedback and Cabinet will make a decision. If the decision is made to close the service we will put a plan in place to manage the bookings and communicate with you about the plan.

Why did you shut Lilac and Laburnum (short breaks at The Trees) when short breaks are in short supply?

The short breaks services provided from Lilac and Laburnum were not viable as the building is 2 storeys, with no lift and steep stairs. We know that short breaks provision needs to be accessible and suitable for people with physical needs, which these buildings were not. The conversion of Lilac and Laburnum is part of work to provide support to people with complex needs under the Transforming Care Programme. We have a shortage of accommodation for supported living resulting in a long waiting list. The change to supported living was therefore seen as the best use of this property.

How many short break beds are you proposing to have at The Trees?

The proposal includes the provision of 8 short break beds at The Trees – this will be in addition to the 4 current beds at Cedarwood.

Can you find somewhere else in Coalville to replace the current Short Break service?

The proposals that we are consulting on are thought to be the best in terms of use of public money whilst being able to meet people's needs. The purchase of a suitable property would require a considerable amount of additional money which would need to be identified. There are also costs associated with continuing to provide this service. You can submit this idea as feedback, along with any other feedback on the proposals as part of the consultation process.

Will the amount of short breaks people get reduce?

The proposals are not about reducing the amount of short breaks that people get, it's about making improvements to the services countywide to ensure there is enough suitable provision. A social care worker determines how much short breaks individuals can get through an assessment process, this is not determined by the services. If you have concerns about the amount of short breaks service you are receiving you should speak to your social care worker (if you have one allocated to you) or contact the Customer Service Centre (0116 3050004).

Who will pay for the additional travel cost required for people currently using Smith Crescent Short Breaks?

We will look at that as part of each person's assessment. The Council will ensure that individuals are not left financial worse off as a result of the proposed changes to Smith Crescent when they make use of alternative Short Breaks.

How will need for short breaks be met whilst the work is being carried out?

If proposals are agreed the work to expand the short breaks at The Trees prior to closing Smith Crescent Short Breaks. This will ensure that there is no reduction in capacity whilst work is being done.

How much do you expect to save if the proposals to close the residential homes go ahead?

The implementation of these proposals would enable the council to meet the changing needs of people who require social care services and save the council around £100,000 per year.

Who is Cabinet?

Cabinet is made up of 8 County Council Members, including the Leader of the Council. The Cabinet meets monthly and is responsible for the most important decisions affecting the council. It also makes recommendations to the council regarding the annual budget and major plans.

How do I contact my Councillor?

You can [find your local councillor](#) on the Leicestershire County Council website or go to your district/borough council website and search for your local councillor.

What are the timescales?

The consultation runs for 8 weeks from 19 February to Cabinet in June 2018 with the consultation results for a decision on how to proceed. If the proposals are agreed, we will aim to start working with individuals in July to assess and start looking for alternatives. How long people need to find and move suitable alternative accommodation and support will determine when the home will close. This will need to be managed and co-ordinated well as it is unlikely that it will be best for any of the individuals to be living at either of the homes on their own, therefore we will aim to support people to move at a similar time.

If approval to reconfigure The Trees is given, there is no specific timescale by which the closure will have to be completed; therefore we will be able to carefully plan the transition for each person.

Is it consultation?

Yes. Consultation runs from 19 February and runs for 8 weeks (to 15 April). The consultation will gather as many people's views on the proposals using an online or paper questionnaire, and a number of meetings for those people directly affected. We are keen to encourage as many people to take part in the consultation.

For Staff Only**Will staff be made redundant and what are the timescales for redundancy? Will redeployment be offered?**

If all proposals are agreed the option of redundancy is likely for those staff working at Hamilton Court and Smith Crescent. Services will continue to be provided at The Trees therefore no staff would be offered redundancy. It is the council's policy to offer redeployment to staff at risk of redundancy and any vacancies will be made available to those people. The redeployment process will consider what is 'reasonably practical' in terms of location of employment.

Smith Crescent and Hamilton Court Staff only - No changes will be immediate and it is unlikely that, subject to all proposals gaining agreement, that the home will close before December 2018. Posts will not be made redundant until the home has closed. If however part of the service is not in use for some time and staff are not required redundancy may be looked at sooner. An Action Plan will take place after consultation and a decision being made by Cabinet in June 2018.

What happens to our pensions?

If you are 55 or over and you are made redundant, you can draw your pension with no loss of benefit. If you are under 55 you will stop paying into your local government pension and access it at the point of retirement.

What will you do if there is not demand for respite/ short breaks at The Trees?

We know that there is a shortage of suitable and accessible overnight short break provision therefore we are confident that demand for the service exists. We know

that those services which are purpose built, modern and accessible have a good occupancy rate so staff will continue to be required. The proposals will not affect the HR Action Plan that you have recently been consulted on.

Why tell us now, why not tell us before as part of the HR Action plan?

At the point that the HR Action was being carried out, we had not fully developed the proposals. The options available to staff as part of the HR Action Plan would not have changed as a result of joining up the two processes e.g. staff would not have been able to apply for voluntary redundancy.

If you have a question please email Louise.Melbourne@leics.gov.uk or phone 0116 3055060