

Kingston upon Thames Association for the Blind

Adams House Dickerage Lane New Malden Surrey KT3 3SF

kingstonassoc@btconnect.com 020 8605 0060

www.kingstonassociationforblind.org

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Mr P Levick
Community Care Services
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Guildhall
High Street
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 1EU

Dear Mr Levick

Eligibility for Adult Social Care Services Consultation

Several members of the Kingston Association for the Blind (KAB) have now attended consultation meetings and I am writing to put forward the KAB's views.

Firstly, I must stress that it is not easy to comment fully without knowing the details of how any changes might impact upon visually impaired people (VIP's). Having said that, it is essential that the following points be taken into consideration when proposing any changes to the present level of services provided –

- It is of the greatest importance that care services for VIP's be provided throughout by a person, or team, familiar with an individual's developing condition, as is now the case with the Sensory Impairment Team.
- In the case of a progressive condition such as visual impairment, it is vital that care, advice and training be provided at a very early stage in order to avoid hardship and the need for greater services later.
- Loss of sight is very traumatic and it takes people a long time to learn how to employ all the new techniques and gadgets they are going to need, and to learn how to access the help available.
- The older a person is, and the more their sight has deteriorated, before they are assessed and start receiving support, the less likely they are to be able to absorb training and get used to new equipment.
- The KAB does not duplicate the services of the Sensory Impairment Team, but does work closely with them to complement and support their services.
- The KAB does not have the resources available to be able to expand the services we already provide to VIP's.

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In summary, and with regard to the five specific questions raised in the consultation document, the KAB views the possibility of a diminution of eligibility criteria for care services provided to people with visual impairment with deep concern.

We hope that further consultation will take place and that we will be given the opportunity to comment further if, and when, more concrete proposals are forthcoming, and before any decisions are taken. To this end, we would like to see the consultation period extended.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Cooper
KAB Chairman