

## **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

### **RE CONSULTATION ON CLOSURE OF NEWENT OR HOBKIRK HOUSE CENTRE**

#### **Budget Process 2007/2008**

I write as a regular user of the facilities and services provided at Newent House to let you know of my concerns regarding the proposals to consolidate the day care services provided at Hobkirk House and Newent House Centre in order to reduce expenditure during the coming year.

Newent House has nice facilities, including a lovely garden which we are able to enjoy during the summer, a big conservatory which is used for various functions, including musical entertainment, and which also provides space to give us the occasional opportunity to see and buy clothes etc. We have a TV room, DVD and internet facilities, and an area and resources for flower arranging, card making and other activities to keep us occupied and alert if we wish to. Food is prepared and cooked on the premises and served in a nice dining room.

The staff are very professional and caring. As you know, the staff, including drivers and escorts can make or mar a Centre. Newent House is Al.

We understand that Hobkirk House is a smaller Centre than Newent House. We would like to know what facilities and amenities Hobkirk House has to offer to entice us to endure the extra traveling that would be necessary if the decision is made to close Newent House and transfer Users to Hobkirk House Centre.

Myself and my fellow Users are feeling very insecure about the proposed changes to our Centre and would appreciate receiving some reassurance as to the situation we would find ourselves in should Newent House Centre close.

I cannot see that Newent House can accommodate the extra users with the resources and staff that are currently available, and am concerned that the extra load put on staff and resources will make it difficult for them to continue to give the level of care that we receive at present without adding substantially to their work load. I am also concerned that increased numbers at the Centre will change the whole atmosphere, from a family atmosphere to an institutional one and that make our days spent at the Centre will be less fulfilling and enjoyable.

Whilst it has been stated that existing Users will still receive the day care, albeit crammed into one Centre, there will be other housebound rate payers who would benefit from the chance to leave the solitude of their homes and enjoy the company of others. This could have an impact on their mental health. Disabled people are obviously not able to make use of the Walk-in Centre provided at Devon Way, Chessington. Are they to be left to cope alone?

If places in Day Care Centers are reduced not only do the Users miss out on the chance to "get out of the house", meet other people and take part in activities, so do Carers, upon whom we rely heavily when not at the Centre. My husband is my Carer, and if he did not have a breather some time during the week I am worried that it would affect his health and our relationship would suffer as a consequence. Without his support I would require 24hour care, and this situation is reflected in households across the Borough. You must take into account that not only are Users elderly, the majority of Carers are also.

Another aspect I am concerned about is transport. Traveling to and from the Centre can take a long time now and the extra traveling time to be endured by disabled people should we have to go to another Centre is not relished. If there should be a breakdown of one of the buses, it could take the staff along time to return all users home. Another aspect of longer journeys is of course the extra petrol costs involved and extra impact on global warming.

Mrs JC