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26th February 2007

Dear MIS Connolly

Budget Proposals for Day Care

Thank you for your letter re Budget Proposals for Day Care for the Elderly. I am the daughter of BM who attends Newent House Day Centre for one day a week.

Firstly, I have informed a member of staff in your office, that although I have given my new address (above) to the Council, this letter was still addressed to my old address in Chessington. That person assures me they will get my address changed for future correspondence.

I am concerned at the Budget Proposals, and as I cannot attend any of the meetings arranged I would like to make the following points.

1. How do relatives tell if the person who attends the day centre is in the "higher" level needs category. My father is nearly 87 years old, with bowel cancer, three heart attacks and ongoing heart problems, and a deformed hip, necessitating the wearing of a surgical boot. He enjoys his day at the day centre, and if this had to change I would be concerned about the lack of social interaction he would have. He speaks very highly of the staff and care he receives at Newent House, and if any of those staff were to be made redundant what a waste of a committed, kind and caring group of people.

2. I see the proposal is to put all the "higher" level of need older people on one site. Surely this would put pressure on the staff caring for those people. Indeed is either site physically capable of housing such a large number of people?
3. It states that the proposal is for the voluntary sector organisations to meet the needs of people with lower level of needs. Can the voluntary sector fund this increased provision? I thought they were fully stretched as it is. Will RBK provide any funding to them? If so, why not provide the care themselves.
4. I note that the letter states that one of the main reasons behind these proposals is to "begin the process of modernising Older People's day services". I do not exactly understand the meaning behind the word "modernising" used in this context. The system seems to work very well as it stands- surely this is all about "generating savings" and not "modernising".
5. My father may well be lucky enough to carry on with his one day a week, but I am fearful about the future of other older people in the Borough. My father has lived in the Royal Borough of Kingston for 90 years, and considering the high level of Council Tax he, and many other thousands of older people, have paid for those years, I think the Council should reconsider this proposal - especially as the cost of Home Care is so expensive.

I hope you will take these comments into consideration, as I cannot attend the meetings, and I would welcome your views on them.

Yours sincerely

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