

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

1. Proposed changes affecting Day Care for older people and the Carers' Centre

- 1.1 This consultation concerned a proposal to reduce the number of day care centres and also to offer day care on a more flexible basis. Opinion was somewhat divided with 58% of responses supporting the change to the use of larger sites and around 42% of the respondents indicating they were opposed. Those supporting the change cited the potential benefits of providing more efficient and flexible services, while others said that larger centres were more likely to be impersonal, and that this may adversely affect people with dementia. Getting the transport right was also felt to be a major factor in improving the offer because some service users spend a significant amount of time travelling to day care centres.
- 1.2 Some 88% of respondents supported the proposal to offer more flexible day care, some noting that a whole day was too long. However, a number said that because of the travel time a shorter period of day care would not be worthwhile as it would mean the carer would not have a sufficient break from caring duties.
- 1.3 There was near universal support (97%) for offering day care to those who pay for their social care, with many respondents arguing the benefits of day care should be available to all who need it.
- 1.4 Opinion was divided on whether to provide specialised day care for people with dementia or whether day care services should aim to meet all needs. The 56% who supported specialised day care commented that the care needs were different to those of other users and that staff require specialised training to meet their needs. The 37% who indicated they were opposed to segregated provision commented that service users with dementia benefited from socialising with others who do not have the condition, especially at the early stages of the condition.
- 1.5 In relation to travelling to day care centres, 57% felt that transport should be offered only to those who cannot arrange their own transport or use public transport. However, the 37% who felt it should be offered to all noted the frequent limitations of public transport and the difficulties people with memory loss face in using it.

2. Charges for non-residential adult social care services

- 2.1 This consultation concerned a proposal to increase charges for a range of social care services including day care, the Sitting Service, Transport, Short Breaks and Careline. There were 352 responses to this question although many indicated they would be affected by a number of the services subject to consultation.

- 2.2 While a number of commented that it was not unreasonable to increase charges as proposed, and were sympathetic about the challenges faced by the Council, 62% strongly disagreed with the proposal to increase the cost of short breaks. A number commented that they would not be able to use the service(s) because it would be unaffordable, and that it would have an adverse effect on their capacity to provide care. Others asked for reassurance that a means test would be applied to ensure those of limited means would still be able to receive the services. Modelling undertaken to estimate the potential income raised from an increase in charges suggests around 30% of current service would be entirely unaffected, around 20% would expect to pay the full cost of the increase and the remainder may have to pay more depending on a financial assessment. The provision of Direct Payments may also be an effective way to mitigate the impact of this change especially with regard to short breaks.
- 2.3 In relation to the provision of day care services a number of respondents commented that volunteers and community groups could be used to improve the quality and diversity of what is offered, and that this would also have a positive effect on costs.

3. Equipment and adaptations costs less than £50

- 3.1 This proposal is to change the list of equipment and adaptations the Council provides so that items costing less than £50 are excluded. This reasoning is that most who need these items could themselves, or their carers, source them from the high street or the internet often at lower cost. There were 287 respondents who said this proposal would affect them.
- 3.2 In response to the consultation, suggestions were made that costs could be saved if more equipment was recycled. A review of the current arrangements shows that the Council recycles or re-uses most of the equipment that is not designated as single use, in conjunction with the community equipment provider ECL (formerly Essex Cares).
- 3.3 While 58% of respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal, a significant number who provided comments were in support. A number sought assurances that assistance would be available in cases of real hardship or where a person does not have the capacity to source the equipment themselves, or with the help of family or carers.

4. The provision of Extra Care Housing

- 4.1 This concerns the proposal to stop providing extra care at Kynoch Court and to increase the number of flats used for extra care at Piggs Corner. The consultation also concerned action to ensure all residents are clear about the charges for care and support at Elizabeth Gardens.

- 4.2 A number of respondents described the proposals as sensible while other expressed concern about closing extra care provision when there is an ageing population.
- 4.3 A number of respondents expressed concern about the obligation to pay for the 24/7 care and support service at Elizabeth Gardens which is intended to provide piece of mind but which they said they did not use.