



norfolk coalition of disabled people
EQUALITY • DIGNITY • HUMAN RIGHTS

Thursday 11th November 2010

David White
Chief Executive, Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2SQ

Cc:

Derrick Murphy – Leader of Norfolk County Council
Harold Bodmer – Director of Community Services, Norfolk County Council
Councillor David Harwood – Norfolk County Council
Amanda Reynolds - Deputy Regional Director of Social Care and Local Partnerships, Department of Health, East of England
Richard Bacon MP – South Norfolk
Henry Bellingham MP – North West Norfolk
Simon Wright MP – Norwich South
Chloe Smith MP – Norwich North
Norman Lamb MP – North Norfolk
Elizabeth Truss MP – South West Norfolk
Keith Simpson MP – Broadland
Brandon Lewis MP – Great Yarmouth

Dear David,

The proposed cuts to adult social care and Freedom of Information Request

I am writing on behalf of the trustees and members of Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People (NCODP) to express our dismay both at the level of proposed changes and cuts to adult social care and the process of consultation.

As you will be aware NCODP, the representative voice of disabled people in Norfolk, has developed a strategic partnership with Community Services to co-produce personalisation and support the transformation of adult social care. The way in which the proposals have been decided upon and set out for consultation seems to go against the spirit of our partnership. This is extremely disappointing.

We also feel the proposals are very short sighted and will, in fact, lead to both greater costs in the medium and long term and result in many disabled and elderly people suffering needlessly. For example, cutting out people with substantial needs will only result in more people having critical, and therefore, more costly needs. The same can be said with respect to halving the prevention budget. Less prevention is bound to lead to more personal hardship and greater demands on social care and health.

In order that we can respond effectively to these proposals we need some additional information from you.

NCODP is deeply concerned that the NCC's legal responsibilities and statutory duties will not be properly executed if these proposals are implemented. We do not make this challenge lightly. Around a quarter of the population of Norfolk has a disability or long-term illness (Census 2001). We do not believe that the deficit reduction measures should be at the expense of disabled people, their families and carers in Norfolk.

Our gravest concern is that disability organisations in Norfolk do not have the resources necessary to issue a legal challenge to Norfolk County Council on these matters.

Nonetheless, under the Freedom of Information Act, we request a copy of the legal advice given to NCC on raising the eligibility criteria from substantial and critical to 'critical' only and to cut nearly 50% out of the prevention budget over the next three years

I also need you to provide the departmental justification for :

- Decommissioning the Sensory Support service
- Sharply reducing services to people with mental health problems and learning difficulties
- The way in which the consultation has been organised
- The impact assessments which lay behind the proposals

In addition we feel that both the model of consultation and the process chosen is totally inadequate, amounting, in practice, to a sham exercise. The level of detail provided makes it impossible to offer a considered response to the proposals. I therefore request under the Freedom of Information Act:

- a detailed breakdown of the services being affected by each of the budget cuts and the total spend in those areas so we can work out accurately the percentage of the cuts against total council budgets.

On the process of consultation, we question the amount and accessibility of the information available. Because of this, the current timetable does not meet statutory requirements. Accordingly, we request you change the

timetable so it starts when sufficient information is available and accessible in formats that the disabled citizens of Norfolk can access.

Under the Freedom of Information Act we understand that you will respond to us within 20 days. However, we would appreciate an immediate response to the timetable questions.

Yours sincerely

Mark Harrison
Chief Executive
Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People

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