

Report Title: Briefing to Adult Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To raise concerns on behalf of parent carers of people with learning disabilities in relation to plans to reduce day and respite service provision across Devon.

Date: Friday, 10 February 2023

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Background

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay (HWDPT) are the three local independent consumer champions for people using health and social care services across Devon.

The scope of HWDPT is to listen to what people say about their local health and social care services and to identify what works well and what could be improved, and to make those views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of health and social care services; ensuring the voice of the community is used to influence and improve services for local people.

HWDPT statutory responsibilities include:

- Making reports and recommendations to decision makers about how health and social care services could or should be improved.
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- Providing information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.
- Making the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping them to carry out their role as a national champion.
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.

Summary of Concerns raised to Healthwatch Devon

At the beginning of February 2023, Healthwatch Devon received correspondence from several parent carers who expressed their concerns following communications they had received from Devon County Council to inform them of plans to reduce the provision of respite and day care services across Devon as follows:

Day Services

That learning disability day services will be ceased, except for Abbey Rise - Tavistock, Nichols – Exeter and Rushbrook – Totnes.

For the three remaining services, it is proposed that opening will be condensed into three days per week, with the intention to maximise attendance and to promote social interaction. Activity in buildings will be engaging, interesting and mainly buildings

based. Replacement Care will be the focus of this service. For those individuals eligible for replacement care over five days, alternative ways to meet this need will be provided.

Respite Services

That either Pine Park House – Honiton or New Treetops - Exeter is closed and additional bed spaces created at the remaining unit. The staffing in the open unit to be restructured to enable the additional beds to be fully utilised.

Potential Impact on Families

The families involved rely heavily on these services as an essential lifeline and any reduction to the availability of care and potential changes to their care provision could have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of both the parent carers and the people they care for – adults with learning disabilities.

Parent carers have contacted Healthwatch Devon to express their concerns at the proposals, therefore Healthwatch Devon would like to raise these concerns to Devon Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, as to our knowledge, there has been no consultation with clients and families prior to these proposals being considered.

Recommendations to Devon Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee:

1. That Devon Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee seeks reassurance that all families who would be affected by the proposals to reduce day and respite care provision are fully consulted with, before any decision is made to reduce these services, to ensure that all clients with assessed care needs will continue to have their care needs fully met if changes were to be made.
2. To note that Healthwatch Devon - who's statutory function is to promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services - can independently support and help to facilitate the consultation process.