

## Appendix 7: Open Responses received via email and letter

### Comment

I note that you are consulting about proposed financial cuts to social care and I am concerned that this consultation has not been publicised more widely. Apart from those currently in receipt of services any changes are clearly going to impact on anyone who might need to rely on those services in the future and those around them.

In the meantime, I have replied to the survey separately but felt I should write to express my very deep concerns about the way Social Services operate financially and culturally. This is based on my own family's experience over the last 11 years since my elderly mother was left paralysed down her left-hand side after a stroke. While there are undoubtedly some kind and well-meaning people working within Social Services, our experience has been largely negative and I feel strongly that public money is being wasted and misdirected unconscionably:

#### 1. Day-to-Day Waste and "Efficiency Savings"

First an example which I think exemplifies the problem of waste.

Earlier this year, within three weeks of a visit from a nurse attached to my mother's GP surgery, we had visits from the GP, a social worker, a bloods nurse, a District Nurse, a physiotherapist followed by various visits from a different physiotherapist and an OT accompanied by a second OT for some reason, as well as people who came to deliver equipment, and people who came separately to remove old equipment (because no one put removal on the order form). The "physiotherapy" was too little much too late - six basic exercises on a pro-forma sheet ("point your toe" etc). In addition to our usual commitments and a hospital visit, the sheer density caused us problems and things would have been even worse if we had not restricted the visits as much as possible. There was an awful lot of talking but the whole process which left me tearful and debilitated only achieved one concrete result - a replacement commode which we could have bought if we thought it important enough.

The nature of the visits did not help. They were mostly longer than they should have been and largely duplicative. The most extreme example was the OT who came at the suggestion of the physiotherapist specifically to discuss a pole to help my mother stand up. It turned out that no such pole existed but she arrived without knowing what she had come for (with a second OT without notice) coinciding with my mother's carer who could not therefore do her work. The OT began by asking me what work we were having done in the kitchen (!) She then recommended that I move round all the furniture in my mother's room so that (after 11 years of using exactly the same muscles) my mother could get out of bed on the other side (and if it did not work I could move everything back again) and finished up by peering down

the commode to see if the carer had emptied it (which she had not because I had had to ask her not to finish her work). Since she was there we did ask her for the replacement commode and she ordered two bars (which were not really any use in the event). She did not arrange for the old commode to be removed so we had to do that separately but she did try to come back to look at what had been delivered.

We have got used to this sort of thing and this is not a personal complaint. The problem is with the procedure the OT was following. Social Services should consider the following (all of which are taken as read in any private business):

(a) Before visiting a patient, consider whether it is necessary to visit and/or whether it might help to telephone, write or email first or instead. We could have dealt with the OT in two minutes over the phone. The physiotherapist could have sent the pro-forma exercises by email.

(b) Do not have two people attending at the same time unless absolutely necessary. Apart from the cost it is oppressive for the patient. Where two people are attending tell the patient in advance, ask for access and explain why two people are necessary

(c) Focus meetings and try to use time cost effectively. Even if a phone call does not avoid a visit it may mean you can use time better eg by bringing a possible aid with you or at least a picture

(d) Remember what you were given access to do and do it as well as possible. Do not pry unnecessarily. It is rude. Do not try to duplicate everyone else's job (a huge problem in social care – "duty of care" etc)

(e) Try to have some kind of continuity. If you cannot send the same individuals who know the background, try to have a clear written record of the important facts eg a patient's disability and choices and make sure anyone attending has read and understood it.

(f) Remember that the patient/carers has probably had other visits and that you are taking up their time. If you are "throwing out thoughts" ask the patient/carers if they want to listen to them. Do not use them as a captive audience.

(g) Remember that carers are not your lackeys and are usually under pressure. Treat them with respect. Their time and effort is not at your disposal.

(h) Try not to be rude, patronising or high-handed. It sets peoples backs up and wastes time. Be open and honest about what you are doing and why.

(i) Only prescribe drugs or provide equipment where it is reasonable to do so, not to avoid accusations of "neglect". Try to arrange removal at the same time as delivery etc

## 2. Institutional and Cultural Problems

It feels as if no one is monitoring the way money is used and clearly there is a need for better management and direction. I have mentioned the lack of continuity and I found it exasperating that I had to explain the same basic facts every time anyone came – my mother’s disability, how it affected her, her choices, how many carers she had etc. – but this was particularly difficult to understand when everyone seemed to be writing reports all the time and having discussions about us. It felt as though everyone was occupied with peripheral things - how many pets my mother had, or whether I was “difficult” – rather than tedious but important basic record keeping.

I think this is partly a management issue but it also seems to reflect a self-serving culture in which there is too much emphasis on the employees’ status and self regard so that the emphasis is skewed towards what they personally think is important rather than what is objectively important and the choices the patients have made. This kind of thing needs to be reviewed at a more senior level.

On the receiving end it also feels as if compliance with “procedures” has become an end in itself rather than a means to help provide good care. Whether or not you help or support people in fact depends upon whether those people find your actions helpful or supportive yet no one assesses the impact of what they are doing. I do not think anyone could consider the actions I have described above as likely to help or support anyone but that is not the point of them. They simply represent a procedural, one size fits all, checklist driven approach to avoiding liability for misunderstood “neglect”. The approach needs to be reformed to save money and to provide a better and more responsive service.

I think Care Packages should be looked at more individually and built around what a patient /carer want s and needs and the risks they as adults are willing to take. My mother did not need two carers at once but she was told she had to have them. She did not want to be put to bed like a child between 4pm and 6pm nor have two people inexplicably visit between 11am and 1pm to give her lunch when she was living with my father, all of this at huge expense. A more collaborative, common sense approach would save money, provide better care and vastly improve the image of Social Services and the general community.

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Hi I am replying on behalf of Mr X

- 1) I find that the care managers some of them do not know what their staff are doing.
- 2)Have been told lies about what time the carer would turn up, they say 5 mins away but after an hour they turn up.
- 3) Last week no one showed up, it was down to me to contact the care team to ask where the carer was. They then had to call out an emergency carer as they didn't know where the carer was.

4) we requested for 1 hour in the morning and 1/2 hour in the evening - STILL they get that wrong and charge us more. - so have to re-check it which causes delay in payment to Merton council.

5) Think that the management need to be shaken up.

Regards

Mr X

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Re: Mrs X

I have recently been contacted by Mrs X's son regarding his concern that the Council is considering ending their contract for meals on wheels.

Mrs X is ninety-five years of age and is partially paralysed and is also nearly blind, she lives alone at the above property and does not receive any help with shopping or personal care. Mr Hopkins is concerned that his mother will be unable to prepare meals on her own and that her wellbeing will suffer should the meals on wheels service be withdrawn.

I understand that the consultation on the future of this service ends today, and that Mr X would like to register both his and his mother's objections to the withdrawal of this service. Mr X would also like to enquire as to what alternative facilities are in place for residents who currently use the meals on wheels service.

I would be grateful for your comments as to this matter.

I am writing on behalf of my father in law X with regards to the above proposed savings. He is a gentleman of almost 101 years who like us is extremely concerned about the impact these proposed changes will have on him and many other elderly and vulnerable people.

I wonder how many of the 'current 177 customers' who have worked all their lives, paid their taxes, never claimed benefits, fought for their country, as did my father in law, will be seriously affected by these proposed changes. There is a very true saying that people in power who make important decisions know the price of everything but value nothing, and if these proposed changes go ahead I dread to think of the consequences for these '177 customers.

For many people the meals on wheels service is a lifeline and can often be the only human contact they have on a daily basis. From my point of view knowing that someone is going to my father in laws house each day is a great comfort and a wonderful insurance, as I know from past experience that if they get no answer they will be straight on the phone to me to see if there is a problem.

Before Merton Council provided meals on wheels on a Sunday my husband and I were members of Merton Lions and as part of our volunteering would deliver meals

to the elderly, and on several occasions we had to call for an ambulance because the person we were delivering the meal to was on the floor, or worse.

I have no faith in the so called 'community group and neighbourhood support' idea which has been suggested to provide meals on wheels, as if this is anything like the 'care in the community' for mental health I feel it is set to fail before the first meal is even cooked.

I appreciate that Merton Council has to save money, but feel that the risks to so many elderly and vulnerable people to save £153,000 is very short sighted, as I can see many people finishing up in the hospital at a cost to the national health because they have been denied the daily contact that the present meals on wheels service provides. I really hope that the people who have to decide the final outcome of this will look to their conscience and think about the '177 customers' concerned.

This email is to support the continuation of Meals on Wheels for elderly and vulnerable residents of Merton.

My mother in law lives in Mitcham (under Merton council) she has dementia - she desperately wants to continue living in her own house - which with the various services available she is at the present time is able to stay at home. She has carers in the morning and evening and completely relies on Meals on Wheels for her midday 'HOT' meal as she is unable to cook/prepare any meals for herself. (The carers give her breakfast in the morning and a sandwich in the evening along with here essential care).

The suggestion that 'supermarket delivery' is completely nonsensical in the case of my mother in law as she is unable to use any cooker/microwave and in fact it would be extremely dangerous.

We appreciate the care and responsibility that the people who deliver the meals show as they are able to let the family know of any concerns with her - as they have done for us on several occasions.

We appreciate that they not only deliver a hot meal but also are able to check on her safety and well being midday, whilst the family are working.

It is of great value to the family to know that she is getting a hot meal once a day and are obviously extremely concerned about protecting this valuable service to the elderly and vulnerable (which my mother-in-law) is certainly in both those categories.

As the proposal is to 'decommission the home meals delivery service in Merton'. We would like to support the continuation of the delivery of hot meals as this is a worthy, vital and necessary service to the elderly and vulnerable.

As the elderly and vulnerable will be put at more risk to there health and welfare if this service stops.(among this group would be my mother-in law).

Regards

X

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Dear Sirs

MERTON CARER RESPITE SERVICE

I have read the Easy Read Version of the Merton Council Adult Social Care project entitled "Consultation on proposed Adult Social Care savings for 2016/2017" documentation.

We are mindful of the resources constraints on the Council.

My spouse and I are very happy with the ongoing respite service we receive from Cross Roads Care for our above named daughter who is 32 years old. Our daughter is disabled and unable to find her own solutions.

Furthermore, my spouse is already taking care of our daughter outside her carers time allocation and does need sometime for respite.

We have no contact with communities.

In principle we have no objection to alternatives provided the quality of the existing service we are receiving is not materially impacted.

Yours faithfully

X

Father of X

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To whom it may concern

I have been advised that the service 'Imagine' may be affected by proposed spending cuts and I just wanted to provide feedback for the consultation process. Myself and my colleagues have made numerous referrals to the service for our patients experiencing anxiety and depression and they have reported the service has been invaluable to them in terms of providing advocacy and practical support.

It would be a great loss to the local borough if the service was not able to continue

Kind Regards

X

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To all Merton councillors and both MPs

A reply to the consultation on Adult Social Care

Q2 Is the reduction in funding too much. Yes

People with disabilities and their carers are already being seriously affected by various Government cuts and decreases in benefits. Locally there have already been serious cuts to daycentre staff with far fewer activities and a shorter day. Cuts will mean less staff, less well qualified staff and also mean that the learning disabled are no longer being well cared for. In an emergency they would be at risk. People with severe learning disabilities are among the most vulnerable in our society. They need and deserve a high quality of care which will be lost. There is now no hope of improvements in services and basically good services are being gradually downgraded. Carers will become sick and exhausted.

Q3 Comments on staffing cuts. I strongly disagree with these

It is already almost impossible to speak to a social worker and definitely impossible to speak to the same one twice. The lack of personal knowledge of the client then causes extra work in repeating information and means suitable advice or action is not available causing worry and distress. Lack of help when my daughter left Orchard Hill college meant that her work placement which she had been doing fell through. Cuts to behind the scenes staff will mean difficulties in commissioning suitable services and even worse mean that there will be insufficient checks on performance. It is well documented that those with serious learning disabilities are the most likely people in our society to be mistreated or not suitable cared for. Merton will not have sufficient staff to ensure their safety.

Q6. Crossroads Carers, Meals on wheels, Mental Health Day Support

Crossroads Care is an excellent essential service giving carers a real break knowing that the person they care for is in the safe hands of a well qualified experienced and reliable carer. Any substitute will be less reliable. Domiciliary care is unreliable too short and inconsistent. The voluntary bodies are having a 50% funding cut so they cannot be suitable. We need Crossroads

Mental health sufferers need support and some people really need to see a friendly face and have a meal prepared for them.

Q8 Savings from support packages. These are too severe

My daughter needs 24 hour care, support and supervision. I am over 70, and my wife a little younger. Of the 168 hours in the week we have 24 hours assistance from JMC Day centre, Crossroads and a Mencap Club leaving us with 124 hours of caring each week for year after year after year. Her care is physically and mentally exhausting and we need the help we get just to keep going. To cut our care package would be cruel and a kick in the teeth for very hard working elderly council taxpayers. Properly financed packages can preserve the health and sanity of carers and help them keep on caring saving the NHS and council extra costs

Q10 Other priorities These will not help in the short term

Q12 alternative savings close day centres- share services with other councils/NHS - bigger staffing cuts - Outsource all in house services - Fee reductions from providers

You are correct to ignore these possibilities. The day centres for adults with severe learning difficulties provide an essential service to the client and to the family carer. My daughter loves meeting her friends and always comes home happy. As elderly parents we are already fully stretched and need the day centre

Q13 other ways to make savings? USE OTHER SOURCES OF MONEY INSTEAD The council should raise council tax by 2% This would save some services and prevent the loss of experienced staff The use of reserves should be seriously considered

Q15 changes to services since 2011 It is currently extremely difficult to consult a social worker and impossible to see the same one twice. This is worse than previously. It means clients do not get the help or advice they need. Annual reviews of care packages are not taking place. WE ARE ACTUALLY DREADING ANY REVIEW. Although we need and deserve the help we get it is obvious that reviews are being carried out solely with a view to cutting costs and not with the intention of meeting needs. My daughter cannot walk but can cycle on a special trike, but it takes two people to get her on and off the trike safely. I asked for two hours help weekly or even only fortnightly so I could keep my daughter cycling, but without my wife's help so she could have a break. We were refused. We also had to have help from Mencap to get Social Services approval for my daughter to attend a Saturday morning club once a fortnight for three hours. We had to argue for over three weeks to get her the personal help she needed. There are now less activities at the daycentre and the length of time the day centre is open is at least an hour less each day because staff are busy on transporting clients at the start and close of each day. We have constant worries about further cuts with loss of quality and safety and length of provision.

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Dear Sir

I write in response to your letter to my parents regarding the proposed changes to the future provision of the carer support service.

My 85 year old mother is the primary carer of my 88 year old father who is in the advanced stages of Alzheimers, and is still living at home. The majority of Dad's care, together with all ancillary help (e.g. domestic help, transport) is either funded privately or provided by family members on an on-going basis. The only local authority funded support received are the 2.5hrs per week respite that Mum receives which is provided by South Thames Crossroads (STC) Carer Support Service.

Neither my mother, or other family members agree with the proposal to decommission South Thames Crossroads and replace the carer support with either a



domiciliary care service/direct payment offer and a voluntary carers support service. Most importantly continuity of care and support is extremely important to both my parents, who have to build strong, trusting relationships with all carers. Mum has always been satisfied with the service provided by STC, and the likely forthcoming changes to these arrangements to meet the required budget savings has increased Mum's already high stress levels as she continues to endeavor to care for Dad at home. Assuming that the replacement services are means tested, my parents will no longer be eligible to receive any Council funded support, even though they only have a modest amount of savings.

The consultation document states that one of your key aims is to promote independence requiring customers to use their own skills and assets to find solutions in their own lives, and that family members should support their own family members (slide 21). Our situation is a very strong example of this policy, however all the family feels that with the ever increasing amounts that are paid in taxation - either locally or nationally - individuals must be able to feel that they are receiving some benefit - however small - for their outlay.

My mother is also concerned that she will be given adequate notice to find alternative service providers, if necessary, as she cannot care for Dad without continuous on-going support.

Regards

Mrs K T X

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Since my mother (X) has become housebound, this service has become invaluable. I live some distance away in East Sussex, so I am unable to visit my mother on a daily basis.

She lives on her own - and is happy to do so, but she wasn't eating well at all until we discovered this service - and the change in her since she started eating a hot meal every day - has been remarkable.

Sometimes, apart from speaking with me on the phone, having the visit once a day is the only contact that she has with the outside world and another human being. Needless to say, losing this service would be devastating for her.

At age 88, she has difficulty moving around and even standing up for longer than a minute at two at best, so she has neither the capability - not it has to be said - the inclination to cook for herself.

She has come to look forward to - and rely on - these meals 6 days a week, and indeed when her oven broke down a year or two ago, it was disconnected because she wasn't using it - and it had become dangerous.

In conclusion, we would ask you to reconsider decommissioning this vital service to my mother - and to many other vulnerable elderly people in Morden.

Yours sincerely.

X

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Having read the proposals for these cuts I feel that the people being targeted for these are among the most vulnerable in the borough and the cuts will have far reaching consequences for carers, more will be required of carers many of whom including myself are in their seventies and have several health problems

it is vital for us to have "me time" to enable us to recharge our batteries.

I don't think councillors have any idea of what impact caring has on us, if they spent time in a household with any of these people they would be really surprised

as to what is involved and just how much "wear and tear" falls on carers

Crossroads has been providing an efficient service for many years, continuity of care is imperative for some people if the service is put out to an agency there could well be problems with providing this

Direct payments for respite caring will involve expense in administering it for carers so will savings really be made? and if so will they really be worthwhile for all the upheaval that will result.

Hopefully a compromise will be made

from

A concerned carer

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I understand that Merton Council are considering stopping 'Meals on Wheels'. This causes great concern to my wife and I.

My mother in law, X, uses this service. She is 95 and has dementia. She has lived in a warden assisted flat since the death of her husband over twenty years ago. The warden is in attendance for half a day, five days a week. My mother in law has two daughters but each lives over 100 miles away from the flat.

We visit my mother in law about once a week and provide her with all her needs including food and drink. Previously she would go into Wimbledon and do her own shopping and then cooking but she became unable to make the journey. Included in her food that we provided would be ready made meals which all she needed to do was put in the oven to heat up. After a while we discovered that she was not doing any cooking and was therefore not eating a hot meal. We approached the council and she was provided with 'Meals on Wheels' - the difference in her health was immediate. She put on some weight and her general health improved and has not

had a problem since that time. In fact a few months ago she fell over and hit her head and if it had not been for the 'meals on wheels' delivery person not being able to get into her flat and raising an alarm, she would not have been discovered for some while with the consequential circumstances which we do not wish to contemplate.

We understand that one of the alternatives being considered is supermarket delivery but in our case this is impractical as has previously been explained.

We have considered moving her to a care home and have discussed this with her, however she is adamant that she is very happy where she is and does not wish to move. We believe that she would not be able to cope if she moved and it would not be long before she departed this world.

We accept that this is only one case but we believe that there are similar situations.

We believe that it is the duty for the community to look after the old as they reach the end of their lives and make their lives as easy as possible and to have an acceptable life style. The current proposals do not provide this!

We hope that these thoughts will be included in your considerations.

X

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I was alarmed to hear that Merton Council are to decommission Crossroads Care as part of the proposed savings to Adult Social Care. The fact that the first service users heard about this proposal was by reading it in the local Guardian Newspaper is even more disturbing.

We have been fortunate to have received a respite service from Crossroads for the past few years. Our daughter X is autistic and the three hours we receive on a Friday evening is as vital to her as it is to us. The respite support they provide is reliable, with fully trained workers who offer a level of consistency which is so important. Our daughter has formed wonderful bonds with the support workers they have provided us with. We are able to enjoy our respite(the only break we get) in the knowledge that our daughter is safe and is enjoying whatever activities they do together. I cannot bear to tell her about these proposals as she will go into meltdown.

It is rare in these current times to find such an organisation as Crossroads and I hope that a resolution can be made to continue it's work with Merton clients. The proposals to replace support needs from the voluntary sector will not be able to provide the same level of dedication and expertise.

I appreciate Merton council's dilemma and know that these changes are met with a heavy heart. I consider myself lucky to be a lifetime Merton resident but please rethink or renegotiate a new arrangement with Crossroads because this service is invaluable to the 72 customers currently served.

Yours sincerely

X

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Once again the consultation is confined to a pre-determined slicing of the cake. I would prefer that the £3million proposed to be spent on wheely bins be diverted to the asc budget. I would also be prepared to pay an increase in council tax to ensure that paid carers are employed in sufficient numbers and adequately trained to provide a quality service. I would therefore request you up the council tax by the 2% allowed by the government.

Regards X.

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Sodexo have been delivering meals to the elderly and vulnerable residents of merton for the last 14 years, they are extremely efficient kind and caring. To loose this service would be devastating for my sister Mrs X who looks forward to the meals as they are excellent. The staff are kind and polite and I myself feel at ease knowing that the staff of Sodexo looking after my sister whom myself have met on many occasions. I hope this service continues for many years not only for my sister but for the very vulnerable, as this is a lifeline for these clients. Mr X

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Dear Sirs,

Reference: Mrs X - suffered a stroke X, diagnosed Vascular Dementia X

I can only speak about my experience with Sodexo Merton Area, they have been delivering hot meals to my elderly mother for some years now. They have been able to alert me to an accident my mother had and if there were any problems. They are such a great group of caring people.

When they first started, my widowed Mother 'looked' after herself, not very successfully, but with the help of Sodexo Hot Meals she had that extra bit of independence. My Mother is now 90 and although she now has carers looking in three times a day she looks forward to her hot meal at lunch time. If anything happened to me, her daughter, I don't know what would happen, if the meals were stopped.

There must be a lot of people who don't have help like my Mother and depend on that hot meal at lunch time. My Mother has lived in her own home for nearly 60 years and this service has contributed to her being able to live there. This house on St Helier Avenue is where she lived with my Dad until he died and bought up her family. It is where she wants to remain until the end.

This service is a lifeline for many people of her estate, perhaps it saves people from going into care homes until they really need to. Please don't take away this valuable resource for the elderly. If my Mum could, she would say the same.

Thank you.

X

On behalf of Mrs X

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Dear Mr. Williams,

My mother receives this valuable service. PLEASE DO NOT GET RID OF IT. Sodexo are great and very reliable. The council should not expect other voluntary groups and neighbours to pick up the pieces and costs.

Yours sincerely,

X

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Hello,

I understand that you are consulting on advocacy services. I am writing in to let you know how helpful it has been to my clients:

1. LH- female- 50 years old- unfairly dismissed from work. Imagine helped her with not just paper work but actually sitting down with her and explaining the law, her rights etc. They then also accompanied her to all her meetings and spoke on her behalf when she felt too distressed to do so. They also helped do risk management alongside when she became suicidal at one point due to all her problems.
2. CK- male-30 years old- struggling to go to work due to his depression. Imagine team went to his work place and conducted in depth mediation meetings to support him to have an altered role for a while till he was able to feel better to get back to his full time duties.
3. MP-male- 59 years old- Tamil-speaking man, facing harassment at work and not able to voice his concerns adequately. Imagine team again went into the work place with him and enabled a smooth resolution of the issues.

These are just a sample of the many clients I and my colleagues at IAPT have sent to Imagine. They have always responded positively and promptly. Laurie the manager has always come across as someone who is clearly passionate about the work she does.

I do hope this service will be allowed to continue. Please do feel free to contact me for any further clarification.

Kind regards,

X

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Please please do not stop this service.

My uncle had a fall last Christmas when he came out of hospital meals on wheels were set up for him.

This is such a important service as he lives on his own he is 85 it means he gets a hot meal without having to go to the shops which he can't not do now on his own and he does not have to worry about preparing a meal with all the grief just for himself.

Someone is going in as well everyday to check on him when he had his fall he could of died but now we know someone pops in everyday with the help of the key safe he feels a lot safer.

Please do not let our old people suffer because of cutbacks they need this Service.

I beg you !!!!!

Thank you for listening

X

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I urge you not to remove this vital service. I live at quite some distance ( a days journey) from my older brother who receives your meals on wheels service. I know that he receives a hot meal every day and has some human contact. I know that it is a safe and reliable service and if there were any issues of concern I would be contacted.

I am fearful that without the meals on wheels service his physical and mental health will deteriorate. It is very shortsighted to suggest that this service is removed and it would result in more hospitalisations and interventions by social services.

Please please do not take this service away.

Kind regards

X

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A family carer's plea. Reconsider the ASC cuts

My daughter is now 30 and I am 71. My wife is slightly younger and we care for my daughter in our family home. Because of severe learning disabilities she cannot do everyday tasks that even a six year old can do, but in addition she cannot walk at all and cannot even stand up unless she is supporting herself on both arms. This also means she cannot use the toilet without help.

She currently has 3 days at a Merton' daycentre for the learning disabled (JMC), which including transport time is approximately 6 1/4 hours a day. My daughter loves the day centre.

My daughter also has a Crossroads carer come in for 3 hours a week, and this gives my daughter chance to chat to a different adult, which she does enjoy, and this gives my wife and I a short break. The carers from crossroad have been first rate they are qualified, sensitive, responsible and caring. They do personal care, (a delicate task) and each one we have had has been pleasant, consistent and come for several years. My daughter has become friends with each one.

My wife and I desperately need the help we get and my daughter needs the variety that the daycentre and Crossroads brings. All 3 of us need the daycentre with no cut in hours or in quality of staff. We need Crossroad Care too, with the quality, and reliability that this organisation provides.

For someone with learning disabilities, particularly if they also need personal care it is absolutely essential that there is consistency and regularity in care.

The client and the family carers need people they can trust, and an organisation they can rely on, for quality and dependability of care. Crossroads is an organisation which we trust. It will be horrifying if Crossroads is no longer going to be commissioned. Crossroads carers really work hard to keep their clients happy and the quality and reliability is almost certainly to be lost if changes are made. Taking on a new cheaper provider can only result in a loss of quality and reliability, which will be a real blow to fragile, vulnerable people and put more strain on their carers.

**NOT ONLY DO WE FACE A LOWER STANDARD OF HOME CARE BUT WE ARE ALREADY SUFFERING FROM CUTS TO DAYCENTRE STAFFING AND NOW FACE EVEN MORE SEVERE CUTS TO DAYCENTRES.**

It is appalling that the quality and number of day centre staff and the length of time allowed to people like my daughter is also under threat.

Quite severe cuts have already been made and these STAFFING CUTS HAVE ALREADY AFFECTED THE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES THAT STAFF CAN OFFER. Further planned cuts can only make this worse. Redundancies for well qualified staff and lower qualified replacements (or no replacements,) will mean a disastrous loss of quality and reliability at the day centres. The length of time allowed at the day centre is also under threat because of the planned cuts to the services offered to individuals in their care plans.

**MENCAP FUNDING IS TO BE CUT.** My daughter uses a Mencap Saturday Morning Club and this too is threatened in two ways by possible cuts in my daughter's care plan also because Mencap's funding from the council will be cut possibly by 50% and they will have to cut some services.

EVERY TYPE OF SERVICE WE GET, WHICH HELP MAKES MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE HAPPY AND GIVES US A BIT OF RELIEF FROM THE STRAIN AND STRESS OF CARING IS SERIOUSLY UNDER THREAT. My wife and I save the council thousands of pounds by the caring we do.

The services we get help us to continue caring and these services should not be downgraded in standards of quality or safety. Nor should the hours we receive be cut.

SOME FAMILY CARERS ARE IN WORSE SITUATIONS THAN I AM, THEY MAY BE STRUGGLING ALONE, OR CARE FOR SOMEONE WITH BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES OR ILLNESS IN ADDITION TO THEIR DISABILITY. COUNCILLORS SHOULD THINK AGAIN ABOUT THESE CUTS AND DO NOT MAKE OUR OR OTHERS SITUATIONS WORSE.

From X

I am a member of on the Steering Committee of ADULTS FIRST a local group of adults with learning disabilities and they are very concerned about the cuts this year. To save time I have written in a personal capacity but many others share my views.

Please deliver to Councillor.

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Dear Siobhan,

I received your letter today regarding the decommission of the above service. My views are as you say that this service is a lifeline for the vast amount of the recipients, one being my brother whom lives in Merton, He is specifically reliant on this service for his daily dinner as he is disabled with MS and unable to cook or make a hot meal for himself. I live a fair way from him also am getting on in years and cannot get to him that often so this service is a very important part of his life, without it it will make life very difficult for him. As you say as well it gives people the safeguard of having some contact with the outside world especially like my brother whom is housebound and living on their own. We have been so happy with the service which has been so well run, I feel it would be criminal to decommission such an essential service that so many people have become to be part of their everyday lives. To take this away will leave so many vulnerable. So personally I feel very strongly against decommission of this service and rather angry that the council could even think of doing such a thing. The people that rely on this sort of service have enough problems in their lives without having to worry about having their essential services taken away from them.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. M. X

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As the sole carer of my husband, who has Alzheimers and Parkinsons, I would not be able to cope without the excellent Crossroads Care service. To know that I can rely on the same caring young man every week to look after my husband for three hours makes all the difference to my life. It means I can go shopping, get my hair cut, go to the dentist etc. Please do not cut the funds for Merton Carers and Cross Roads Care.

X

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Dear Sirs,

I would just like to express my concern of the suggestion that the meals on wheels service might be under threat of being discontinued.

This service is an absolute lifeline for my elderly parents who are unable to get out and about for shopping or cook a meal. My mother has Alzheimer's & my father is 96 years of age & with no relatives living nearby this service is their only way of getting a hot meal.

The discontinuing of this service would have a damaging effect on their health and wellbeing.

Also for other elderly people within the area who rely on this service.

Yours faithfully,

X

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To Whom it May Concern.

I understand that Merton are considering making cuts in the Meals on Wheels service and I must say that am appalled. This service used by the elderly, is a life line. How can an elderly person with no access to the internet order ready meals!!! Added to that there is now a minimum order value of £40.00 for deliveries and a monthly charge will this reflect in a rise in their pensions which are measly to say the least.

My friend's mother weighed 4 stone this time last year and was hospitalised, because she was not taking care of herself as she had her sick husband to look after. Meals on Wheels were arranged after her release from hospital and she started on the road to recovery, sadly her husband died a short time afterwards. Meals on Wheels was a life line - a caring face at the door once a day and a good hot meal. She now weighs 8 stone.

This service is so much more than just food, why can't this council see that. Surely there are other things that could be cut back. The council have spent millions on Mitcham Town Centre for what I can only see are extra benches for the alcoholics to lay on at night.

All I can see this achieving is to put extra strain on our NHS, with falls and possibly deaths from falls, bodies not being found for days because nobody is aware of an elderly person needing assistance. Some elderly people will not have the option to live independently with a good nutritious diet many will be in the same position as my friend mother.

Come on Merton Council our elderly deserve better treatment than this and as a resident of Mitcham all my life I couldn't be more discussed in this council for even contemplating such an action.

X

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