

**Cabinet – 9 February 2018**

**Item 7 - Reconfiguration of In - House Learning Disability Residential Accommodation**

**Representation on behalf of Service Users of the Trees Residential Care Home**

*(Following legal advice, names and other personal information detailed in the submissions below have been removed)*

To each member on the cabinet,

Our Son was born with cerebral palsy, is quadriplegic and epileptic. He is both physically and mentally handicapped, reliant totally on his wheelchair for mobility and also reliant on 24 hour care.

We have cared for him in our home, full time for almost 30 years, meeting all his personal needs and everyday/night requirements. We have had respite care breaks for him at The Trees, Hinckley, which we started 20 years ago.

These breaks gave us time to recharge ourselves and spend better time with our other two children. Six years ago we had our chance to settle our Son in a full time residential care at The trees. This was not an easy decision for our family to make but as we were so happy with the care The Trees had provided him whilst going to respite care, we decided it would be the best for all of us.

He has now lived at the Trees for the past six years, all of his personal needs everyday/night requirements have been met by a fantastic group of people. The staff at The Trees past and present have gone over and above caring for him. He has grown into the most pleasant and loving young man with their support and care. They have dealt with his behaviours and personal traits and treated him like a true person giving him love and confidence to enable him to live the life he truly deserves.

This all happens at The Trees, a complex built 30 years ago for this very reason, in the town, Hinckley, that he comes from and is well known. He has six very close friends who also live at The Trees, some for much longer, all with complex needs and requirements, all with no or very limited mobility, all cared for and made to feel secure and loved by the fantastic staff.

Monday 29th January we were informed by LCC that the use of The Trees may be changing to allow for a small amount of short term respite beds to meet a county shortage.

This change of use would mean long term residents, would no longer be able to live at and call The Trees their home, severely unsettling for many many people.

People who have worked so hard for our Son and friends to bring them together, giving them the feeling and happiness, love and security to live as family.

Not only did we have this horrific news, when we asked the lcc representatives where their intentions to rehome our Son and friends may be, they answered, 'we don't know.'

Not very professional or organised at all.

The Trees is a special place, purposely built for the needs of people like our Son and friends who must be allowed to live within this safe secure environment, within their local community and local town.

We ask can you please consider all and any other options to meet our county's shortage of short term respite situations, and let these 7 vulnerable, wonderful, unfortunate adults continue to live, feel safe, secure, loved and cared for in this place they know as home, The Trees.

Yours Sincerely

Parents of a resident at the Trees Residential Care Home

I am writing this letter on behalf of my Auntie

### Reasons for recommendations

In this bit of the in the report its saying about The Trees - is no longer considered to be an appropriate physical environment from which to provide residential care services. This statement is untrue because The Trees is purposely built for disabled special needs people and there is nothing wrong with the building or the layout and if there was anything wrong with the building the residents would be moved out straight away. I also have evidence to back this up because the CARE QUALITY COMMISSION this 2017 report is online and its saying The Trees safety is GOOD. So if The Trees was not a good appropriate physical environment the CARE QUALITY COMMISSION would not rated The Trees to be safe.

The screenshot shows the CARE QUALITY COMMISSION website for 'The Trees'. The overall rating is 'Good'. The inspection summary is as follows:

Category	Rating	Type of service
Safe	Good	Type of service
Effective	Good	Residential homes
Caring	Good	Specialisms/services
Responsive	Good	Accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care, Learning disabilities, Mental health conditions, Physical disabilities, Sensory impairments, Caring for adults under 65 yrs
Well-led	Good	

Overall Good

Read overall summary

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION website - <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-123424944#accordion-1>

My Auntie will be 70 years old in March and for an old person to be kicked out of their home at that age is heartbreaking. But for a 70 year old vulnerable disabled special needs person it could kill my auntie.

My auntie as grown up around Barwell and Hinckley all her life and she is in involved in the community by going to Age Concern in Earl Shilton 3 days a week. My auntie is also as been brought up as a Jehovah witness my grandma. So my auntie goes to the kingdom hall about 2 times a week. So moving my auntie from her community and area she got brought up in would not be good and this also could kill my auntie.

My auntie as been going to The Trees since it open in 1987 that's 31 years and my grandma let my Auntie go to The Trees for respite. My grandma could not look after

my auntie anymore in 2010 because my grandma was unwell so the perfect place for her to live was The Trees. After month and half of her getting her place at The Trees my grandma sadly past away it was like my grandma was just waiting for her to get her place at The Trees because my grandma knows my auntie would be very happy at The Trees. Most of the other residents have done respite as well so they know each other from the respite as well. My auntie as been living at the trees 8 year but spent the rest 31 doing respite at The Trees. Splitting the 7 residents up who are very happy and settled at The Trees is very wrong. Also the staff are wonderful with the residents at a The Trees.

My auntie does not like loud noise and it hurts her ears and she starts to lose her patience with people. She also finds it hard to walk. She will walk around The Trees with a wheel walker but when she goes out her need to go into a wheelchair because of falls.

Kicking out 7 vulnerable special needs disabled adults is wrong, disgusting and immoral behaviour by the Leicester council all just to save money because of cuts. So please can you stop Leicester city council from doing this. Thank you

Dear Member of the Cabinet

We write to you in relation to the Committee meeting due on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February and in particular the proposal item relating to the change of the use of The Trees from a proper Residential home to a short term Respite establishment.

Our sister is one of 7 permanent residents at The Trees. She was born with a Chromosomal abnormality which meant that she was physically and mentally handicapped and she would require permanent care for the whole of her life. She has many difficulties but is a happy soul who loves to be in the company of people she knows with a beaker of tea in one hand and a handbag in the other.

Her mother and father looked after her at home until they were in their mid-70's when they became too elderly to care for her at home, They looked around for suitable accommodation and carers who they believed could look after her for the rest of her life. In 2001 they found the Trees Care Home, a purpose built facility perfect for Our Sister's needs. The carers look after her as if she were family, giving her friendship, support and care. Her Parents believed that this would be her Home for the rest of their Daughter's life.

Sadly her Father passed away at Christmas aged 93 still believing she would continue to be safe and looked after in her home at The Trees. Following his death his wife had to go into a care home which we are privately funding, and she still believes her Daughter will continue to live at The Trees forever.

This proposal is causing a lot of pain and anguish to relatives, carers and staff and we are writing to you asking that this proposal is rejected on Friday. If it continues, the harm to the health of the 7 residents affected by this move could be immeasurable.

Difficult decisions have to be made with budget deficits and costs reviewed, however, we honestly believe this is wrong on many different levels and the proposal is also flawed.

Point 3 of this Proposal states it is not 'particularly accessible for people with disabilities'.

Point 12 states "reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Trees will cost approximately £390,000" to bring this up to standard. We would dispute these items for the following reasons.

The Trees Care Quality Commission (CQC) report in December 2017 makes no reference to any requirements or deficiencies in the layout or facilities, in fact receiving a "Good" grade in every area.

The Trees is a purpose built Residential home specifically for people with the type of disabilities that are currently living here now, so we know it works. Of course its 30 years old so some updating work might be required but much of the layout is still acceptable.

Residents with physical disabilities require it all on one level, bedrooms, lounges, kitchens and outside areas patio all flat. This is essential for our Sister and the other wheelchair or mobility restricted residents who live there now. She is unable to

communicate verbally and can only indicate if she is hungry, tired or wants to go out or use the bathroom. The layout of the Trees is perfect for her, as rather than get frustrated trying to communicate what she wants, she is able to make her own way to the kitchen area to indicate she wants drink or food, or she can make her own way safely to her bedroom when she is tired or wants some quiet time. She is able to make her own way around because of its excellent design. Private sector homes invariably are over two floors and with stairs or lifts installed. These homes are totally unsuitable for her and the friends she lives with at the Trees.

We have also recently paid for her bedroom to be redecorated & upgraded including having a new basin/vanity unit installed. This is her room in her home where she feels safe and secure.

Our Sister and some of the other residents also use the Day Service facility, Deveron Day. This again is linked to the Trees and is easily accessible on one level. All in all it is a perfect location and home for her and the other permanent residents.

Points 10 and 11 makes reference “that Adults & Communities are required to identify a saving of £11 million by 2021”. It is said in the report that ‘implementing these proposed changes will save a potential £100k per annum’.

Firstly it is only a potential amount so no guarantee it is going to be anywhere near as much. In addition the report also states that to oversee and implement these changes they have already employed a Business Change Officer at a salary of £60,000 per annum. As you know the actual cost of this post will be quite a bit higher with additional contributions. This reduces further any potential saving to less than 40k per annum at most.

Our Sister and her friends will still need continued care costs, even in Private sector homes it will still be partly financed by Social Services so there are no savings to be made.

The amount of savings carrying out this proposal is actually very small compared to the massive impact this will have on the 7 residents who will be emotionally harmed by losing their home where they have lived, some for nearly 20 years and the loss of very close friendships when they are separated. Not to mention the carers who are also their friends. Please consider the viability and is it really worth it?

Point 5 of the report makes mention ‘the short break service at Smith Crescent has declined over recent years’. From information obtained through the CQC, Carlton Drive has a 6 bed capacity. At the time of inspection 21/3/17, four people were staying. And in the 12 month period only 55 had been accommodated.

Similarly, Melton Short breaks had 6 beds and at the time of inspection 25/5/17 only 4 were occupied with only 42 people 'supported at various times throughout the year'.

The proposal is for The Trees to be reconfigured for respite care only which means ALL beds will be short stay only and No full time residential places in the whole of the county.

Respite beds are not filled throughout the year and so perhaps they need to be managed better to increase occupancy on a more consistent basis. If this was the case we will not need the additional Respite at the Trees.

The Trees had a Good CQC rating across every area with no issues for concern in Dec 2017

The Melton Short Breaks had 3 areas requiring improvement in May 2017– areas of safety, leadership and effectiveness, yet it is The Trees that is facing reconfiguration. This does not make sense.

Point 6 makes reference to the Strategic direction and that there is demand now for only Supported Living establishments, and that there has been no interest in places in a residential home since 2013 when the last permanent resident joined the Trees. Of course there is a requirement for some Supported Living buildings but there is other demand also. Supported Living or Community Care types of establishment would not meet our Sister's, and her 6 friend's needs.

A new campaign this week by the charity Sense called WHEN I'M GONE refers to their findings that two thirds of councils have no idea of the amount of Adults being cared for at home by relatives currently and what provision might be required in the future. The claim that The Trees is not full and 2 residential places remain empty because there is no demand is surprising as placements have always been sought after and the Trees is very highly regarded across the county.

Equal Opportunities and Human Rights legislation emphasises that 'persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement'.

Her family are making this choice for her, which is to remain at The Tree's. We can assure you that our Sister's health, safety and happiness is at the top of our agenda. The residents of The Trees have an excellent quality of life here and they should be allowed to continue to live here without hindrance or interference.

We have asked officers at the County Council about where our Sister and her friends would go if The Tree's residential should cease but no-one can say. Only that it will be with the Private sector. I have not seen one long term residential place come close to The Trees in terms of quality, facilities and layout.

These 7 residents have lived together and with a lot of the same staff at the Home for many years now. This is not just a building it is their Home in the same way where you live is your Home. They know each other so well, having parties, entertainment, trips out etc. They show concern for each other especially when one of them is ill. They are like a family, some going on holiday together and to Lourdes. Also the staff care for them as if they were their own relatives. You cannot imagine the relief that this brings to the family knowing that they are so well looked after and with dignity.

Can we suggest that you make a visit yourself to The Trees to see the Residents and staff? You will be made very welcome. See first-hand how well this home works for them all.

Please do not simply look at the bottom line of this proposal when you see some savings to be had. Instead please look at this as the opportunity to keep The Tree's as a Residential Home. Onsite work here also gives the Council a supported Living accommodation option as well as the short term Respite in other locations. Deveron Day Service are also here so you are able to truly say that there is real choice dependent on each person's needs. Use The Trees as an example to show how all types of care provision is available and Leicestershire can lead other Authorities in this way. Please take a few minutes to read the CQC report on The Trees as it shows what an excellent service they are providing to the residents.

Since the proposal we understand that there may be a 3% precept for Adult Social Care provision. We would hope this would help secure the Trees for these 7 vulnerable residents for the future.

What we ask is that you reject this proposal as sometimes even in cash strapped times we have to take the correct decision on moral and humanitarian grounds and when something works so well. These 7 residents and friends need to be able to live where they belong in their Home together.

Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely

Relatives of a resident at the Trees Residential Care Home