

Older Person's Provision

My Mother is a resident of Ladesfield Care Home in Whitstable, which is one of three homes that KCC is proposing to close. **I and other relatives are opposed to these proposals.**

The consultation set out four reasons for the proposals:

"People: More people living longer and living with dementia. People rightly expect more choice in care".

By more choice, presumably KCC meant the choice of home care, sheltered accommodation or residential care. However, KCC must know that people only come to residential homes when they are unable to continue to live at home, because of a lack of mobility or dementia. As people live longer there will be increased demand for home care and sheltered housing, but the demand for residential care will not diminish. It is likely to increase.

"Care: High quality care is a continuing priority. Dignity in care is crucial and more people want care at home".

There is little dignity in moving very elderly people to somewhere they do not want to go.

"Buildings: Residential care should be in high quality buildings. Some KCC buildings have reached the end of their useful life and don't meet expectations. All the residents should have en-suite bathrooms"

The statement that 'some buildings have reached the end of their useful life' is not a statement of fact, but KCC's opinion, an opinion with which many would disagree. En-suite bathrooms are a laudable aspiration, but many residents require assistance with bathing and using the toilet, so en-suite is superfluous. Ladesfield looks run down, because KCC has neglected to maintain the home properly. But the standard of care is excellent.

"Cost/the market: Good quality care can be commissioned for less money. The private and voluntary sector is set up to care for more people"

At the moment KCC is able to buy rooms in private care homes at a discounted rate. However, the more rooms that KCC wishes to buy at these rates, the less revenue the private homes will generate. These homes exist purely as commercial enterprises, so there is little reason to expect them to accept less revenue. The likelihood is that the cost to KCC will increase significantly over the years.

The Private Sector - We know that staff in private homes are paid less than carers in KCC homes and we also know that the amount of care hours per resident is less in private homes. We suspect that many private homes will not be willing, or even able in some cases, to undertake the type of care that many residents need and currently receive.

Reasons for Change - We suspect that this is basically a capital raising exercise. The sale of the homes will raise a significant sum of money, which in times of economic tightness, will be a welcome addition to KCC's coffers. However, that is not a good reason for closing these homes and inflicting considerable distress on many elderly people. Clearly the consultation was a sham.

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