

The Limes Focus Group's Written Statement for the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

The Limes Care and Day Centres provides a valuable service to the vulnerable people aged 55+ in North West Kent.

Since the Limes reopened as a care centre, over 1,000 people have been admitted to the Limes and approx. 800 people have been able **to return to their own home** behind their **own front door**, (to quote **Graham Gibbens**). Others have been assessed to require residential or nursing care, for the own safety and dignity. There is already a **bed crisis at Darent Valley Hospital** (DVH) since Queen Mary's Hospital (QMH) A & E, Sidcup closed. There has been a significant increase for patient care at DVH and we have it on good authority that in recent weeks, patients are waiting in corridors and being treated in ambulances.

At December's County meeting, Penny Cole asked for this to be taken into account (as the consultation ended, as QMH A&E shut). Mr Gibbens said he would take this into consideration once he had received the Limes report. Did this happen? Under the Freedom of Information Act, we want evidence.

Gareth Johnson has told the Limes Focus Group by email and at a meeting with us, informing that he had spoken to Graham Gibben's personally about the Department of Health's extra £162million that has been made available to local health and care services to spend this financial year on frontline services by the Health Secretary. (see attached). Why wasn't this taken into consideration and investigated? Gareth said he told Graham that he would be willing to go with him to approach Andrew Lansley and request funding, so that the Limes could remain open.

We have no knowledge that an Evaluation Panel had take place for the Limes for the Limes Focus Group proposal.(see attached) to be considered until we received a letter saying that it had not been recommended.

We would like to point out that there was 6 months allowed for consultation and preparation for the outcome report to be published but only 8 working days for 2 committees to debate the recommendations, 1 day later the Cabinet Member announced his decision and only 3 working days for the Cabinet Scrutiny and witnesses to read and prepare for this meeting. Somewhat unfair!

Why weren't the loss of respite beds based at Gravesham Place included in the consultation? Respite carers should have been given the opportunity to have their say, as these beds are now only going to be provided in the independent sector.

Day Centre Service Users are able **to stay in their homes and be independent – behind their own front door**. They socialise and interact with likeminded people and this helps their mental wellbeing. We are confident this supports them in keeping healthy and happy. We are **also provide the venue for the Falls Prevention Exercise Class** promoted by the West Kent NHS Trust Get Active Campaign. (See attached BBC news article).

No information about Sutton Court, as a possible venue for current Day Centre Service Users was passed onto front line staff before the report was published. Is there a copy of this proposal and under the Freedom of Information Act, can the Focus Group see this? The Day Centre is not even mentioned in the signed Record of Decision. Why?