

Witness Statement from UNISON Kent LG Branch

Re: Proposed Closures of Residential Services for Older Persons for Scrutiny Committee

UNISON raises concerns in respect of the full consultation process. It is felt the report given to Council and the final report did not have any resemblance to public opinion nor the scale of the campaign carried out by UNISON and local focus groups. In KCC's own question in relation to the consultation it was perceived that 60% of people who took part in the survey were in favour of KCC in-house services. The impression was 3 out of 4 were in favour of keeping the older people's homes in-house.

All Homes managed by KCC have received good ratings by the Care Quality Commission. Local news items have highlighted that private care homes providers are stating they are not able to offer a much cheaper service. Suggestions that some private and voluntary providers will be running 50 bedded units to provide care services for the elderly. Good practice and research resulted in hospital wards and residential homes reducing their person bed capacity to 30 beds. KCC has not provided the evidence that suggests that the above mentioned research and good practice has changed.

We ask the Scrutiny Committee takes on board the need to thoroughly investigate and research in full all individual and global arguments and information given to KCC to establish what is visible to many people the residents who live in Kent want all the homes to remain in-house and be run by KCC.

What seems to be lacking in the Kent area are specialist residential homes. Kent County Council is best placed to turn the existing homes into much needed specialist units and run them. In doing so it keeps the Care market in control and they would be in a position to sell their services across the board. Keeping jobs and work in Kent is important for the economy of Kent.