

**Modernisation of the Queen Elizabeth's Resource
Day Centre, Brent Way, Dartford**

The changes to QEF are part of a much wider change programme within KASS designed to ensure that we provide services that improve peoples independence and ability to integrate into the wider community and do this very much on an individual personal basis. This vision is clearly stated in "Active Lives", which was drawn up in full consultation with service users and complements national policies including "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" and "Putting People First".

The Queen Elizabeth Resource Centre is a traditional day centre for physically disabled people. The service operates from a building which is owned by Kent County Council and is leased to Queen Elizabeth Foundation. KASS pays QEF a total grant per annum is £473,137.33. The notional rent for the building is £58k per annum although this is not collected.

The centre is open five days a week. There are currently 161 service users on the books of the centre the vast majority of whom live in Northwest Kent. Many of the Service Users have been attending for several years. The service has not met its objectives in respect of moving people on and supporting them into independent activities, or getting them back into work. The average unit cost of a day's service is between £65-£70. There are 10 people who attend from Medway and whilst QEF invoices Medway separately for these people the full cost is not recovered.

The capacity of the service is for 80 people a day, although approximately 30 people a day attend the centre. People normally attend for 2 days per week. 76% of service users are over the age of 46. Very few service users are from the BME communities. The cohort of service users represents a minority of the total population of disabled people in Northwest Kent.

Activities at the centre include Art and Craft, Gardening, Woodwork, Computers, Jewellery and a gym. People also meet at the centre to go bowling, bird-watching, to lunch clubs and bingo. The activities are not structured courses designed to help people get back to work or access services in the community they are however greatly enjoyed by the users.

Consultation with Service Users indicated that the single most important aspect of the service for many of them was the social networking element to the centre; watching television, reading the paper and playing pool, and having the opportunity of meet with friends and acquaintances. Carers have also stressed how important the respite element of the service is.

The plans for new services have evolved as a direct result of the service user consultation, and the 'social networking opportunities' will provide opportunities for recreation and 'club like' activities, as well as advice and support and providing a base for outings such as bowling and shopping trips. Accessible gym and other sporting facilities are being developed in partnership with colleagues in District Councils, and work has been taking place with colleagues in Adult Education to enhance the accessibility of mainstream Adult Education opportunities for disabled people. In this way there will be more opportunities for disabled people to take advantage of a range of integrated activities, whilst we

continue to offer opportunities for those people who currently wish to retain the peer support they currently value. Each existing service user is being offered an individual assessment when they will be able to talk through with a qualified professional their needs and aspirations, and also to assess their eligibility for services, including Direct Payments. There will be alternative services available for all Kent current users.

One of the key benefits of this change is to make better use of resources allowing the £475k to stretch to a much wider number of disabled people, and contribute towards the Council's objectives in respect of supporting independence and choice.

The site in Brent Way is being redeveloped and K.C.C is looking at using Section 106 opportunities within the Thames Gateway to develop integrated services, as well as working with colleagues in the District Councils to ensure that mainstream leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all.