

Item 8c

Unions were invited to submit any comments they would like Care Services PDS committee to see prior to the end of the consultation on 9 July.

The attached was received on Friday 19 June. The questions are answered, either in the public questions, staff questions received to date, or the public report.

A formal written response will be issued to these comments at the end of the consultation period.



Bromley local Government Branch submission

Dear Councillor

Re: PROPOSAL TO PRIVATISE THE LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES

1. I am writing in response to the above proposal due to be debated at the Scrutiny community on Tuesday 23rd June.

At the meeting you are being asked to agree to privatise the following three services run for adults with Learning disabilities.

- The running of the homes of 35 clients across 9 different houses that enable them to live as independently as possible with support/care staff.
- The Respite care at 18 Wilmore Road used by 90 clients and their families. The service provides critical respite that supports carers in their caring role, reducing residential placements.
- The Day Opportunities Services provides 2 services; a critical respite function for families and carers that enables them to continue in their caring role, as well as providing opportunities for the service users to obtain valuable independent living skills. The Service provides for 315 clients, who attend an average of 3 days per week.

Why not keep the services in house as privatisation has already shown to fail.

2. The report before you dismisses out of hand and without explanation the continued running of the services in house. There is no evidence of any demand for the privatisation of this service from the clients, their families or the staff and trade unions. In fact the opposite is the case where concern is being raised that the company chosen have no experience in running a number of these types of services.
3. In addition the council has very recent experience of the impact of privatising these type of services and it going wrong. Recently the council via Astley day centre has had to step in and pick up the support for clients after the Shaw trust contract failed. The Shaw Trust was given the contract to run services that were previously run by the council at the Oakfield day centre.

How will it save the council any money- the figures don't add up?

4. The report before you states. ***It is not anticipated that any award of contract will result in any changes to the level of service to individuals*** (section 8.3) in fact if anything it implies it will improve the service.
5. The report also accepts that the TUPE regulations will apply and as such all the staff will transfer on their current terms and conditions meaning that there is no saving from any staffing costs.
6. If the service is not to be cut and the staff all transfer, it begs the question how are the private company going to be able to provide the services for £250k a year cheaper than the council? (7.1 of the report)
7. The report also fails to explain why the part year savings (from October to April 2015/16) are only £30k and yet it's alleged that the full year saving will be £250k nearly tenfold more? These figures simply don't add up unless you and I are not being told the whole story.(7.1 of the report)

Is the council planning to sell off the Astley day centre in another property deal were not being told about?

8. A number of years ago the service was transformed into a community based model, however it had to be recognised that the level of need and high dependency of some clients meant that their needs could only be met through the day centre at Astley. As stated above the use of this provision has in fact increased with failure of Shaw Trust contract failure.
9. Despite this the report is very vague over the future of the Astley centre. Clients, families and workers have the right to know if there is a commitment to maintain this centre.
10. If the council has plans to decommission it for yet another land/ property speculation then the people of the borough have a right to know? If that is the case how can the council say it is their intention to provide the same quality and level of service?
11. Until all of these question have been adequately answered then as a minimum UNISON is asking that you do not award the contract for the services and that a genuine exploration of keeping the services in house is made.

Glenn Kelly
UNISON Branch secretary