



By hand and e-mail to:

**Roslyn Tidman,
Overview and Scrutiny Officer**

For the attention of:

**The Chair and Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ**

19th June 2020

Dear Chair and Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Re: Meeting Being Held on 24th June 2020 Day - Care Services for Young Adults with Learning Difficulties; Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Disabilities

I am writing to you because of my great concern regarding any adverse changes which may occur to the funding of Day Services for mentally and physically disabled young people in Milton Keynes. I write this in consideration, not only of my grandson, who has had these difficulties since birth, but also for the wider young community in Milton Keynes, who are similarly disabled.

As my first-hand experience is with my grandson, I will explain how the Coronavirus Pandemic has impacted on him, which I'm sure will have similarly affected other young people. I should mention that, although my husband and I are now both elderly, we have Deputyship from the Court of Protection for Personal Welfare, as well as for Property and Affairs for our Grandson and we are required to provide annual reports. He lives in Milton Keynes with his mother (who also has Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Disorder). His father died unexpectedly about 18 months ago.

Background Information and Observations

- 1. Our Grandson has been involved with Phoenix Rising MK and SNAP for many years and during his time at both of these Day Services he has gained in confidence, improved his communication skills, as well as improved his social skills as a result of being able to regularly interact with other disabled young people and having excellent support staff around him. He could not have achieved any of these skills without all the hard work and support the people in these Day Services provide for him.**

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2. Since Phoenix Rising MK and SNAP had to suddenly temporarily close in March, my Grandson has been mainly in prolonged lockdown in his home, unable to regularly see my husband and me. (I am shielded and my husband is classified as vulnerable). Neither has my Grandson been able to see any of his friends in Day Services since March. Consequently, he has recently changed from being a confident; cheerful and outgoing young, disabled person into an increasingly withdrawn and depressed person. Mentally fragile, disabled young people need a regular routine in their lives, such as regular attendance at Day Services and this has not been possible since March for understandable reasons. However, these Day Services need to be fully resurrected at the earliest, safe opportunity.
3. I do appreciate that the current difficult times in which we are all living is bound to have an adverse financial impact on many important areas, including for Milton Keynes Council, and that difficult financial decisions need to be made, however:
 - a. Young people with physical and mental disabilities need the full support of Day Services in Milton Keynes, in order to make the best of their difficult lives, and consequently should not be discriminated against. (I understand that adjacent Councils are not reducing their financial support for the groups of vulnerable young people who attend Day Services in Milton Keynes).
 - b. If physically and mentally disabled young people have their Day Services reduced or removed, this will in my view, cause serious damage to their physical and mental well-being.
 - c. As the Care Act 2014 promotes the well-being and safeguarding of vulnerable adults, it is difficult to see why disadvantaged young people in Milton Keynes should be selected by Milton Keynes Council to have a reduction or removal of their Day Services' financial support (if that is what is being proposed).
 - d. The Day Services businesses in Milton Keynes, which in the past have successfully supplied high quality effective Day Services in Milton Keynes, may not be able to sustain their businesses for the future if full funding for Day Services is not provided from July 2020 onwards. If it isn't provided and this happens, a very large void will be left which will adversely affect current as well as future care and support for vulnerable groups of young people in Milton Keynes. These may never be recovered.
 - e. I am aware that Derbyshire Council is facing (or has already faced) a legal challenge regarding the Care Act 2014. I definitely don't wish to take the same or similar action against Milton Keynes Council. However, if it becomes necessary, I shall have no choice but to seek legal advice.

I do hope that Milton Keynes Council will carefully consider the points I have made before coming to a decision about the funding for Day Services in Milton Keynes for Young people with Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder and other mental and physical conditions.

Yours sincerely


C. A. Hibberd (Mrs.)

cc. Victoria Collins, Director of Adult Social Care
Amanda Griffiths, Group Head Adult Services