



Report to: Willenhall LNP

Report by: Joint Head of Walsall Integrated Learning Disability Service

Subject: Short Breaks development for Adults with a Learning Disability in Coltham Road Short Heath

Date: 30 January 2006

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In March 2005 Walsall Council approved the development of a Short Breaks Service for people with a learning disability in Coltham Road Short Heath. This report outlines the next stage of the process to develop the new unit in consultation with the local community.

CONSULTATION – THE NEXT STEPS

The council is working in partnership with the Norman Laud Association who have been commissioned to build and manage the new service. Norman Laud Association are a voluntary organisation who run a similar unit in Sutton Coldfield. Prior to the submission of a planning application the Council and Norman Laud Association will jointly hold a consultation event at Short Heath Methodist Church. This will give local people the opportunity to view the proposals and designs for the proposed building.

During the consultation event Council staff will be available to answer questions, they will be joined by representatives of the Norman Laud Association who will build and run the Short Breaks Service.

The Norman Laud Association will also write to residents living adjacent to the proposed unit and will be willing to meet them on a one-to-one basis to discuss any concerns. Local people who are affected or concerned by the proposed development can also contact the Joint Head of Learning Disability Services.

Following the consultation event the Council will take account of local peoples views about the design and operation of the service into the subsequent planning application.

The planning application is the formal consultation process when local people can express their views, just like any other planning application, prior to final planning approval.

RECOMMENDATION

The LNP notes this report and the planned consultation with local people

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What is a Short Breaks service?

Sometimes called Respite Care, Short Breaks allows the Carers of people with a learning disability who have substantial or critical support needs to take a break from caring. This gives people time to 'recharge their batteries' and deal with important family issues.

What is a learning disability?

It is a disabling condition which occurs before a person's 18th birthday and may be as a result of a genetic disorder, birth accident, illness or other reason.

This lifelong condition means that people have difficulty learning, it is not an illness although people with a Learning Disability are more prone to certain illnesses such as Epilepsy for example.

Recent research [Lancaster University 2004] suggests that 2% of the general population have a Learning Disability, by 2021 there will be a 37% increase in the number of adults with Learning Disability aged over 60 and an overall increase in the total population of People with Learning Disabilities from 2% to 7%.

Similar effects can be suffered after 18 years of age by anyone who suffers a Stroke for example, sometimes this is called Acquired Brain Injury. Like Learning Disability the results of a Stroke can vary from minor to catastrophic.

Why Short Heath?

People from the North and North West of Walsall have to travel a long way for their Short Breaks. 52% of users live in the North and West of Walsall, 25% live in Willenhall and Short Heath.

What are the benefits?

The development will provide a local service and create up to 30 jobs. There is an increasing need for Short Breaks in the future, particularly a purpose built service that meets the needs of people with associated physical disabilities.

What are the needs of people using the service?

As well as having a Severe Learning Disability people will have substantial and critical support needs. They may have a physical disability or other complex support needs like epilepsy or sensory disabilities.

Will the service be safe?

There is no risk to the general public. There are no community safety issues as the unit will have appropriately trained staff and safety measures to prevent people leaving the building who do not have road safety skills.

The Norman Laud Association who will run the service are skilled and experienced in the support of people with learning disabilities, they have an excellent reputation built over a number of years.

Coltham Road offers the same risks as any other main road location in Walsall, at peak times traffic flows are high but compensated by low traffic speeds. The road safety advice for the development only requires good visibility splays and the ability to drive into the site, turn on site and then drive out.