

Trade Union “UNISON” response to Budget Cuts to Frontline Services.

It is with considerable disquiet that within the Budget Proposals whilst claiming that Frontline Services would not be targeted, it appears the opposite and frontline services have been targeted before seeking to find efficiency saving from other sources as a priority.

UNISON’s website has clearly identified up to approximately 24 million pounds of possible savings.

I find it incredulous that the cuts announced to these services has been proposed.

- Day Care Services for the Elderly.(Attached to the EPH’s)
- Posts slashed to the Day Service CoOrdinator Team
- Posts at risk within Day Services Physical Disability Teams
- Welfare Rights Teams (see website for response)
- Service Advisors- This service should not be cut until assessment into what posts are required to implement SDS. They are highly valued by the tax payer for direct professional and personalised advise.
- “Sell off” of Elderly Persons Homes (see website for response)

Day Care for both sectors of Elderly provision and Physical Disability, go against all recent reports including the Ibsen Report (personalisation) and the latest Demos Report (“at your service navigating the future market in health and social care)

The Demos report found that when asked the question, “What support services would you want if you held a personal budget?”

177 people responded across all groups, (Elderly, Physical impairment, Learning Disability).

31% stated they would use a personal budget to access Day Centre Services!

This proves that the recent direction for announcing budget proposals has not been given appropriate time and consideration for future planning.

UNISON has gone on record on numerous occasions commenting that we understand the need to reprioritise and focus the departmental strategy with regard to change.

However we believe very strongly that the transfer won’t be successful without, utilising and retaining the loyal, committed, experienced and very professional workforce.

The Transformation required for delivering future services.

In an address by Glen Mason, Chair of the Workforce Strategy Board” he states, “*We are on a journey to deliver the transformation of adult social care so that services are truly centred on what people who use then want*”

So why has this Local Authority decided to ignore this statement?

All statistics show that the majority of service users wish to remain accessing public services in some form or another.

Although for many, the choice of control can only be totally achieved by the vision and empowerment of dedicated staffing with a unique understanding of service users needs and aspirations.

So UNISON believes very strongly that the department has “Put the cart before the horse”.

It has embroiled itself in a Scatter gun approach to finding savings.

We are requesting that,

NO reduction to - Day Services attached to the EPH’s takes place until the review into Day Care has given its findings. The current proposal to reduced piecemeal hours from contracts is a disgrace, and in a mess with relation to employment rights of members contracts. This service is currently over subscribed and in some areas requires expansion in order to fulfil the authorities’ vision of prevention.

Day Services are a model for prevention so service users can stay in their homes longer.

NO reductions to - Day Services Physical Disability staffing until there has been an assessment of how much savings could be recovered from the utilisation of buildings.

This area should be a growth area for the implementation of SDS.

Promoting Independence is already a highly motivated and trained staffing resource, ready to operate to individual self directed support programmes.

NO reductions to – Day Services Co Ordinator Team, without presenting to the Trade Unions a concise plan for the “Workforce Planning Strategy” and how the department intends to restructure the CLDT Teams, and reorganise the assessment and brokerage processes for implementing Personalised Budgets for Self Directed Support.

“Working to put People First” The Strategy for Adult Social Care Workforce in England” outlines as one of its clear directives under the Leadership Strand, That one of its priority themes should be:-

To promote user led models of care and solutions to the emerging challenges of personalisation.

The current practice of service user reviews undertaken by “Person Planned Approach” are without precedence to be upheld as highly praised and have achieved huge success in its 18 month history as a new and challenging service.

It has always been UNISON view expressed in numerous forums that this team are without a doubt in a position of true enablement for the delivery of SDS.

If any UNISON member finds themselves in a compulsory redundancy scenario and the department seeks to employ other staff into “brokerage” posts we feel they will have an entitlement to challenge “Unfair Dismissal” at An Employment Tribunal.

The skills for each member of this team could be easily transferable to other available posts required for the “transformation of social care services” within the workforce planning requirement for “Putting People First.

UNISON welcomed the commitment from the Service Head during this consultation process that the £150-000 required budget cuts could be found over the extended period of two years.

We hope that during this time if identified posts within the new transformation transpire, this team should be prioritised and trained and valued staff retained.

UNISON believes the current proposals require total re-evaluation after other efficiency measures have been exhausted first, and not the indiscriminate attack as describe within our numerous responses which appear to attack frontline services while protecting other wasteful areas.

UNISON believes that:-

Putting People First will only work with a dovetail approach to services tailored to **“Care for All”**

UNISON believes in a workforce strategy which provides :-

“Personalisation in tandem with In House Services”

Grace Perry UNISON Convenor ASC&H 18/1/2010.