



**Councillor David Perry
The Leader of the Council
Harrow Council
Harrow**

5th November 2014

Dear Councillor Perry

I am writing on behalf of [REDACTED] to respond to the Harrow Council "Take Part" public consultation.

The [REDACTED] has been in an interim period between the Chairmanships of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and so the Board agreed that I would write on its behalf to outline our concerns about some aspects of the proposed cuts in service. The new Chair has had sight of this letter and has agreed to its contents.

As you will be aware, Harrow LSCB is a statutory body and one of its roles is to act to highlight issues that impact on the safeguarding of children and young people in Harrow. We appreciate that the Council has some very difficult choices to make and that no reduction in service is an easy choice. However, the Board is very concerned about the impact that some of the suggestions will have on potentially vulnerable children and young people.

We wish to highlight the proposals of:

- Close or reduce some of the Council's Early Support services to families, including Children's Centres
- Reduce the short respite breaks to children and carers

The impact of possible closures of some Children's Centres would, we feel, be detrimental to the future outcomes for children. Early intervention activities, as are provided at Children's Centres, are strongly evidence based as being effective interventions for children. Children's Centres have been a place of provision of multi-agency services in the borough for many years and have provided support for vulnerable families from pre-birth to early years. These centres are, we believe, essential in the work that partners undertake to fulfil one of the

Health and Wellbeing's priorities; namely supporting parents and the community to protect children and maximise their life chances.

The Board is also concerned that it will be increasingly difficult for Children's Services to provide their statutory functions without the Children's Centre settings. Service provision is likely to be stigmatising and isolating for these families. We strongly feel that it would be counter-productive to minimise these early support services and we urge the Council to reconsider these proposals.

The provision of short respite breaks to children and their carers can often be a fundamental element in the support of these vulnerable families. Professionals know that these breaks can often encourage families to maintain a home environment for children with challenging circumstances. Without a good provision of respite the Board is concerned that this may result in more costly and less desirable provisions such as looked after placements.

Harrow LSCB feels that the current Council proposals unfairly impact on children and young people and would urge the Council to work with the Board to consider how the difficult decisions that are to be made could be made with the children of borough at the centre.

Yours sincerely


Named GP and Harrow LSCB Member

Cc Harrow LSCB Executive Board