

Head of Paid Services and Corporate Director
of Community Health & Wellbeing
Harrow Council
Station Road
HARROW
HA1 2XY

Friday, 31 October 2014

Dear Paul

Re: Harrow Council Proposed Budget Cuts

On behalf of the Safeguarding Children/Adult service in CNWL, I write to express grave concerns regarding four of the Harrow budget cut proposals:

1. Close or reduce some of the Council's Early Support services to families, including Children's Centres

Reducing funding for early support will result in greater spending in future years for the Council. Instead of addressing family problems early, these will become intransigent and it will result in more children being taken into care, and other poor outcomes like increased criminal behaviour, and reduced educational attainment, impacting on Harrow communities.

Children Centres are a vital part of the early help offer providing non-stigmatising family-friendly centres where families can see staff for a variety of interventions. These centres are often staffed sessionally by health staff who work closely in partnership with CSC staff (early help staff to prevent family problems or deal with them at the earliest point.) Closing these will have the ramifications as described above.

2. Reduce the short respite breaks to children and carers

Reducing respite breaks for children and carers will also result in increased breakdown of families in supporting children with disabilities/challenging behaviours. This will again impact in a greater amount of funding required to deal with the children/adults concerned. Carers provide a huge support to both health and social care budgets by looking after children/adults at home. Reducing the respite breaks is both cruel, inhumane and counter-intuitive.

3. Cut some support to older and disabled people in harrow under the Supporting People Programme

The Supporting People Programme aims to provide vulnerable adults with relevant support for them to maintain independent living in the community including maintaining their tenancies. These people already are dealing with significant problems in their lives. To reduce support will impact directly on their health and wellbeing and again is inhumane.

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4. Cut funding provided to the Voluntary Sector

Voluntary Sector agencies provide excellent support to services across a huge range of issues including vulnerable children and adults. They often provide value for money, and so cutting them at this time would again appear to be counter-intuitive.

Yours sincerely

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c.c.  Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships, Harrow