

## Four services identified for closure

### 1. Lawson Street

**The Service:** Lawson Street was initially set up on a temporary basis as an opportunity for training for employment and is largely based in the Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church. Simply, cakes and pies are prepared in the kitchen and then sold in two extra care schemes, across the counter within the church and to order. The “shops” in the extra care schemes also sell other items to the residents of the schemes and visitors. The “shops” are open 3 half days in each scheme and are currently staffed by Lawson Street.

Currently 12 people over the course of a week currently use the service. The service offers individuals the opportunity to learn the skills they need to progress into paid employment.

**The Budget:** The overall budget for Lawson Street for 2011/12 is £97,257 of which £92,000 are staffing costs.

**Staffing:** There are 4 staff employed within Lawson Street (1 N Grade and 3 Support Workers).

#### **Commentary:**

Although initially set up as a bridge into employment, the service has not been successful in increasing the numbers of people in employment. The service itself is based outside of the town centre with little potential to develop within the local community. The resources currently available within Lawson Street do not lend themselves to service development. The desire for paid employment remains a key outcome both for local people with a learning disability and the Government who measure local progress through PSA 16.

#### **Impacts:**

- There will be an impact on Harrowgate Methodist Church who receive approx £5 k per annum rental income. Lawson Street is occupied on a hiring agreement which is subject to 4 weeks notice to quit.
- Currently the small number of residents who use the shop service within the two extra care services will need to find an alternative
- Potential staff redundancies
- 11 people needed to identify an alternative arrangement through individual reviews

### 2. The Grange (Now Closed)

**The service:** This service until very recently was based in the Grange Church building in central Darlington, however following the termination of the lease an alternative had to be identified very quickly. The building itself, however did not meet the needs of a group of people with at times complex support needs. The 14 people who used the service are currently being supported across the existing

services. Following an initial settling in period and apart from two minor issues which have now been resolved by changing venues for the two individuals, the clients are settled and coping very well. Transport has worked well with no issues. Activities are continuing from the new bases. There are no reported complaints from families/carers. The staff have also adapted to the new situation.

**The budget:** The total cost within budget for The Grange for 2011/12 is £143,718, of which £126,000 is for staffing costs.

**Staffing:** There are 5 staff employed at The Grange (2 x N Grade and 3 x I Grades).

### 3. Lifestyles

**The service:** is attended by 26 individuals. 15 of the individuals who attend Lifestyles are over the age of 65; 8 of these individuals live in a 24 hour care setting. The building, environment, facilities and furnishings do not support the needs of older people and detailed individual planning work has been undertaken to look at the following considerations:

- Those individuals in 24 hour care to be supported by the Providers to seek alternative 'age appropriate' services, within the contract
- A number of individuals have highlighted that they now wish to spend more time at home or do other things on a less regular basis.

The landlord is Mencap and the current licence with The Gateway Club is based on the proportion of the building that we use and the proportion of time that we use it for. The existing licence can be determined with 3 months notice at anytime although there is no guarantee that the landlord would be prepared to grant a new one at a lower rent for less space. Rent was £21,500pa + 46% of any increase in service costs; however this was set in 2009 and was subject to indexation in line with RPI.

**The budget:** The net budget for 2011/12 is £91,614 of which £87,480 is for staffing costs

**Staffing:** there are 5 staff within the service (1 x N Grade and 4 x I Grades)

#### **Commentary:**

The service was set up to provide a group of older people and people who enjoy a more relaxing lifestyle with activities that meet their needs. It does tend to achieve this by providing Tai Chi sessions, curling and for some individuals' horse riding and visits to the cinema. In general the service tends to be based around a friendship group. A coffee morning is provided where groups of friends who have known each other for a considerable time can meet and have a chat. Many of the people who attend are past the current retirement age.

#### **Impacts**

- Potential staff redundancies
- Loss of friendship groups
- Finding alternative service provision where appropriate
- Possible negative impact on landlord (Mencap)

#### 4. Grassroots

**The Service:** this service is at Unit 7, Cleveland Trading Estate and is attended by 14 individuals. The landlord is the Royal Bank of Canada Trust and the service runs under a lease which expires on 19 June 2011, rent passing is £6,000 p.a. There will almost certainly be a dilapidations payment to cover redecoration as envisaged by the lease. Plans are in place to relocate individuals when the lease expires.

**The budget:** The net budget for 2011/12 is £73,404 of which £58,441 is staffing costs

**Staffing:** there are 2 workers within the service (1 x N Grade and 1 x I Grade both full time)

**Commentary:** Although initially set up as a bridge into employment, the service has not been successful in increasing the numbers of people in employment. In the last 3-4 years no one has moved on into paid employment from the service. It provides a garden tidy up service for people in the local community and has a very small number of larger contracts for this gardening service. This number of contracts has dwindled over the course of the last few years. The service users also create wooden garden ornaments and wooden garden furniture for sale to the general public.

**Impacts:**

- Loss of self-esteem for the service users from a situation where they perceive themselves as being in work
- Potential staff redundancies
- Service users will require an alternative service
- Loss of friendships between people who use the service built up over a number of years