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Our Ref: CM/AW

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By email: patochiefexecutive@darlington.gov.uk

Ms Ada Burns
Chief Executive
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Dear Ada

Medium Term Financial Plan 2016-2020

Thank you for asking us to comment on the Council's spending proposals up to 2020. These have been considered widely across our clinical services and I wish to make the following points:

- As an organisation we recognise the considerable budget reductions which you have achieved to date while maintaining mandatory and discretionary services, and the further reductions which will be required by 2020.
- We recognise that you are maintaining mandated services and that you are seeking to reduce discretionary services. We endorse your view that the discretionary services are highly valued and in particular for people with mental health and/or a learning disability these are an important element of maintaining their wellbeing. We are concerned that the significant number of support and advice type services for vulnerable people and families which you propose to reduce or cease is likely to have an impact on their wellbeing and therefore may mean increased demand on TEWV community and inpatient services. The specific areas of concern are:
 - The reduction in funding for advice and financial advice in children's centres, at Age UK for over 50s and in the CAB. These are valued services with the CAB support into West Park inpatient and community teams working very hard to meet the level of demand. Any reduction in service provision is likely to mean that people will not get the benefits they need and for older adults many will not be able to travel to the one provider.

- The reduction of Housing Related and Outreach Support for Vulnerable Adults - Your proposals state that currently this service supports approximately 500 vulnerable adults with their tenancies and well-being and that not all of these people will be able to be supported in the future. We are concerned that some of these people will deteriorate when the support is withdrawn and go on to have acute housing or care needs and potential for admission to TEWV services (there is a known link with accommodation failing and hospital admission). We would ask that this service reduction is reconsidered in light of the potential impact on the people involved as well as the range of services who may be required to manage the consequences. In addition it may be helpful if we can identify the current people in receipt of this service who are known to TEWV services so we can assess and quantify the likely impact.
- The cessation of the Arts on prescription and Mindfulness service will affect 230 people a year – a % of which will be those referred from TEWV services and will reduce the element of choice within intervention plans for patients.

I trust these comments are constructive to inform the decision making process.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Martin
Chief Executive