

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

22 MARCH 2017

RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION FROM DEBRA MOYCE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

It appears there will be less money available for Personal Budgets but at the same time an increase in rent for The Camden Society to stay at the property in Cherry Garden Street. That appears to be a win-win situation for the council but a lose-lose situation for parents, carers, users and staff at the day centre! Can you explain please?

RESPONSE

The rent-free periods for the Camden Society's two day centres were always time-limited and both came to an end with their leases on 31 January 2017. The council's long-standing policy since the 1990s has been to usually charge market rent and the exceptions made in these two cases that led to rent-free periods would be difficult to justify for new leases.

Whilst it is possible that post assessment, some current centre users may no longer be eligible for personal budgets and others may decide to use them for other services, both of those factors arise from the 2014 Care Act rather than a decision made by this council.

The council is working with the Camden Society to look at options for the future provision of day services for people with learning disabilities.

Any proposals to deliver services for the current site will need to be both financially sustainable for the Camden Society as an organisation and affordable to the individuals requiring a building based service who wish to purchase a service using their personal budget.

2. QUESTION FROM DESMOND GRAY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Will there be sufficient money to fund each individual's personal care plan or will there be a cap on how much a person can receive?

RESPONSE

Yes, there will be sufficient money to fund each individual's personal care plan. The council has a responsibility to ensure that the personal budget is sufficient to meet an individual's eligible needs and to achieve their agreed outcomes.

There is no cap on the amount of money the council will fund as this is determined by an individual assessment under the Care Act 2014.

3. QUESTION FROM MELANIE CARVALHO TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Following his meeting with the Schools Minister Nick Gibb, can the Leader confirm to the SPACE Campaign group what action the council will now take to work with local parents to secure fair funding for all schools in Southwark?

RESPONSE

Following my meeting with the Schools Minister this morning, it is clear that the Government has not properly considered the consequences of the cuts to Southwark. The minister's view was that schools could cut things like electricity bills and IT spending to make up this funding shortfall. However, with around 70 per cent of a school's budget being spent on staff salaries electricity bills will not be enough. This proposal clearly means fewer teachers and support staff posts in schools, as well as increased class sizes and a narrower curriculum.

I would like to thank local parents and the SPACE (Southwark Parents Against Cuts in Education) campaign who have also been pressing the government hard to reconsider their funding proposal. SPACE's commitment to this issue is sending a powerful message to ministers not to penalise local children for their success and I would welcome the council to work further with SPACE to secure fair funding for all schools in Southwark.

The education directorate is working with schools and governors to respond and work with families and wider community to raise awareness of implications of changes to funding for Southwark schools.

It important to note that this campaign does not end when the consultation finishes and we need to work nationally to keep up pressure on the government to re-consider its proposals. In addition to their response to the NFF consultation, the Autumn budget provides the government with a further opportunity to re-think their funding for schools. We must work together to ensure this issue is still at the forefront of their minds come November.