

East Kilbride & District
DEMENTIA CARERS GROUP

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28th January 2009

Dear Friend,

The recent article in the East Kilbride News (January 14th) stated that our Group is “*safe from closure*”; I would like to take this opportunity to give you a fuller picture of the ongoing challenges we face.

Our Group had a 3 year contract with SLC to provide daycare (5 places per day); the contract was extended for a further 2 years and is now due to expire on 30th June 2009.

SLC had identified that from 1st July 2009 onwards, instead of renewing the contract, they could “re-provision” our Service Users into their own daycare centres. They estimated that by not renewing our contract, they would effectively “save” £83,000 per annum. (The actual figure would have been just over £62,000 for 2009/1010).

The information fed to the East Kilbride News that the Committee will reject this proposal and therefore our Group will be *safe from closure* is based on assumption and does not come close to telling the whole story.

The support of the public... *YOUR* support... has in turn generated political support, and we have been given assurances that the proposal to terminate our contract will be removed from the ‘efficiency savings’.

However, although it looks likely that the Executive Committee will reject the proposed cost saving proposal, *we have no guarantee that SLC will renew our current contract.*

I would suggest to you that by submitting the cost saving proposal in the first place, SLC do not consider that our daycare centre is part of their forward plan for Dementia care provision. The fact that SLC are actively rearranging their own daycare structure within East Kilbride & Strathaven areas, and did so without any prior consultation with representatives of our group would support our concern that we may not be part of their forward plan.

On 14th January 2009 representatives of our Group met with Sandra Sage from SLC to discuss a going forward plan. Although both parties are keen to work together going forward, we have concerns that the Council may view our daycare centre as surplus to requirements and have other ideas of how they can utilise our services.

We firmly believe that the daycare service we provide is at the leading edge of care provision.

By providing care in a small homely environment, having a 1:3 staff to service user ratio and having our own transport readily available, we can provide our Service Users with a service that is person centred and also has the flexibility to ensure our service users have ample opportunity to benefit from regular external activities that are organised to meet their personal choices and preferences.

We have a clear mandate from our Service Users and Carers; they want our Group to provide ongoing care, they do not want to be transferred to Council daycare facilities. Their message is loud and clear; they believe that the service provision we offer is in excess of what is on offer from Council facilities and that daycare should not mean sitting with a group of people in a centre with no opportunity for going on regular trips and outings.

Our Group was formed to provide a service that meets with the needs and choices of our Service Users and their Carers, and we are obliged to do our very best to continue to meet this challenge.

The Executive Committee do indeed meet on January 29th 2009 to vote on the 'Efficiency Savings' plan, and we are quietly confident that your support means that we will no longer feature in it as a proposed cut.

We have a further meeting arranged for February 12th 2009, where we can look at options for going forward, however, there is no additional money available to contract with us, and no guarantee of a contract to continue providing dementia care after our current contract expires on June 30th 2009.

Options on the table still include the contract going out to competitive tender, whereby other service providers can enter into a bidding war to provide care on behalf of the Council.

As we continue our discussion with S.L.C. we are fully aware of the responsibilities we have, but we also have to be aware that the Council may have a different view on the way forward and we will be prepared to listen to and discuss a forward plan with them, however the real challenge will come if both parties have differing views.

In summary, "the fight" is far from over.

We need your continued support in generating both funds and publicity to help us ensure we continue to provide what we believe is leading edge care and support to our Service Users and their Carers.

John Vance
Chairman