



07/02/2025

### **BHCC comms to families re BHCC 2025 26 budget line proposed change of use of the standalone Drove Road flat**

BHCC have a commitment to families to consult with you regarding the £225k saving proposed against the soon to be vacant flat at Drove Road. This flat is currently occupied by an adult and all care is provided by NHS staff. The plan is to convert the flat back to become a short placement provision (up to 3 months at a time) for children with disabilities, which would be offered to other local authorities to generate an income. The local authority would also consider whether the provision could be used in an emergency for children and young people living in Brighton and Hove to prevent an out of area placement and ensure families can maintain their family bonds.

The flat at Drove Road is not and has never been part of the short break respite offer and the proposed use to generate income will support the council's ability to continue to provide the existing support to SEND families in this extremely challenging financial situation. There is no additional resource to increase the offer we already provide.

As some of you will be aware, the council is looking at up to 60FTE job losses this year, is taking considerable money out of both adult and child social care, particularly around looked after children, while making no reduction in the SEND provision to families and increasing funding to Direct Payments. This indicates the council's commitment to our families with disabilities.

I know it has been a particularly difficult, uncertain and unclear time for our families with disabilities due to some mistakes and miscommunications on the part of the local authority and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and apologise for that. I also recognise that there are significant difficulties currently in providing sufficient staffing at Drove Road to meet current respite plans for families and in order to address this there is now agreement that agency staff (in addition to overtime staff) can be used to ensure there is sufficient staff for all agreed respite.

I appreciate your patience in addressing this and hope that this will significantly reduce, if not eliminate the cancellation of respite currently. In the medium term this issue is being addressed through recruiting additional staff and the Head of Service undertaking a staffing structure review of Drove Road and Tudor House. Following this review, we will

be able to plan to ensure that Drove Road has sufficient staff to provide agreed respite and a plan around when the children on the waiting list will be able to start respite at Drove Road.

Clearly, we are having to make extremely difficult decisions in the current financial climate, and we are doing our best to be equitable and ensure we take care of some of our most vulnerable families in the city.

Lorraine Hughes and I are arranging a meeting with Drove Road parents and carers to consult on this plan and to hear feedback, which as always, we really value. Cabinet will also note questions and feedback from PaCC before coming to a final budget decision at budget council.

If you have any feedback or questions regarding the use of the flat please email [scds.businesssupport@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:scds.businesssupport@brighton-hove.gov.uk) where we will collate feedback and provide Q&A response once all the questions have been collated.

### **Meeting date for families affected by Drove Road cancellations**

An online meeting will be held on Thursday 6th March 9.15 – 10.15am with Kirsty Hanna, Interim Director, Family Help and Protection and Lorraine Hughes, Head of Service, Specialist Community Disability Service 0 - 24 to discuss the ongoing issues faced by families at Drove Rd.

Link to follow from BHCC.

**[Kirsty Hanna \(she/her\) | Interim Director, Family Help and Protection | Brighton & Hove City Council](#)**