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On behalf of parent carers, PaCC's position remains that any decision to close Wellington House on 17 September would be premature.

PaCC acknowledges the council's financial pressures and capacity challenges.

However, PaCC highlights that BHCC's consultation report does not yet adequately address the feedback shared by parent carers during the consultation period and that a more detailed reply to the community is needed.

Transitions, co-production and communications

PaCC continues to raise concerns around transition processes and communications with families, including information regarding adult day provision. This information has been promised by officers but has not yet been communicated. Equally, Councillor Alexander's commitment to co-produce with families of young people coming through the system, to help shape future day provision, has yet to be realised.

PaCC made it clear during the parent carer consultation engagement sessions that discussions must take place with the city's special school heads, as we believe they have the clearest understanding of the children and young people coming through the system. The community needs to hear that these conversations have taken place- to convey that forecasting is accurate, and tallies with Specialist Community Disability Service (SCDS) data. Vanessa Hickey, Executive Head of Downs View (which includes the Link and Life Skills colleges) must be involved in conversations around this data, and the suitability of day provision going forward, ditto Hill Park, as flagged by the Hill Park Chair of Governors in his communications.

While PaCC recognises that BHCC has continued to focus on the current Wellington House cohort, we know that the needs of young people who have recently left education have not yet been fully resolved. Although this number is small, PaCC believes there must be a commitment to secure appropriate day provision for all coming through the system, this must hold the same weight as Wellington House (WH) adults before any decision is made.

And for Wellington House service users, where is the feedback confirming that the adults and families/carers are completely satisfied that next steps are appropriate for them. The SEND community understanding this would build confidence.

Recent years referrals to WH

While the BHCC report cites very low referral numbers in 2024 and 2025. The community share both anxiety and examples that this is the result of managed decline; some families feedback that placements at Wellington House were withdrawn early in discussions with SCDS, others were not informed of Wellington House as an option, further the proposed closure may have discouraged families consideration of the provision. This context must be considered to fully scrutinise low referral rates to WH, and the community questions this significant mismatch to BHCC data showing clearly that overall, LD referrals in the city continue to rise.

Confidence in the system

Families of children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and very high levels of support needs, continue to experience inequitable access to social care support. Examples consistently raised by PaCC include gaps in short breaks provision, a lack of overnight respite for young people who accessed Drove Rd and Tudor House, but at age 18 find that Beach House cannot meet their needs, and inconsistencies whereby some young people in supported living are not able to access day provision, resulting in social isolation. All these issues are affecting the high needs cohort.

BHCC needs to focus on developing social care sufficiency in the same way it has focused and progressed areas of SEND education sufficiency. Until such times, families will continue to lack confidence that planning around their overall needs is being considered.

Families continue to lack confidence that there are realistic alternative providers to Wellington House. Providers continue to cite capacity constraints, with some buildings lacking sufficient breakout rooms and appropriate facilities. While some providers report that they are seeking new premises, families have little sense of how, where or when this additional capacity will be developed.

BHCC tender process-

The community must receive accessible information about the tender process, particularly given the significant £9 million proposed. How will BHCC demonstrate that this funding is allocated to effective, fit-for-purpose services. This reinforces PaCC's position that meaningful co-production is essential to ensure the voices of young people and their families help shape future services, inform decision-making, and deliver provision that meets need. PaCC ask is there an opportunity for community feedback ahead of contract decision making.

It is difficult to comprehend the need for a £340k saving when £9 million pounds of tenders are being discussed. Councillors will be aware that contracts always carry risks of providers charging more at review or individual placements.

Parent Carers seek commitment

That existing adults using day services will not have their provision reduced - or rationed for new users.

Financial risk

The proposed saving has now reduced to £340,000. The risk of alternative daytime provision placements failing remains significant and could quickly wipe out these projected savings. Again, a clearer understanding how this saving will be made is needed. PaCC continues to relay the community's need for greater confidence in forecasting as information underpinning decision making remain lacking in detail.

The WH building-

Information around the building being unsuitable was not made clear in consultation meetings, families feedback that there is a lack of consistency in information, and no known evidence of lack of suitability.

The community regards the building as a potential asset to the city and social care support being developed there rather than withdrawn. PaCC reminds readers of ideas presented in our earlier report.

BHCC messaging

The SEND community constantly hears BHCC talk about good outcomes for CYP with SEND. PaCC stress the importance of this messaging matching transparent information around sufficient and appropriate provision and processes; we can all understand that families lose confidence when the messaging does not sit comfortably alongside the day-to-day realities and immense pressure that families face.

We all recognise some of these concerns align with issues raised in the Adult Social Care CQC inspection report.

Finally, PaCC does not underestimate the task facing Councillors in making informed decisions such as the future of Wellington House. We appreciate that Councillors may not have the experience and/or knowledge of the needs of people with severe learning disabilities/autism.

Please reach out to PaCC for any further information that can support your role in decision making.