

The Linden Court Community Appendix to submission made for May 20th 2025 Full County Council meeting.

Alternative provisions

It is clear to the parents/carers from the initial consultation meeting, numerous emails and the full Council meetings that ESCC have proposed alternatives to Linden Court in their documentation without conducting detailed and appropriate research into their restrictions and their capacity and therefore these options are not creditable and are invalid to most clients of Linden Court. The only independent local day service in Eastbourne named on appendix 4 map is 'Inspire' which is not accessible for many clients currently attending Linden Court due to the following reasons:

Inspire day service

- Cannot provide care and support to clients with high needs and require 1:1 support.
- Only have two rooms available and no outdoor space on site.
- Concerns over security due to open door policy and clients are free to come and go as they wish.
- They do not currently have adequate staffing to accommodate more clients.
- Inspire provide less hours a day which is not suitable for working parents.
- Inspire run on different days which would not work for working parents.
- Client C attends Inspire once a week costing ESCC £127.28 for one day. This client also attends Linden Court 4 days a week costing ESCC only £53.50 per day. Evidence of this can be provided.
- No quiet room for overstimulated clients when required.

The other two alleged alternatives shown on appendix 4 map in Eastbourne, are not day care provisions and they are not regulated by CQC which is hugely misleading and unfair to be claimed as appropriate alternatives to a day care provision with the higher needs and abilities that present at Linden Court. The map demonstrates there are no realistic alternatives in Eastbourne or the surrounding area suitable for the majority of clients at Linden Court.

Chalk farm LDC

This is a workplace on the job training opportunity for adults with learning disabilities.

- Most clients at Linden Court would not be capable of such tasks and they require care needs for themselves, hence why the client already attends a day care service provision.
- This is not a day care provision.
- This opportunity is for more able clients that could provide a hospitality service to the general public.
- This opportunity is not CQC registered.
- This opportunity does not have qualified and trained staff to cater for complex needs and abilities.
- This opportunity does not cater for wheelchair users.

The Archery Youth Centre

This is a club for disabled and non-disabled people to carry out activities and participate in events which is often run by volunteers.

- This club is only held on a Wednesday evening and they have no availability. Evidence of this can be provided.
- This club is not a day care provision.
- This club is not CQC registered.
- This club does not have qualified and trained staff to cater for complex needs and abilities.

This club is not an option for any of the clients attending Linden Court day centre and is far from a day care provision alternative. This is again, misleading to parent/carers and the councillors who use your alternative suggestions which will influence their decisions.

Beeching Park

Beeching Park has been suggested as an alternative to Linden Court as a 'like for like' service as stated in the scrutiny committee meeting on 17th March. However, the reasons below demonstrate how this alternative is not an adequate option for many clients for numerous reasons, which we feel have not been considered as individuals with complex needs and abilities. The venue would also be at full capacity, meaning there would be no availability for future clients which is hugely concerning for future support for others and their families. This, will only create crisis point for many more families in the near future.

- ESCC claim Beeching Park in Bexhill is a larger venue than Linden Court by adding Working Wonders satellite service into the measurable area which is actually a separate building in Hastings which they have failed to add onto the appendix 4 map. This creates two similar venues within close proximity with Beeching Park in Bexhill.
- Beeching Park is a smaller venue compared to Linden Court which will be operating at full capacity with 85 clients in total. Linden Court is 1006 m2 and Beeching Park is only 893 m2.
- ESCC have confirmed Beeching Park can accommodate 85 clients, this busier and noisier environment level will have a huge impact on all the clients, future and present, due to their needs and abilities.
- The days will be different for the clients which will affect working parents and their commitments.
- The times clients attend will be less per day, Linden Court is open 8:30 – 16:30, where Beeching Park will be open 9:00 – 15:30, therefore clients may lose up to 1 hour a day, four days will result in a total to 4 hours lost a week.
- Transport and escorts will be required by most of the clients to and from Eastbourne and the surrounding areas to Beeching Park each day, causing numerous risks to clients with behavioural and medical needs, traffic congestion, increase pollution and expand ESCC transport finances even more.
- Limited spaces if any, for clients to access who need quieter areas. Due to the venue being at full capacity, this could cause a great amount of stress to individuals resulting in behavioural, physical and medical complications. This stressful environment may lead to clients not wanting to attend or not being able to cope. This is not good practice for the clients' and carers' well being, leaving families to deal with the adverse consequences.

Personal assistants

During our fact finding, we now know that many parents/carers would have to consider personal assistants to work with their loved ones if Linden Court was to close. This option causes the following concerns:

- It is well known that there is a shortage of suitable PAs, therefore we request that if Linden Court was to close that any surplus staff are directed to support clients within the home environment or out in the local community.
- Some clients will need this option up to 4 times a week and up to 7 hours per day. Other clients will need 2 personal assistants for personal care, medical needs and when out in the community. This costing far out ways the 1:5 ratio within the Linden Court environment.
- Where would a PA would take clients for the day, 4 days a week, all year round? This would not be good for anyone's well being. This option would again be more costly to ESCC in comparison to a day at Linden Court day centre. Evidence can be provide.
- PAs may not be a reliable long term support network due to sickness, personal commitments and lone working.
- We assume personal assistants receive minimum wage or slightly more, the care company would also add their fees onto ESCC. We have evidence to show this could be charged at a minimum of £17.66 per hour depending on the client's level of need. Based on this amount, it would cost £123.62 for a 7 hour day per PA, totalling up to £494.48 per 4 day week, each PA .
- An outreach service charges between £22-24 per hour, we can provide evidence of this. Based on the lower amount, 7 hours a day, 4 days a week, this would cost £616 per week, £29,568 for a 48 week year, for one client.

Residential care

ESCC have stated that they believe that no client will be seeking full time residential care as a direct result of Linden Court closing.

As stated in ESCC cabinet report on 25th February under 6.4:

'The pressure on unpaid carers could mean that some adults could not remain in their family home. In this instance Adult Social Care and Health may need to provide a 24/7 service to meet these people's needs. The estimated cost savings are not achieved as a result.'

The parents and carers believe that due to the lack of local suitable day care provision, families will fall into crisis forcing them to seek residential care for their loved ones.

- We can confirm that two clients are already actively seeking residential care options which the potential closure has prompted prematurely. ESCC will be aware of these 2 clients and we know there will be another potential eight who may also need to seek this option, if this closure goes ahead and a local appropriate day care alternative is not successful. We have gathered this evidence from our fact finding questionnaire which parents/carers have completed.
- The parents/carers insist that this costing is reflected in the risk and financial assessments presented to the board prior to any final decision being made. We also have evidence of these costings.
- The astronomical costs of full time residential care will have a significant impact on ESCC and their budget. We also know for a fact, that there is a shortage of suitable local residential care placements.
- When clients go into residential care, they often require day care provision also which will be an additional costing.
- By parents having their loved ones remain within the family home, saves ESCC £750,000 per client over 10 years.

Transport

The Beeching Park provision would require transport for most clients.

- The journey for the client from Eastbourne could take up to 2 hours a day and accumulate to 8 hours a week, whilst in rush hour traffic and the route is well known for delays and accidents.
- The use of any minibus would increase this journey time due to pick up and drop offs.
- It is impossible for working parents and carers to transport loved ones that distance in rush hour, due to inflexible working hours.
- If parents/carers could to provide transport to Beeching Park, this would incur additional stress, reduction of respite hours and a financial increase on their vehicles with wear and tear and petrol costs, up to four days a week. This could accumulate to approximately around 40 miles each day, 163 miles per week. This does not enhance the well being of parents or carers.
- Some clients would need their own personal taxi and escort. Some clients would not be able to cope within a minibus environment.
- If transport was to be provided for clients, the long journey could have a huge impact on challenging behaviours and medical needs.
- Some clients will require a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- We know of at least one client that is unable to remain in their wheelchair for longer than 45 minutes at a time, which would be a huge concern during rush hour traffic, traffic jams, accidents and any unforeseen circumstances.
- We have evidence that a taxi would cost £60 for a return journey with an additional cost of a suitably trained escort which would total up to approximately £100 per day. Transport would out way any alleged savings.
- It is clear already, that many clients will be unable to make the journey to and from Bexhill or any other out of the area services.

Consultation

The parents and carers believe the consultation feedback has not been listened to.

- 85% strongly disagreed with the proposal and only concerns were raised. The other percentage was possibly clients, who would not understand the cause and the consequences of the loss of the service would have on them and their families.
- ESCC have stated each client attending Linden Court would be reviewed and their care package adjusted. Parents and carers are aware that assessments and revisions to care packages are rarely done on time and in most instances are years behind schedule. Parents and carers have absolutely no confidence that proper assessments will be completed in a suitable and considered timeframe to permit a transfer of provision without a significant detrimental impact.

In ESCC cabinet report dated 25th February it states:

‘By expanding Beeching Park to open five days a week, and through maximising its current capacity, all adults who attend Linden Court Day service could be offered their day service provision at Beeching Park where this meets their assessed needs; or at alternative provision elsewhere where necessary.’

ESCC continue to state that Beeching Park can meet on the current needs and abilities of **all** clients attending Linden Court, however this has been seriously questioned and ESCC have found it necessary to propose the new satellite service in an attempt to reassure parents/carers.

In the Linden Court consultation meeting, it was made clear by ESCC staff that the potential closure of Linden Court was not something ESCC wanted to do and that it was a short term solution to bridge the funding gap. However, this would be at the detriment of our livelihoods, causing harm, and negative impacts to our children and families, affecting well-being and stability. It may create job losses, economic hardship and a decrease to access vital resources. This is likely to be a serious ongoing problem that will have to be addressed in the near future at a greater cost to ESCC.

Special schools, colleges and further education in Eastbourne

There are 8 special schools, colleges and further education settings within Eastbourne, these are:

- South Downs Infant School
- South Downs Junior School
- Hazel Court Secondary School
- Further Education (FE)
- Linfield Secondary School
- Summerdown School
- The Southfield centre
- East Sussex College

This is a huge number of educational placements within Eastbourne which will have many future clients needing a day care provision. Closure of Linden Court will have a detrimental effect on the future young people and their families within Eastbourne once their educational placements come to an end. Linden Court enables some of our most vulnerable people in Eastbourne and the surrounding areas to stay within their local community whilst living in their family home environment. Closure of Linden Court will have detrimental effects on their adult life and is clearly not a sensible long term strategy.

Impact on the NHS

There is a huge concern amongst NHS professionals on the negative impacts the closure of Linden Court day service in Eastbourne will create. Psychiatrist consultant, Dr Zak was horrified to hear about the potential loss and has written a letter to share these concerns. Evidence of this letter can be provided.

Tender

Parents and carers were informed that all alternative avenues had been exhausted before the proposal to close Linden Court took place, however tender opportunities were not explored. Therefore, a member of our community took it upon themselves to seek any potential tender interests and opportunities.

- Three organisations replied with an interest of Linden Court.
- One in particular demonstrated a strong interest with appropriate experience and a similar service within the Hove area.
- This opportunity would not only benefit ESCC tremendously but also the current and future Linden Court community. This should not be disregarded after ESCC claimed that all options had been considered.
- Parents and carers can confirm that the tender interest passed on to ESCC has not been discussed further with any of the 3 organisations. Evidence of this can be provided.

Linden Court

Life as a vulnerable adult with a severe learning disability is tough, however, the users of Linden Court have learnt to accept the location, building, staff members, clients and the routines. One current client has attended Linden Court for 23 years now and any change big or small is most distressing for many and creates negative behaviours and feelings which often cannot be controlled or understood.

- For a client receiving a 1:5 ratio within Linden Court, 4 days a week cost ESCC only £53.50 per day. Evidence of this can be provided.
- Due to the client/staffing ratio needs, the same amount of staff should be required within both ESCC settings, regardless of venue and we are told by ESCC staffing is the largest cost. However, due to the same amount of clients potentially attending Beeching Park and the ratios given to individuals, no savings should be valid on staffing other than a management post may longer be required.
- We are horrified to learn that Beeching Park would require '**no additional staffing**' to cater for an additional 22 clients from Linden Court, this indicates that Beeching Park staffing levels are currently excessive and a source of saving to the benefit of a Linden Court service.
- 69% of clients at Linden Court are from Eastbourne.
- Clients are assessed to need either a 5:1 ratio or a 1:1 ratio which is manageable at Linden Court due to the environment and experienced staff members. Parents and carers have witnessed an increase of staffing levels required within an independent service. Evidence of this can be provided.
- The impact of Linden Court closing on the local special schools and college will limit future supportive options to students and their families. Linden Court enables them to stay within their local community with friendships they have created throughout their educational journey.
- Linden Court supports clients to continue living within the family home environment, creating preventative support in needing full time residential care, creating ESCC savings of £75k per client, per year.
- It appears that ESCC only want to close Linden Court to resolve the current deficit in their budget which is only a short term fix creating detrimental long term effects on peoples life's and probably a greater cost to ESCC in the long term.
- **Here is a link to our petition against the closure of Linden Courts day service:** <https://chnng.it/bkNhgRHfCN>

The Linden Court community have gathered cost evidence and strongly believe there are no savings to be gained from the loss of Linden Courts closure. If anything, there would be a financial increase due to the need to provide transport, escorts, personal assistants and even residential care placements. The alternatives are not valid and do not provide a 'like for like' or day care provision for the clients as previously claimed. We believe this false representation may cause families to fall into crisis with life changing impacts which are not in the best interest of the current and future vulnerable clients within East Sussex.

As a result the increase in full time residential care would have a huge financial impact on ESCC and the future budgets. Considering all the financial and negative impacts Linden Court loss would create, we believe it is in ESCC, the clients and their family's best interest for the Linden Court day service is to remain open.

There were 4 ESCC day centres at risk of closing, some of which were saved from closure. The majority of the reasons to keep some of those day services open also apply to the Linden Court day service.

Parents/carers of the Linden Court community are suggesting the following to create appropriate savings:

- **Keep Linden Court open and save on transport, escorts, satellite service, independent services and residential care.**
- **To decrease the surplus staffing at Beeching Park to create savings of £120,000 to £150,000.**
- **Invite a private sector/ organisation to manage Linden Court to maintain the current services or expand to a 5 day week provision, therefore creating more jobs for local people.**
- **Promote Linden Court to potential future clients leaving education, staff to attend open days to share future opportunities and provision.**

The Linden Court community really hope that the all the above is considered in great detail and that is reflected in a reconsideration of working together to discuss the true financial impacts closure of Linden Court would create. We would be keen to help support any future growth of the service.

Yours sincerely,

The Linden Court Community