

Consultation results: Learning disability day services in Hastings and Rother



Date: April 2016

Document summary

Results from the consultation on proposed changes to Learning Disability day services in Hastings and Rother

Contents

Background	3
Why we are consulting.....	3
What we consulted about.....	3
Consultation process	3
How people could take part	3
Client and parent/carer meetings.....	4
Online survey.....	4
Other forms of feedback	4
Table1: Responses by method	4
Key themes	5
Positive themes	5
Concerns about the proposal.....	5
Suggestions if the proposal went ahead	7
Summary of consultation responses	8
What happens next	13

About this document:

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Background

We asked for your views about our proposal to change the way Learning Disability (LD) day services are provided in Hastings and Rother.

Why we are consulting

We need to make sure that services are good value for money and the best they can be.

We think our plans are the best way of doing that, but we wanted to know what you thought and whether you had any other ideas.

What we consulted about

We proposed to:

- make Beeching Park in Bexhill the main day service for Hastings and Rother;
- focus the Working Wonders site, adjacent to the Conquest centre in St Leonards-on-Sea, on providing opportunities for skills development that may lead to voluntary or paid employment;
- use the new day service capacity at the Greenwood respite service in Bexhill to provide personalised support for people who require a more specialised service; and
- stop using the main Conquest centre.

We asked people:

- Do you agree with our ideas for the day services in the Hastings and Rother area?
- Do you have any other ideas for making day services better and saving money?
- What could we do to help people get ready for the changes?
- What would the proposal mean for you, or someone you look after?
- Is there anything else you would like to say?

Consultation process

The consultation ran for around seven weeks, starting on 18 January 2016 and closing on 3 March 2016.

How people could take part

We contacted parents and carers in early January to let them know about the consultation. Following this, we sent letters to everyone who uses the services and their parents and carers to invite them to the information events.

Additional letters were sent out to all parents and carers who didn't attend the information events inviting them to have their say, including the option of meeting with managers.

We also contacted partner organisations to let them know about the consultation and to invite them to have their say.

Cardboard post boxes were set up at each of the services so that respondents could return their completed surveys anonymously.

During the consultation period, clients, parents and carers were invited to visit Beeching Park and Working Wonders, to see the facilities and buildings for themselves.

Client and parent/carers meetings

Two information events were held for clients and two for parents and carers (both paid and unpaid carers). Posters promoting the events were displayed in advance at all three services. The dates and locations were:

Date	Location, group and time
19 January	Conquest Day Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients (1pm – 3pm) • Parents and carers (4pm – 6pm)
20 January	Beeching Park Day Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients (1pm – 3pm) • Parents and carers (4pm – 6pm)

After the events, a list of Frequently Asked Questions was shared with clients and parents/carers. We also published the FAQs on our website.

Online survey

An online survey was available throughout the consultation period. People could also download a printable, Easy Read version of the survey from the website.

Any client who didn't attend a meeting was given or sent a printed survey.

Other forms of feedback

Those who did not want to complete the survey, but who wished to offer their views, were encouraged to do so by passing on verbal comments to the managers of the Beeching Park and Conquest services, sending us written feedback via post or email, or completing an online comment form.

Table1: Responses by method

Please note: It is likely that some people took part multiple times. There was also one letter, one email and one survey received after the consultation closed – these will be shared with Members but are not included in this report.

Response method	Responses or attendees
Survey responses	48
Emailed, written or verbal responses	7
Meeting attendees	143
Total	198

Key themes

Note: This section focuses on key themes, while the following section provides a summary of data and themes.

There is no clear view on the proposal, with a fairly even split between people who agree, disagree or aren't sure. People who use the Conquest and their carers are more likely to disagree with the proposals, but some Beeching Park clients and parents are also concerned about more people using the centre.

Some respondents felt that it would make more sense to redevelop Conquest instead. This was generally because they feel it has better transport links, more outside space and has a bigger building than Beeching Park. Other ideas for improving the service and saving money focused on ways of raising money such as holding a market.

A clear theme across all respondent groups is concern about how the change itself would affect people. Both clients and their parents/carers said that the disruption of moving to a new service or changing their current service would worry and upset them.

Positive themes

There were positive themes that came up regularly in the consultation responses:

- **Services:** There were many positive comments about the services at Conquest and Beeching Park, with people talking about why they liked them. There were also a number of positive comments about Greenwood and its refurbishment. Some people said they or someone they care for could be interested in having a day service there.
- **Facilities:** The proposal was seen an opportunity to improve the facilities at Beeching Park, with suggestions that the computer room and kitchen could both benefit from work. People also hoped there would be an opportunity to get involved in the redevelopment.
- **Activities:** Many people talked about the activities they already take part in and what they enjoy doing. People were hopeful that the proposal would give them a chance to take part in more or different activities. Some people said there should be more training that helps people to develop skills and become more independent.
- **Community involvement:** It was mentioned that this would be a good opportunity to increase community involvement.

Concerns about the proposal

There are some clear themes that come up consistently in the survey and across all the different methods of response (the survey, meetings, letters and emails).

It should also be noted though that many of people's concerns are personal to them, such as the activities they enjoy, friends they still want to see, people they don't want to see or the noise of additional people. A number of comments reflect this, emphasising that a person-centred approach would be required to support people through the changes if they went ahead.

Apart from general concerns about the process of change itself, the issues that came up consistently are listed below.

Travel and transport

- Longer journey times and the cost of travelling further are the most commonly mentioned issues raised throughout the consultation.
- For people who currently walk or get the bus there is concern that this would not be possible in future, leading to a loss of independence for the client.
- The impact of journey times on people's personal care needs and carers was also raised a few times.

Capacity and noise

- People questioned whether Beeching Park could cope with the additional people if Conquest was closed. This was raised generally and also in relation to capacity of the specialist facilities for things like physiotherapy and for those with sensory needs.
- Linked to the capacity issues, were concerns about the noise level. A number of clients were worried that they would find a busier service too noisy.

Facilities and meeting everyone's needs

- There was a lot of concern about losing the facilities at Conquest, with people questioning what Beeching Park is able to offer. This related to the surroundings, such as the garden and parking, and also to the space in the building for providing activities and specialist support.
- People wanted to know whether there would be enough toilets at Beeching Park and whether staff and clients would be sharing toilets.
- People were concerned that clients who use wheelchairs wouldn't be as well catered for in a busier service at Beeching Park. Examples were given of the computer room and toilet facilities.
- The physiotherapy facilities at Conquest were felt to be much better and there was a query about whether Beeching Park would be able to provide the specialist worker with the space and equipment they need to support people.
- There was a query about capacity and space in the Beeching Park sensory room. People also wondered whether the plan to put the laundry room next to the sensory room could cause an issue with noise.

Relationships:

- People talked about the importance of maintaining relationships (with staff and other clients) and the fact they were worried about being able to do this.
- There was also concern about attending the same service as people they don't get on with. This was raised by a few clients and some supported living providers.
- A few people are anxious about making new friends.

Activities:

- People are worried about whether they would still be able to do all the activities they enjoy. There were a number of concerns: whether the activities will still be offered; on at a time the respondent could attend; and not oversubscribed.
- A few people said the computer room needs better equipment. People are also worried about whether it would be too busy for them to use it as much as they want.

- A few people are worried that they wouldn't be able to do the sports they liked at Beeching Park.

Suggestions if the proposal went ahead

Many people suggested things that could be improved or how the change could be managed if it went ahead. The issues and suggestions are listed by themes.

Travel and transport

- Provide information about travel options.
- Let people try out the journey before they decide what to do.
- Offer travel training to people.
- Consider coordinating travel for people.
- Work with providers already transporting people to the centre.
- Have travel buddies.

Activities

- Let people know what activities will be available.
- Give people access to the same activities as now.
- Offer people more choice of activities.
- Give people more training to learn new skills and become more independent.
- Have activities that get clients more involved in the community and help other people in some way.

Information

- Keep parents and carers informed throughout the project, maybe through an open forum/website.
- Have more meetings with parents/carers to discuss the changes.
- Explain why the proposal is to close Conquest and not Beeching Park, as some respondents believe that Conquest has more space and is in a better location.
- Have more meetings with clients and give them the chance to meet clients and staff from the other service.
- Use pictures to help people understand what is happening.
- The drawing of the proposed layout of Beeching Park was difficult to understand and clients couldn't tell how big each room would actually be at full scale.
- Have ongoing opportunities to visit Beeching Park and Working Wonders.
- Provide more information about the activities that will be offered and how the service would involve people more in the community.
- Provide information on other options if people don't want to attend Beeching Park.

Support and involvement

- Make sure we work closely with clients and their parents and carers to ensure any changes address their specific concerns and focus on their individual needs.
- Some people asked if they could be involved in choosing colours for the day centre.

Summary of consultation responses

Number of respondents – survey

48 people completed a survey or comment form (not everyone answered every question)

15 people (31%) use the Conquest, while 9 people (19%) care for someone who uses it

14 people (29%) use Beeching Park, while 4 people (8%) care for someone who uses it

Number of respondents – other methods

77 clients attended the information events to share their views

66 people attended the parent/carer information events to share their views

7 people shared their comments by letter or email (4 were supported living providers and 3 were parents or family of clients)

Our advocacy provider POWhER also gathered feedback from people at the meetings and separate drop-in sessions

Views on the proposal – the survey

40% agreed with the proposal (19 people)

27% disagreed with the proposal (13 people)

31% weren't sure about the proposal (15 people)

Conquest clients and parents/carers are more likely to disagree with the proposals (10 people) or be unsure about them (8 people), rather than agree with them (5 people)

Beeching Park clients and parents/carers were more likely to agree with the proposal (11 people) rather than be unsure (4 people) or disagree (3 people)

Views on the proposal – other methods

Client information events: Beeching Park clients were more supportive of the proposal, although some Conquest clients did support it. Quite a few clients at both services were unsure about the proposals

Letters and emails etc: 3 people stated they are against closing Conquest and moving people to Beeching Park

Advocacy feedback: People said they do not want Conquest to close and that they are happy there. The majority had not visited Beeching Park before so found it hard to decide if they liked the plan or not

Comments on the proposal – the survey

Comment themes by tick-box answer were:

Agree: The main reasons were because

Comments on the proposal – other methods

Client information events: People were concerned about travelling further and the

they like the staff or people, and there will be an opportunity to make new friends. It would make the best use of facilities

Disagree: The main reason for disagreeing was because of concerns about transport (cost, travel time and loss of independence).

People were also concerned about capacity, facilities and space at Beeching Park

Not sure: The main reason was because change is upsetting and people will be worried about what it will mean for them.

People also mentioned facilities and space at Beeching Park, particularly for those with complex physical needs, and travel issues

Didn't answer tick box question: One person commented that they are happy with the current system and that change will be upsetting

cost of that. They asked to visit Beeching Park so they could see what it is like. Concerns raised included: seeing their friends, keeping the same staff and noise levels at Beeching Park

Parent/carer information events: The main concerns related to transport: costs, a less convenient location, better transport links at Conquest, loss of independence in travelling and car parking. The new link road was seen as a positive. Some respondents were concerned about clients who don't get on with other clients currently at a different day centre. People also asked why Conquest is closing and not Beeching Park

Letters and emails etc: The key concern is about the increased cost of travelling to Beeching Park, which would not be affordable for some clients, and the longer journey time. Respondents also praised the service at Conquest and said that moving would cause much distress. One person questioned whether there would be enough space at Beeching Park

Advocacy feedback: The most common concern from Conquest clients was about travelling to Beeching Park – the cost, learning new routes, and the possible loss of independence. Beeching Park clients were generally positive about meeting new staff and clients. There was a common concern about the size of the centre and whether it could accommodate the extra people. Related to this, most clients said they preferred quiet environments and wanted to know how that would be possible with more people at the centre

Other ideas – the survey

There were a number of general comments on the proposals for this question.

A few comments made suggestions for how the facilities and activities could be improved (4 mentions) or suggestions for making or

Other ideas – other methods

Client information events: The main suggestions were to offer more activities that help people to be independent and have more involvement in the community, particularly helping other people

Parent/carer information events: Council

saving money (3 mentions), such as:

- making objects for sale
- having a coffee shop and baking at Conquest
- making better use of Working Wonders including hiring it out
- recycling

tax and other ways of saving money, such as shared lives services and other delivery options for people in residential care

Letters and emails etc: A supporting living provider may be able to provide transport to non-residents in its bus

Helping people prepare – the survey

The most common suggestion was to support clients through the changes and ensure they have the support they need to understand them and get the right services in place for them (11 mentions).

Other suggestions that reflected key concerns were support around:

- opportunities to visit other services (10 mentions)
- more detailed information on what the proposals would mean – generally and for individuals (7 mentions)
- travel and transport related (6 mentions)

Helping people prepare – other methods

Client information events: The main suggestion was arranging visits to Beeching Park and Working Wonders.

Other suggestions focused on:

- Knowing what activities will be available; having access to the same activities as now; and offering more activities
- Keeping people informed through meetings and picture-based information and notices, such as a countdown board about the move
- Provide information about travel options, offer travel training and have a buddy system
- Keep the same staff and have opportunities for the clients at both services to meet each other

Parent/carer information events: Having the same staff would be good. Clients generally don't like change so it's important to have a detailed plan and support people through the transition. Information on other options if you don't want to attend Beeching Park was also suggested

Advocacy feedback: The drawing of the proposed layout of Beeching Park was difficult to understand and clients couldn't tell how big each room would actually be at full scale. Some people asked if they could be involved in choosing colours for the day centre

Impact of the proposals – the survey

The main themes in the negative comments were:

- the change and disruption that would be caused by the proposals (11 mentions),
- travel issues (10 mentions), and
- the impact on relationships, which included concern about capacity, new people, other clients that people were worried about and consistency of staffing (5 mentions)

The positive comments were general, either saying they liked the proposal or Beeching Park, rather than giving specific reasons

There were also a number of neutral and mixed comments

Impact of the proposals – other methods

Client information events: The top impacts for Conquest clients are around travel (cost, journey time and independence) and access to activities. Beeching Park clients' top impacts are also around access to activities

Parent/carer information events: The ideas acknowledge the move towards more community-based activity. There will be a need to manage the change and support people

Letters and emails etc: One respondent said the client they support may have to reduce their use of the day service, while another said that the activities that their client is able to take part in would be a big factor. People also raised the fact that people have been attending for a long time and change would be difficult for them

Advocacy feedback: Some Beeching Park clients were worried about other people they did not want to share activities or lunch times with. There was also concern about whether people would still have access to the same facilities and activities – the most popular query related to the computers and whether the computer room would be bigger, but people also asked about the kitchen and dining area. Having adequate space for wheelchairs was also mentioned

Other comments – the survey

Overall, the topics that came up most across all comments were:

- comments or concerns about activities (5 mentions),
- people who wanted to keep Conquest open and felt it would be a better building to invest in (4 mentions),
- the fact that people are concerned, anxious or upset about the proposal

Other comments – other methods

Client information events: Other comments reflect consistent concerns around activities, travel and relationships

Parent/carer information events: People wanted to know what would happen if the plan wasn't supported and whether eligibility criteria would change

Letters and emails etc: Parents heard about it first in the local paper

(3 mentions)

There were also a number of positive comments about Beeching Park and the staff there (4 mentions)

Advocacy feedback: A common issue raised was around toilet facilities, with people asking how many toilets there would be and whether staff and clients would be sharing toilets. People wondered whether putting the laundry room next to the sensory room would make it too noisy. Some people requested more skills based activities in future

Quotes highlighting the key themes

Responses to the proposal

- “It is [a] good idea to re-arrange the day care provision, to save money, but mainly to provide a better service for the clients.”
- “I love Conquest & Working Wonders. I don't want to go to a smaller building with more people it will be too small & I like open spaces... I feel safe at Conquest as it's in its own ground. I don't want to go too far from my home.”
- “I'm excited for new people to be coming to my day centre.”
- “Don't do the changes let them be happy where they are at Conquest.”
- “I think this would be a terrible thing for the people who attend the centre. Many of them have been going there for a number of years and feel secure there. Many of them do not like change and would not settle in a new environment.”

Travel and transport

- “The travelling takes me 2 hours a day as a carer - not really acceptable to make centre clients travel when services should be local! Building and car park at Beeching is not big enough for double the numbers of users and calm environment will be lost due to number!”
- “More travelling, I don't get home till 4:30pm/5pm now. Couldn't handle it. I would need the toilet whilst travelling. I would get upset and frustrated.”
- “I would be disappointed to see some of the clients that travel independently to Conquest Centre lose their ability to travel independently due to the increased distance and that a bus does not stop outside Beeching Park.”

Capacity and facilities

- “The young man I care for would find the additional number of people, and the inevitable noise and activity very difficult to cope with.”
- “It is important that facilities are appropriate to support individuals with complex physical disabilities.”
- “A number of Conquest Centre clients had wheelchairs and feel that Beeching park is

not as well equipped not manage adults with complex physical health conditions and moving and handling support.”

Activities

- “Carrying on the same activities and jobs... [he] wants to continue with computer.”
- “Keeping activities and things to do the same.”
- “I would like more opportunity to do things, gardening, cooking, cleaning the fridge.”
- “Computer room - would be sad if not enough computers.”

Helping people to prepare

- “Take people who are likely to change buildings on short visits beforehand.”
- “Perhaps have a meeting with other service users who will be integrated together, perhaps some sort of tea/coffee morning.”
- “Please try to allow us to continue doing things that we like and are used to, to help us with any change. Travel training.”
- “Explain changes to them, short visits to acclimatise them to different buildings if necessary.”

What happens next

A recommendation will be made to the Departmental Management Team in April 2016. Following this, a recommendation will be presented to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care & Community Safety. The Lead Member will consider the recommendation alongside the consultation results and an Equality Impact Assessment.

We will then write to everyone to let them know what has been decided.