

Responses to Speakers for HRS Paper Adults Committee 22nd May 2019

Service: An Lac house

Provider: Abbeyfield Vietnamese Society

Speaker: Trinh Johns

Question / issue being raised: Statement from speaker as shown below

To the Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Committee 22nd May 2019

Dear Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to put our case against proposed changes made by the joint commissioning board, to the way the service for Vietnamese Elders is delivered

We welcome your collective wisdom and hope you will reconsider the proposal.

We also bring to your attention the County Council's impact assessment, for which we provided much of the information.

I wish to make five points.

First, An Lac House is meeting significant and complex care for Vietnamese elderly needs in a unique, culturally appropriate way. By doing so we are reducing risks to health and life, which is of vital importance to Residents, families and relatives.

Please note that An Lac House accommodates people even when 'end of life' care is required – in the past year we have supported 3 residents to remain in their home, where 'end of life' care packages were provided and funded by CCC Social Care. If on site An Lac House staff support was not available, those residents would need residential nursing care instead. This would take them out of a culturally appropriate setting and increase the financial burden to the County Council. According to the "paying for care" website (<https://www.payingforcare.org/how-much-does-care-cost/>) in this region residential care for frail elders averages £670 pw, but for frail elders requiring nursing, the average is £980 pw. As those three residents had been receiving up to 3 social care visits per day for over a year, the cost of remaining in residential care for one year would have totalled well over £100,000. The current cost to the county council is £81 per person per week, or £42,000 per year. So we are preventing significant upstream cost burden to the County Council.

Council's response:

We would like to just be clear that the support provided by this funding is 'housing related support' not 'care', and should the housing related support element of the service reduce, this would not mean that residents would suddenly need to be moved to a residential care setting. Any move to residential care would be on the basis of an individual's care needs. At present, there is no evidence to suggest that a significant number of residents at the scheme do have care needs.

Whilst we acknowledge that An Lac House does have some residents who are in receipt of care (currently we are aware of 2 individuals), previous checks on those residents named by An Lac House as being in receipt of 'End of Life Care', showed that they were only in receipt of Social Care not 'End of Life Care' packages as suggested.

The Commissioning Board has stated that in 2014 the Council moved away from funding individual sheltered housing units, and An Lac House would be considered in the same category as Alms Houses and sheltered accommodation. Our response to this is, An Lac House was originally set up as a frail elderly service, however, the needs of our Residents have increased to the point that a significant number now require significant health input. Also our referrals are increasingly for frail elderly, whose needs increase quickly. Lisa Sparks acknowledged that An Lac House more fits the extra-sheltered model.

Council's response:

In terms of resident frailty, the service is more akin to extra care, however at present only two residents are in receipt of care packages. Due to the small number of units at the scheme it would not be feasible to have an 'extra care' type service in place as these require a core number of hours which support the provision of care staff on site. These services also receive only minimal amounts of 'Housing Related support' funding which contribute towards welfare activities for residents.

The removal of the HRS funding will not impact on any resident's access to care. Those assessed as eligible for care will still be able to access the levels of care they require, and care assessments will take into account any cultural needs that are connected with care delivery.

Second, Many of the Vietnamese Elders do not speak English, and the Commissioning Manager Lisa Sparks employed an interpreter at a recent visit. We politely ask how many Vietnamese speakers are available in the older persons visiting support service? An Lac House staff are bi-lingual and interpret for Residents with GPs, hospitals, Social Services, care agencies, DWP, and all other official contacts. They are vital to the physical and mental well-being of residents.

We have provided you with one recent example where a resident was in hospital, not responding until a member of our support team spoke to her in her own language and provided Vietnamese food.

Council's response:

Whilst we accept the scheme manager undertakes a lot of translation for residents, the purpose of the Commissioner's visit was not to speak with residents and therefore there was no formal translation required during the visit, other than for the Scheme Manager to explain who the Commissioner was when she was taken on a tour around the service.

The County Council is obliged to ensure that all commissioned services can access appropriate translation resources where required and this is something that we would discuss with Cambridge City Council, who currently provide the Older Persons Visiting support Service for the Cambridge City area.

Third, We ask you to consider the emotional, cultural and spiritual impact of moving residents out of a culturally appropriate service. An Lac House is a unique environment where Vietnamese customs, social norms, cultural events, food, religion and language are practised and celebrated. The House is also a place for the wider Vietnamese Community to take part in weekly events and special religious occasions. Non-Vietnamese members of the local community also attend events, such as local GPS and ward councillors. We

have a new resident who was in Residential care, this had a detrimental impact on her emotional and mental well-being and with the support of her family, she moved into An Lac House where she could speak and hear Vietnamese and she is now a different person, so happy.

Council's response:

The County Council's funding relates purely to the housing related support element of the service. Removal or reduction of this funding should not be a barrier to residents continuing to socialise and meet within the scheme, nor should it prevent the wider community continuing to access the service in the same way to take part in event and religious occasions, as these elements are not funded through the County's grant.

Fourth, The County Council's impact assessment does not acknowledge the disproportionate impact of the proposals on religion and belief. A central feature of An Lac House and Vietnamese religion is Buddhism and the focus in the Residents lounge is a Buddhist shrine where religious events are organised, including frequent visits from a Buddhist Monk from Birmingham, who presides over the events. Members of the wider community are invited to celebrate the most important religious festivals.

Council's response:

As the County Council's funding relates purely to the housing related support element of the service, any removal or reduction should not impact on the ability of residents to practice their religion as residents will continue to live in the accommodation and therefore still have full access to the Buddhist Shrine which is there.

In summary the Residents of An Lac House and the Vietnamese community as a whole will be disproportionately affected by the proposals and struggle to see how the older person visiting support service could mitigate against this.

We have had very significant support against the proposal, from the local Romsey and Cambridge Community who have to-date provided some 1432 signatures.

Finally we have offered the Commissioners to restructure in order to deliver efficiencies to the County Council, and would like this to be considered by the board. We have made an offer of 10% reduction in funding.

Thank you for listening to us.