

DEPUTATION FOUR
ACCESS COMMITTEE FOR LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please make your speech now to the Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

MR McSHARRY: Thank you Lord Mayor. Members of our deputation are: David Littlewood, to my left, and Linda Watson to my right, and my name is Tim McSharry.

Lord Mayor before I begin may I take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding dedication to the City of Leeds of our Chief Executive, Paul Rogerson, and offer Paul our most sincerest and heartfelt best wishes for a healthy, happy, long and fulfilling retirement. (*Applause*)

I stand before you today not as a representative of the many people living with ill health, injury and disability who fully acknowledge and celebrate the exemplar life changing services they receive through Leeds Social Care, but on behalf of Emily at 90 years old, Annie at 83 years old and Maggie who lived her life independently until she was 97, and also many other people who feel abandoned by a service they believed would be there to help maintain their quality of life, social inclusion and choice to live with support in their own homes and communities of family and friends.

Emily, Annie and Maggie asked for Social Care assistance, but following an assessment it was decided they fell outside the criteria with "No eligible needs" - a decision with potentially serious implications as it can leave people isolated and lost in a confusing process of signposting with no real understanding of how the system works, who to trust or where to go. It also creates additional work and inconsistencies in service delivery with individuals having to start the whole process again if their needs change.

Thankfully, in Emily and Annie's case they had friends in a neighbourhood network who were able to give them the help they needed with the signposting process but sadly in Maggie's case this did not happen and she felt abandoned with no alternative but to struggle on without support and, after all, Maggie was of a generation who knew what struggle and social deprivation was about, starting her working life at twelve years old helping her mother to pack sardines in Hunslet, to working sometimes 24 hours combining shifts on a hospital ward with ARP duties during the war. Maggie worked hard all her life, but was generous to a fault and always has time to help others in her community.

Very sadly, not many months after Maggie's assessment, she was admitted into hospital and spent the last eight months of her life in a hospital bed, always hoping she could get back home.

We cannot really say for certain what may have happened if Maggie had received an exemplar joined up service that placed all customers first and respected everyone's well being, safety and quality of life. However, we can say that from the point Maggie was

assessed as having no eligible needs and given a signposting process that offered no further support, Maggie's dignity, independence and quality of life were seriously compromised.

The real inequality is that this Council, in following such policies, are likely to be failing other individuals, like Maggie, who are deemed to be outside the Council's eligibility for help, and are left to sink or swim in a list of contacts and external services. This is not about the ability to pay for services; it is simply about a service that places some potentially vulnerable individuals on a cliff edge apparently without further assistance, contact, follow up, monitoring or evaluation.

The fact that such cliff edges exist highlights fundamental issues in respect to the delivery of care in our city; cliff edges that are further undermined through the actions of the council's own ALMOs who continue to deny and circumvent the mandatory rights of their disabled tenants.

In conclusion, we ask that this Council takes urgent action to resolve the issues expressed in this deputation and consider what can be done to develop the capacity of the grassroots networks that made all the difference in Emily and Annie's case.

There is no real deal when it comes to the duties this Council owes to the people of Leeds. The success of our public services are not measured against good intentions and cliff edges, but in quality of leadership and how the critical social values of respect, dignity, inclusion, care and support are afforded to all individuals regardless of age, illness, injury or disability. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr McSharry. I now call on Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes, I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* This is PASSED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.