

Mr Stephen Courtney  
Chairman, Scrutiny Board  
Civic Hall  
Millennium Square  
Leeds LS1 1UR

Yewtrees.  
63 High Ash Drive  
Alwoodley  
Leeds  
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09 November 2012

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
Leeds Branch**

Dear Sir

I have been requested to write to you on behalf of the above Organisation because of our continued concerns regarding those people suffering from Sensory Loss in this City. We objected at the last Scrutiny, Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting, when told by a Member of Leeds Vision Consortium that as well as the Satellite Groups that they looked after ALL the Groups that formally used Shire View. This is not true as Friends of Shire View have themselves paid out £2,600 to assist groups in cost of room hire in centres throughout the City. The Womens' Group meet at Fairfax House on a Tuesday but provide all their own refreshments and Volunteers. We are constantly reminded that 'we get the room for free.' The Craft group also meet there on alternate Wednesdays as they find the cost of the Ziff Centre too expensive to attend on a weekly basis.

No other member of Adult Social Care, other than Sinead Cregan, have spoken to us regarding the Deafblind, Blind and Partially-sighted; nor have they enquired how we feel about the new arrangements or asked for our advice.

We asked sometime ago for a review of Services. Has this been done and why have we not been advised on any outcome?

Alan Oldroyd and Victor Jackson are both Representatives on the Equalities Hub of Leeds City Council to assist in obtaining some form of cohesion in Leeds. Due to the present situation we have

lost touch with, not only the Groups of older people, but also our diverse Communities such as the Jewish Blind and the Association of Blind Asians.

When the BID was first thought of three meetings were held. This was classed as a Consultation. At the first one the Deafblind could neither hear or understand what was going on and asked questions of the Staff afterwards. The second was disrupted by the fire alarm, at Shire View Resource Centre, , and never reconvened. The third was held, in the late afternoon, at Centenary House, and the only person to attend was Alan Oldroyd with his guide dog. This is not our idea of a consultation!

There are at present 65 empty buildings in this City belonging to the Council and we have only been offered the use of one room in Shire View. We have not been informed as to which room, nor any specifications of any such room. This we consider not only a disgrace, but somewhat degrading to the Blind and Partially-sighted People of Leeds. We also feel this is discriminatory to those with a Sensory loss and in no way conforms with the Equalities Act of 2010.

The BID did not include the Groups from the onset, as Sinead Cregan later admitted, she wished the Deafblind, Blind and Partially-sighted to mingle within their Community. Deafblind People are unable to do so as they have no means of communicating with 'normal' people unless that person has the ability to hand-sign. All people with a Sensory loss prefer to congregate with like-minded people so they can discuss their problems and so gain knowledge from those who know.

May we ask what training the Staff of Adult Social Care have undertaken to understand the problems that people with a Sensory Loss have to cope with in their day to day lives?

A number of points raised in this letter have already been discussed and written about in previous communications with, the Commissioner of Adult Social Care, Asset Management and the Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing.) In conclusion we are of the opinion that the contents of the new contract should have been

thoroughly researched prior to the tendering process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary M. Adolfson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Hilary M. Adolfson SRN., SCM., (Retd)

Acting Chair,

National Federation of the Blind (Leeds Branch)

c.c. ✓ Mr P. Marrington , Head of Scrutiny  
Councillor L. Yeadon  
File