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'Consultation period' for Middle Street Resource Centre

by the Editor

MIDDLE Street Resource Centre, Beeston.

How many local residents who pass by this flat-roofed building on Middle Street – it stands between Humber Lodge and the boarded-up 'Three Horseshoes' public house – are vaguely aware of its existence but haven't got a clue as to what the Centre is used for?

To put it bluntly, the Middle Street Resource Centre (MSRC) saves lives.

It is one of three such day centres across the county that exist to provide essential support in a number of ways to people with poor mental health.

Resources provided at the Middle Street centre range from the therapeutic support provided by professional mental health workers and peers to a means of regaining access to education, employment and training.

Centre users will have been referred by their social worker, GP or psychiatrist; MSRC has almost 300 users registered and the numbers attending each day of the week can be as high as 60 plus.

One in four of us will suffer from some sort of mental illness at some point in our lives.

Consultation

Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) has issued a 'consultation questionnaire' to the people who use the Centre. NCC proposes to

move from funding traditional day centres to providing services "for those who are eligible within the local community" instead.

To achieve this, it plans to close the MSRC and "use existing funding to provide more services to more people." It adds that "people will be supported to achieve what they want to through a personal budget."

The consultation document, entitled 'The Future of Mental Health Day Services' seeks the views of people who use the Middle Street Resource Centre in Beeston in response to the proposals.

It asks specific questions about the proposed changes in access to mental health services, and the 'services users' are asked to tick

boxes. What it really says is that, "we are closing the Middle Street Resource Centre and giving you a 'Self-Directed Support (SDS)' allowance as an individual to spend however you want. But the allowance has to be applied for and not everyone will meet the criteria.

A statement issued by NCC says: "For example, people could hold an event or group session in another public building such as a local library or one of the County Council's shared-use day services. Or they may receive a personal budget from the County Council."

This "personal budget" is a figure of what is said to be less than £4 a day, which they "could use to pay for support that will help them live independently. For example, they could get help to

ensure bills are paid on time and their home is looked after."

The document also states: "The use of the current buildings as a place to provide day services will not continue. The funding that keeps the centres open will be used to provide personalised services for people."

County Councillor Kevin Rostance, Cabinet Minister for Adult Social Care and Health, said: "These are just plans at this stage and we want to hear people's views. We are proposing to redirect money from paying for buildings into paying for services. The proposals also aim to make all mental health services in Nottinghamshire equitable, no matter where people live."

Continued on page 2...

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