

Subject: In support of The Winchester Beacon

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in relation to the £360,000 cuts that Hampshire County Council is proposing to make to Homelessness Support Services. I am concerned to learn that £73,272 of the reduction in funds could be made to services in Winchester.

As a supporter of The Winchester Beacon and their vital work, I disagree with the proposed cuts. I believe if the cuts went ahead, it could have a huge negative impact on the charity and the lives of the people it supports.

Cuts could mean that the charity would have to scale back its services to make savings. This could mean a reduction in its personalised wrap around care which not only changes, but saves, lives. This could result in more people leaving the service with untreated mental health issues and substance misuse problems which puts them more at risk of returning to homelessness and could also cost the council more money to address these issues at a later date.

Cuts could mean that the vital ongoing work the charity does to support former residents to prevent them returning to homelessness could be stopped or reduced. People returning to homelessness will ultimately cost more money than the current preventative approach.

I am concerned that the cuts come at a time when the national housing charity, Crisis, has predicted that by 2024 there will be 8,000 more people rough sleeping. The increase in the cost of living, benefit freezes and the end of Covid eviction bans are just some of the factors pushing people to homelessness. I understand The Winchester Beacon is working hard to prepare for the predicted rise and needs support now more than ever to achieve this.

Whilst I appreciate that savings need to be made I think that taking the money from such an invaluable service would be misguided and ultimately lead to more expenses down the line as people struggle to break the cycle of homelessness.

Yours faithfully,