



have  
**your**  
say...

# ...on The Birches Older Persons Home

An update on The Birches consultation

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**Central  
Bedfordshire**



# The Birches

## Consultation Update 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

### What we have done so far

Following the approval by the Council's Executive Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to consult on the future of The Birches the consultation documents were sent out to residents, relatives and other interested parties. Since then the consultation team have been busy talking to residents, relatives and staff about the proposals and encouraging them to complete the consultation questionnaire.

Many residents and relatives have now spoken to or met Claire Blankenship, the social worker in the consultation team who has spent a lot of time in the home helping residents to contribute to the consultation.

### Who we have consulted with

Along with the residents, relatives and staff, we have sent consultation information to the organisations listed below that all have a role in relation to The Birches.

**Local GP's** who have patients residing at The Birches.

**East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT)** – part of the NHS that provides services to people with mental health needs including people with dementia.

**Healthwatch** – the national consumer champion in health and care. Healthwatch have significant statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services.

**Shefford Town Council** – The Birches predominantly has residents from this area.

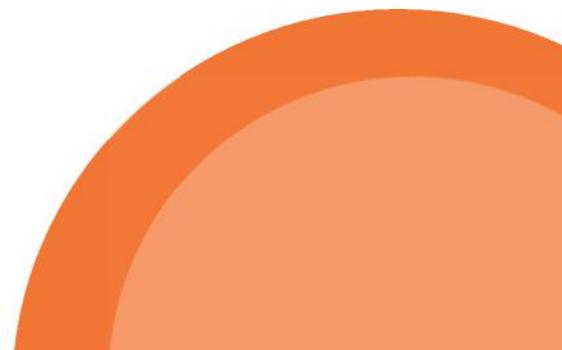
**Carers in Bedfordshire** – a registered charity existing to help family carers and former carers cope with the mental and physical stress arising from their role. They offer assistance such as practical help, advice, training, advocacy, support and information.

**Age UK Bedfordshire** – a local charity based in Bedford and operating through the whole of Bedfordshire and Luton for the benefit of all older people in the County.

**Alzheimer's Bedfordshire** – a charitable organisation providing information, support and services to people living with all types of dementia, their carers, family members, health professionals, and anyone else with concerns about their memory or that of someone else.

**Older Person's Network Group (OPNG)** – an independent forum to improve the services Central Bedfordshire Council Provide for older people.

**POhWER** – a charity and membership organisation that provide information, advice, support and advocacy to people who experience disability, vulnerability, distress and social exclusion.



## Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the questions that we have been asked so far during the consultation by residents and their relatives.

### **How can I arrange a visit to view Oak Manor or another residential care home in Central Bedfordshire?**

If you are interested in looking at other homes you can contact them directly to arrange a visit. If you need help or advice on this please contact Rebecca in the first instance – see details at the end of the document.

Oak Manor will not be open to take customers until September or October 2017, however the home should be open for viewing before then. When we have more information about this we will let people know.

### **Will Oak Manor offer nursing care?**

Like The Birches, Oak Manor will be a residential care home and any specialist nursing care needed will be provided by a Community Nurse.

If The Birches were to close, we would carry out individual assessments of resident's needs and if it is clear that a resident's needs would be better met in a nursing home then this would be discussed with the resident and their relatives.

### **Would I have to pay more if I were to move to Oak Manor or another residential care home within Central Bedfordshire?**

Those people who are not currently paying the full cost of their care would not have to pay any more than they do at The Birches.

For those who are paying the full cost of their care (currently £489.87 per week) their fee will be the rate that the Council pays to homes in the independent sector. This varies dependent on the home's care quality rating and the type of service it is providing. Rates for April 2017 onwards are being finalised and once these are agreed

we will be able to give details about the rate payable at Oak Manor and other homes.

We know that everyone's circumstances and preferences are unique and we will be happy to discuss the financial implications and options with residents or their representatives.

### **Would we still pay the Council or would we have to pay the new home?**

Yes, we will continue to invoice you for the care you receive at a new home.

### **Can I move my relative to Oak Manor or another home before the end of the consultation?**

The places available at Oak Manor have been reserved in the event that the Executive decides that The Birches will close. The intention is that this decision is made (one way or the other) before Oak Manor opens but even if it is not we would not encourage residents to move until a decision has been made about the future of the home. If the conclusion is that the home will close then we will put in place the resources, plans and activities to support residents and relatives, helping them to move and settle in to a new home.

If you feel that an early move to an alternative care home would be beneficial for your relative, please contact Sophie Fleming, The Birches Home Manager, who will be able to discuss this with you.

### **Will staff from The Birches be moving to Oak Manor?**

We know how important staff at The Birches are and we will provide them with help and support whatever the decision is about the future of the home.

Staff will not be transferring automatically to Oak Manor but we would be happy to work with MHA who will be operating the home to explore the employment opportunities for staff.

In the event of a decision to close The Birches Central Bedfordshire Council



would support staff to find alternative employment where possible. This could include redeploying members of the team to other homes or services run by the Council where there are suitable vacancies.

**Will Oak Manor be divided into units?**

Yes. Oak Manor will provide 64 en-suite bedrooms across the ground and first floors. Each cluster of 16 bedrooms shares separate dining and living rooms, with resident choice of which locations suit their needs best. The home includes a café, hair salon, cinema/multi use room, activity & treatment rooms in addition to other facilities.

We can provide you with an artists impression of the home as it will look when finished and drawings of the layout on request.

**Can I visit another MHA home to see how it is run?**

Yes, MHA would be pleased to show you round another of their homes. The nearest MHA homes are located in Hitchin ([Elmside](#) Tel: 01462 451737) &

Bedford ([Anjulita Court](#) Tel: 01234 273642) Please contact MHA via telephone or website to arrange a visit.

**What help will I have to move?**

If the decision is made to close The Birches an experienced and dedicated team would work with you to move you to an alternative home. Our priority is your health and wellbeing and to reassure you and your relatives during a period of change.

The Moves Team would include a dedicated Social Worker, Occupational Therapist and Co-ordinator. The Social Worker would give you personalised support before, during and after the move. They would ensure you and your relatives and representatives are involved throughout the process. The Moves Team would work closely with your current home manager and their staff to understand your needs and preferences.

**Independent advice and support**

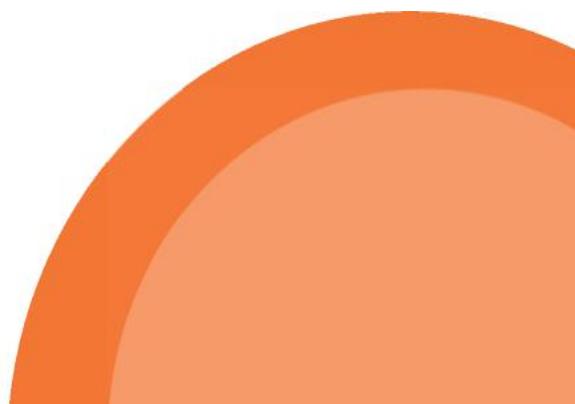
If you would like to speak to someone other than the Council, below are the contact details for two local independent organisations that would be happy to discuss the consultation with you.



Telephone: 0300 456 2370  
Email: [pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)



Telephone: 0300 303 8554  
Email: [info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk)





**Consultation Period and Decision Making**

No decision about the future of The Birches has yet been made. Below is a timetable of the activity planned between now and a final decision being made. The earliest a decision would be made about the future of the home is 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017.

Dates	Activity	Notes
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2017 to 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	Consultation period	You can respond to the consultation on the future of the home at any time during this period by filling in the questionnaire by hand, which can be obtained from The Birches or from Rebecca Carr on the numbers at the end of this document. This can then be posted to us or handed in to the management at The Birches. Alternatively the questionnaire can be filled in online at <a href="http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/consultations">www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/consultations</a>
19 <sup>th</sup> May to 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Preparing the report on the consultation	During this time we will be reviewing the consultation responses and producing a written report.
24 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Meeting of the Council's Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the report on the consultation and recommendations in respect of the future of the Birches.	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an opportunity for elected, non-Executive councillors and local residents to discuss and comment on the Council's policies, plans and strategies before they are presented to the Council's Executive. The Committee encourages public engagement in the democratic process and is keen for people to attend its meetings. The report will be published on the Council's website eleven days before this meeting takes place.
1 <sup>st</sup> August 2017	Meeting of the Council's Executive to consider the report on the consultation and recommendations in respect of the future of The Birches.	This committee made up from elected local councillors will consider the report and the comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and make a decision about the future of the home. This is a public meeting – anyone can attend. You can also watch the proceedings live on the Council's website or view them afterwards. The report will be published on the Council's website twelve days before this meeting takes place.
2 <sup>nd</sup> August to 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Call In period	The decision made by Executive on the 1 <sup>st</sup> August will be published two days after the meeting. Decisions made by the Executive can be 'called in' for reconsideration within five working days of the date they are published. In the event that the decision is not called in we would expect to be able to implement the recommendations from 11 <sup>th</sup> August 2017.

## What happens next?

Claire is continuing to meet with residents. She is undertaking assessments to ensure that all residents have their say in the consultation if at all possible and is encouraging relatives to be involved.

Alongside Claire, the other members of the consultation team will also continue to be available at The Birches on a regular basis to answer any questions you have. If you haven't completed the consultation questionnaire we would encourage you to do so. You can do this by filling in the questionnaire by hand and posting it to us at the address below or by leaving it with management at The Birches. Alternatively the questionnaire can be filled in online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/consultations)

If you need copies of the consultation documents or the questionnaire you can get them from the website. There are also copies in the home. If you want to be sent any of the documents please contact Rebecca Carr on the numbers below.

The closing date for consultation responses is 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017. All responses will be reviewed and included in a consultation report which will be shared with residents, relatives and staff before being published on the Council's website. The consultation report will accompany a report on the future of the Birches which will be considered by the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and at a meeting of the Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017.

As soon as a decision is made by the Council's Executive we will inform residents, relatives and staff.

## Meet the consultation team

The consultation team consists of (left to right) Claire, Mel, Ian and Rebecca.

You can expect to see them in the home and can contact any of them via Rebecca using the details below.

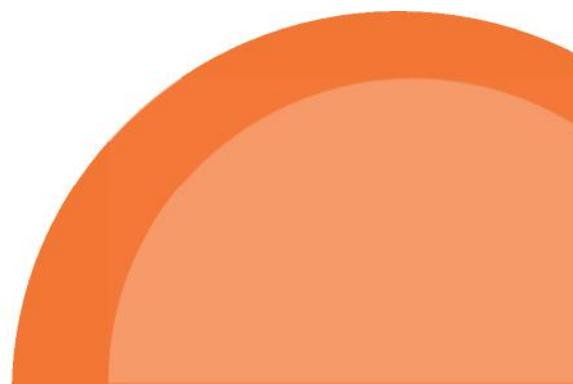


## Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 6609

by [email: rebecca.carr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.carr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Write to: Rebecca Carr, Central Bedfordshire Council,  
Houghton Lodge, Houghton Close, Ampthill, MK45 2TG



# Central Bedfordshire in contact

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