

# Information

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## for County Councillors

From:	Stephen Chandler – Director of Adult Services
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Date:	09.02.2017
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To:	All County Councillors
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## Learning Disabilities transfer update

This is an update on the transfer of the Council's Learning Disability Provider Service (LDPS) to a new social enterprise.

This is an important time in the work towards transferring the LDPS to the new Social Enterprise Venture (SEV).

It is worth at this stage revisiting the reasons for this transfer. The service needs to change to be sustainable in the long-term. Although there are many examples of excellent practice, being part of a local authority has made it difficult for it to compete with other providers and fewer people are choosing its services. Critically, people cannot legally spend their Direct Payments with their local authority. Without change the service will inevitably decline and become unsustainable and more restricted in what it can offer. There also parts of the service that are segregated, outdated and do not offer a modern support to people with a learning disability.

The SEV model was decided upon in November, 2014, following considerable engagement with staff, service users and their carers. SEVs are not-for-profit companies meaning that any surpluses made are reinvested in services and social projects. The model also includes a strong 'voice' for service users in the running of the new venture.

We believe that this transfer will result in a modernised, improved service that is sustainable in the long-term, while managing the reducing funding that is available to local authorities.

Dimensions UK, an established provider of support for people with Learning Disabilities, was chosen to set-up the new SEV following a tendering process. The new venture is due to be launched at the beginning of April.

As part of the process of transferring staff to the new organisation, Dimensions Somerset SEV has sent the Council 'measures' letters. These provide information about steps the SEV intends to take in relation to transferring staff as part as part of

its work to make sure the service can sustainably deliver great support for people with Learning Disabilities.

These letters cover a range of areas including changes to Terms and Conditions, restructuring of management and a review of how Day Services are provided.

We appreciate that much of the content of these letters will be sensitive for all key stakeholders, especially staff. We also understand that the Trade Unions wish to make their members aware of them as soon as possible.

So we have shared the content with members of LDPS staff via an email to Managers and this is being followed up by a personal letter to all members of staff, including copies of the 'measures' letters, which will be with staff on Friday 10 February.

We have also shared these letters with Trade Union representatives and they will be discussed in detail with LDPS Managers at a meeting on 23 February, then in team meetings throughout March.

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