

### Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. We are concerned about the residents; this is their home and if they need to move out it may negatively affect them.** Our main consideration is the residents at our homes. If residents need to move out of the homes because of major refurbishment or closure, a full, updated assessment of need will be undertaken with social workers to assist in this process, and we will make sure any care home they move to fully meets their needs. Residents and families will be fully involved in this process.
- 2. Many residents are over 90 and very frail. How will you ensure that any moves do not have a negative impact on their wellbeing?** If somebody has to move this will not be rushed and we will do everything we can to ensure that the move goes as smoothly as possible. People move care settings ordinarily for a variety of reasons and Surrey County Council staff are experienced in doing this in a professional and supportive manner.
- 3. Are we still admitting people into the care homes whilst the consultation is happening?** There will be no new permanent placements accepted until a decision about the homes is taken. However, we will be accepting people for respite and short-term placements, individuals coming out of hospital through discharge to assess or in an emergency situation, but in these cases, we will be notifying residents and relatives that the consultation is happening. The Placements Team are aware of this position.
- 4. Could someone admitted to one of the care homes under 'Discharge to Assess' (D2A) be given a permanent placement at the end of the D2A period?** There should be no new permanent admissions during the consultation period, and it should be explained to people on the D2A pathway that they will be required to move to a different care home at the end of the assessment period.
- 5. If a decision is made to close the care homes, how will Surrey's older people be cared for?** Surrey County Council has an obligation to assess the care and support needs of all older people if requested and will continue to commission care for those who do not have the resources to fund their own care. The council will purchase appropriate care to meet an individual's needs from the independent sector and will continue to meet its obligations under the Care Act 2014. In addition, the council aims to provide 725 Extra Care apartments by 2030.
- 6. Surrey County Council says it wants to provide more home-based care to enable people to stay at home as long as possible. How can the council provide that service when there is a national shortage of carers? Isn't it**

**more efficient to care for people in residential care homes?** It is important that Surrey County Council supports people's wishes to remain independent for as long as possible by supporting them with their care needs at home. The availability and recruitment of care staff is a national issue and will be part of the ongoing discussion into the future of adult social care.

7. **Is this just about lack of finances?** No, Surrey County Council has money to invest in the future of adult social care and this consultation will help members consider how that money will be best spent.
8. **Won't buying care from the independent sector be more expensive for Surrey County Council than running its own homes?** Buying care from the independent sector is not always more expensive. The council commissions care in a variety of ways including block contract beds and spot purchasing from the independent sector to ensure good value for public funds.
9. **Numbers of residents in the homes are very low at the moment. Have numbers been purposely 'run down' to make them easier to close?** No, the numbers have not purposely been run down. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on occupancy, and we have also received fewer referrals as a result of the government's new initiative called 'Discharge to Assess'. This has meant that more older people have been discharged from hospital to their own homes with the support of care staff whereas they may previously have been discharged to a care home. It is also important to note that we have not been able to accept all people referred to us as we have been unable to meet the needs of some people with complex needs.
10. **Would the homes have more chance of staying open if we were at full occupancy?** The low numbers in the homes currently are due to a number of factors including the homes being closed to admissions most of last year due to COVID-19, a reluctance by some people to move into residential care and more people going home from hospital through the Discharge to Assess process. The number of residents in each home will not be a factor in the decision-making process.
11. **How many of the eight homes are you thinking about selling or closing down?** No decisions have been made yet. This is a listening exercise, and our overriding priority is the wellbeing of the residents and staff at the homes - we want to involve them fully and sensitively. Surrey County Council's cabinet will make a decision about each care home in February 2022.
12. **What's the criteria for keeping homes open?** There are no criteria. Each home will be assessed individually on its own merits as each is different. It is therefore important to have your say by completing the survey on [Surrey Says](#) as all opinions will be considered.
13. **Will it be one decision for all homes?** No, each home will be considered individually.

14. **If the decision is made to close one or more of the homes in February 2022, how long would it take to close the homes?** It is difficult to say how long any planned closure would take. No decisions will be made until February 2022. If the decision was to close any of the homes further discussions would take place and an implementation plan would be developed. Our prime concern is the welfare of our residents and staff. Surrey County Council would work closely with residents, social workers and families to ensure that suitable, appropriate care in another home is secured for all residents should the decision to close be made. If a decision was taken to close a home, the closure process would not be rushed.
15. **Will the fact that our home's CQC rating has improved have a bearing on the decision or is it just the state of the buildings that will be considered?** Surrey County Council recognises the hard work and dedication of all staff in the eight homes being considered and is proud that the CQC has rated all our older people's care homes as 'Good'. All aspects of the services will be considered when Cabinet make their decision.
16. **This consultation is a PR exercise. The people at the top know what they will do anyway so why bother responding?** It is important to stress that no decision has yet been made on the future of the care homes. This is a listening exercise, and our overriding priority is the wellbeing of the residents and staff at the homes - we want to involve them fully and sensitively. We believe it is right for us to be asking for people's views on options for the homes to support Surrey County Council's cabinet to make decisions about their future. It is therefore important that you take time to complete the survey with your views and opinions by visiting [Surrey Says](#).
17. **Why were the care homes allowed to come back from Anchor Hanover Trust in such a poor state?** Surrey County Council were unable to access the buildings to conduct detailed surveys prior to the date they were handed back at the end of the contract. Once the buildings were handed back and condition surveys were completed, the true condition of the buildings became apparent.
18. **Why did you bring the homes back from Anchor Hanover Trust if you were planning to close them all along?** The homes came back to Surrey County Council as it was the end of Anchor Hanover Trust's contract. There was no plan to close the homes and any decisions on the future of the homes will be considered by Cabinet in 2022.
19. **The documentation provided on the website says that knocking down and rebuilding the care homes would not be an option as the sites are too small. Given that any modernisation would probably result in a reduced number of beds being available, is this really a feasible option?** Providing better facilities such as en-suite bathrooms and larger rooms for the same number of residents would not be possible under the modernise and refurbish option. A decision therefore needs to be made as to how viable the homes would be with reduced capacity. The sites may be suitable for building other

specialist services such as dementia care which are more suited to smaller services.

20. **There appears to be room on the site to build a new care home alongside the existing one. Could residents remain in the old home and be moved to the new home once it was completed, thereby minimising disruption?** This could be another option to be considered subject to planning and feasibility. It is therefore important to include any suggestions such as this in the survey on [Surrey Says](#).

21. **If the decision is made to modernise and refurbish one or more of the homes, would staff be involved in making the decisions on the new layout and facilities? Often 'professionals' make decisions that do not translate well into reality for day to day running.** Professionals would advise on the building structure, and staff engagement would be crucial to ensure any new design or facilities would work practically.

22. **I have heard there is a plan to knock down Meadowside so that the land can be used for either a leisure centre or flats; is that true?**

No, there is no plan to build a leisure centre or flats on the site. The consultation is a listening exercise and no decisions on the future of any of the care homes will be made until February 2022. A decision to close any of the homes would mean that Surrey County Council would conduct a review of the affected properties to determine whether the sites would be used by another service within the council. Adult Social Care would seek to ensure where at all possible, that there is a preference towards the future use of the vacated asset being used to provide services, or facilities, or support for older people and meet corporate objectives.

23. **If a decision is made to close the homes with the loss of jobs, what will Surrey County Council do to help staff find new employment?** At this stage no decision has been made on the future of the homes. However, should a decision be made that impacts job roles then there would be a staff consultation and Surrey County Council would support employees to be redeployed to other suitable jobs within the council where possible. Consideration would be given to available roles in the council at the time and the employee's skills, experience and aspirations together with location and salary. If redeployment is not possible within the council, support would be given to staff to find employment externally by assisting with things such as writing CVs, interview skills training and time off to attend interviews.

24. **If a care home is knocked down and rebuilt what would happen to the staff?** Every effort would be made to find alternative roles in another service whilst the building works took place.

25. **When do we know if our jobs are safe?** Surrey County Council's cabinet will make a decision on 22 February 2022 on each care home. When decisions have been made about each of the care homes further discussions will take place on what these decisions mean for each service.

- 26. if a number of staff decided to leave while the consultation is taking place leaving the homes short staffed?** We hope that staff will remain in their roles and continue to provide excellent care for residents. We will continue to carefully monitor staffing levels to ensure we can meet the needs of the residents. If necessary, we would use more agency staff and deploy staff from other services or from other areas of Adult Social Care. Unfortunately, if we had insufficient staff to meet the needs of the residents in accordance with CQC regulations, an operational decision may have to be made to move some residents to another in-house care home or as a last resort move all the residents and consider closing the home. However, it is hoped that staff will continue in their posts until a decision on the future of the homes is made.
- 27. What length of contract can we offer new staff?** We are now offering new staff 12-month fixed term contracts until we know the outcome of the cabinet decision in February 2022.
- 28. Why are you holding the consultation now when the staff have been under so much pressure and worked so hard throughout the COVID 19 pandemic?** We value and appreciate the hard work, professionalism and dedication of all our staff, but it is important that Surrey County Council considers the future of the homes because of the poor condition of the buildings. We need to make sure that we plan for any work to be done rather than wait for parts of the buildings to fail and have to react in a crisis. It is important to reiterate that no decisions have yet been made and the consultation is a listening exercise. It is therefore important that as many people as possible put forward their views by taking part in the survey on [Surrey Says](#).
- 29. I am undertaking an NVQ/Apprenticeship will I be able to continue if the home closes?** Anyone who is currently undertaking a qualification should continue as planned. No decisions have yet been made about the future of the care homes and the earliest a decision will be made is in February 2022. If a decision is made which will impact job roles, then a staff consultation will follow. Redeployment opportunities would be explored and if a role was secured elsewhere in the council then it could be possible to complete your qualification in your new role, if you had not already completed it by that time, provided the new role was relevant. If you secured a role outside of the council, we would advise you to discuss with your new employer about the possibility of them supporting you to complete your qualification.
- 30. If only some of the eight homes were kept open, would the people in the open homes keep their jobs whilst staff in the closed homes were made redundant, or would all staff be able to apply for the jobs in the homes that were to remain open?** It is important to reiterate that no decisions have been made at this stage and that the public consultation is a listening exercise. If a decision was made to close some but not all of the care homes, we would need to consider the impact on the workforce and undertake a staff consultation. This would include seeking opportunities to identify redeployment where this is needed.

- 31. If the decision is made to close one or more of the homes in February, what would happen to staff and how much notice would staff get if they were to be made redundant?** It is important to reiterate that no decisions have been made at this stage and that the public consultation is a listening exercise. If a decision was made to close some or all of the care homes, we would need to consider the impact on the workforce and undertake a staff consultation. The period of consultation would be a minimum of 30 days or a maximum of 45 days depending on the number of employees in scope. Staff consultation gives employees and trade unions the opportunity to understand in detail what is being proposed and why, as well as how employees might be individually impacted. They can offer their views and put forward any alternative proposals for their managers to think about before any changes take place as a result of the Cabinet decision. In situations where employees are to be made redundant there is a process which is followed, and employees would receive notice of redundancy in accordance with the notice period in their contract. Managers would support employees to identify redeployment during the notice period.
- 32. I have remained on Anchor terms and conditions, if a decision is made that impacts job roles would the process be different?** A decision has not yet been made about the future of the eight in-house care homes for older people in Surrey. This is a period of public consultation and is a listening exercise to seek the views of residents, families, employees and other stakeholders. If a decision is made that impacts job roles the staff consultation process will be the same for those on Surrey terms and conditions and those on Anchor terms and conditions.
- 33. I have remained on Anchor terms and conditions, if a decision was made that impacted on my job role and I was redeployed to an alternative role what terms and conditions would I be on?** If a decision was made that impacts your job role there would be a staff consultation and redeployment opportunities would be explored where needed. If you were successful in securing a new role at Surrey County Council, this would be offered to you on Surrey terms and conditions.
- 34. You have referred to the 'Project Team'. Do they have any practical knowledge of the care homes or are they just making decisions based on 'paper' facts and figures?** The team includes Chris Hastings (Area Director of Service Delivery, Adult Social Care), Jo Victor-Smith (Senior Manager-OP Services), Chris Whitty (Lead Project Manager, Service Delivery) from the Service Delivery Central Team, Hannah Dwight and Chloe Stokes from HR together with colleagues from the Property, Legal, Media, Finance and Commissioning teams. The Service Delivery central team have practical experience of the homes as do colleagues from HR and Property. The project team is responsible for collating all the information received as part of this consultation, together with other information such as the independent surveyors reports and preparing a report for consideration by the council's cabinet.

- 35. I recently saw something on Facebook about a consultation on a care service by another provider; is it ok to post something similar?** A factual post is acceptable, for example: 'A consultation is being held about the care home, here's the link, if you'd like to participate or know more'. You should not however give any opinions and it is important that as an employee of the council you do not bring Surrey County Council into disrepute or seriously affect public confidence in its ability to deliver effective services. For more information, please refer to Surrey County Council's social media guidance which can be obtained from your care home manager.
- 36. Can staff pass out surveys into the community for people to complete?** Staff must remain impartial so whilst they may bring the consultation to the attention of people in the community, it is important that they do not undertake canvassing and try to persuade people to respond to the survey in a particular way.
- 37. Can I complete the survey any other way than online?** Yes. Although the quickest and easiest way to have your say is to complete the survey online via [Surrey Says](#), paper copies are available from the care home manager, by requesting them via e-mail from [servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk) or by calling 01372 832257 (Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm) if you prefer. Once you have completed your paper survey please scan and e-mail it to [servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:servicedelivery.info@surreycc.gov.uk), post it to Mr C Hastings, Area Director, Service Delivery Management Team, Fairmount House, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7AH or hand it to your care home manager. Your answers and comments will then be entered onto the electronic survey.

This page is intentionally left blank