



# Review of Older People's Service Provision: A User's Perspective of Day Centres in West Kent

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In July 2009 the Kent LINK was approached by Kent Adult Social Services (West Kent) to help seek views of individuals who use day care services run by Age Concern in the West of the County. Specifically, the LINK was asked to carry out three pieces of work involving day care services which are commissioned at present by Kent Adult Social Services.



(Above) Age Concern, Gravesend

## These three pieces of work comprised of:

- ▲ A series of Focus Groups involving users of Age Concern day centres in West Kent
- ▲ 'Mystery Shoppers' assessing the day centres and their services from the perspective of future recipients of day care services
- ▲ Survey of individual prospective users with regard to their expectations of future day care services or their equivalent.

Eight day centres were involved in this first activity, and they were located in Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone, Northfleet, Sevenoaks, Swanscombe & Greenhithe, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. I would like again, to take this opportunity of thanking staff members for their co-operation and in particular, the service users who gave up their time and made the LINK's visit so enjoyable.

All of the service users that contributed to these Focus Groups welcomed the opportunity to be involved with this review of services. Although all praised the work of Age Concern they did think there were other areas that could be improved on, but much depended on better funding. Here are some of the examples of points raised by the Focus Groups:

- ▲ Transport is key to the operation of these centres as most users were dependent on specialised transport to get them to and from the centres

- ▲ Some buildings were not fit for purpose as some areas in the older buildings were inaccessible for users to benefit from those services that were located upstairs

- ▲ Attention was drawn to the increasing number of fellow users who suffered dementia to varying degrees

- ▲ Staffing levels and funding cuts had resulted in some social activities being reduced – these had previously been enjoyed.

In conclusion, for this part of the review the LINK has found high levels of satisfaction from the users of the services although, for the future, it was generally accepted that there was some scope to make a good service even better given the required resources. The second and third parts of this review are underway and the full report will be available early in the New Year.