

Date: Friday, 08 April 2011

Re: Questions and answers for the proposed Dunvant registration

Here are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the proposed registration of the Dunvant small group home. These will hopefully inform and reassure you about the proposed service.

What is the home going to be used for and when is it likely to open?

The house will be used as home for a small group of up to five vulnerable adults.

Our registration category is Younger Adults – Mental Health (aged 18-65).

It is our intention for the home to be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate of Wales (CSSIW) and thereafter regulated by them.

We cannot say when the home is likely to open as this is dependent upon a successful registration. Even once the home is registered, it is unlikely to open for a few months.

What sort of people will be living there?

Our residents will, by virtue of accessing the service, have had mental health issues. As you may know, many people experience mental health issues in their lifetime (“*one in four*”).

It is not possible to describe exactly what mental ill-health issues our prospective residents will have as we are yet to receive referrals for the home. This will not occur until we have registration. However, irrespective of their diagnosis, all have been assessed as safe and stable to live in the community by their NHS clinicians.

Our residents generally require support and rehabilitation in respect of activities of daily living which most of us tend to take for granted such as shopping, cleaning, cooking, using public transport, further education, expanding their experience and leisure activities.

Common features of mental health issues are vulnerability, anxiety, low self esteem and dealing with social stigma all of which we hope to minimise through our support for their chosen activities.

Typically our residents will spend a relatively short period of time in the care home before they move on to live in their own independent accommodation or to receive domiciliary care support in their own tenancies.

We have a track record of helping individuals successfully reintegrate into the community following periods of hospital admission.

Many of Integra’s residents either have, or will go on to have, jobs or other regular community commitments and are very much actively involved in community life.

Will the residents at the home be paedophiles and sex offenders?

Accommodation specifically set up to house sex offenders and/or paedophiles would not, as we understand it, be capable of being registered as small group residential care homes in the community regulated by the CSSIW.

It is our understanding that such services would be provided within the criminal justice and probationary services.

We believe it is now possible, in certain circumstances, to access a list of sex offenders living in your area from the police.

Our service is designed to support individuals with enduring mental health issues who have been assessed by the NHS as sufficiently well and safe to live in the community.

Have any of the residents got drug and alcohol problems?

We do not deliver drug or alcohol detoxification programmes. Our service in Dunvant is **not** a drug or alcohol rehabilitation service.

Our homes adopt a simple approach of maintaining an environment where our residents can feel safe in order that they can express their needs. This affords maximum recovery through which it is hoped that they can progress to a more independent setting.

Is the home going to be a locked or secure hostel?

No. All our residents are free to come and go because they are deemed safe to be living in the community.

Just as you and I, it is their human right to live without prejudice in the community. We believe this is enshrined in laws such as the *Race Discriminations Act*, *Equal Opportunities Act* and more recently the *Disability Discriminations Act (2010)*.

Our residents are not detained in our homes as our homes are **not** secure placements.

If our residents needed physical security they would not be in the community in a small group home like the ones we provide.

Will the residents have personality disorder and are they dangerous?

Our admissions criteria for the home **exclude** persons with a diagnosis of personality disorder (this would include psychopaths).

People with mental illness leaving hospital are not allowed to leave hospital if they are assessed as a danger to themselves or the public.

Our clients fall into a category of people who, if unsupported, would most likely isolate themselves and after a period of time become unwell placing themselves at risk of self harm or suicide. They generally need support to re-engage and to be rehabilitated.

It is a general misperception that mental illness relapse occurs within a short space of time. Generally relapse occurs over weeks and months. Within a 24 hour staffed setting such relapses should not go unnoticed.

Why is the property in Dunvant suitable as a small group home?

In summary, the home has been a care home historically. It is broadly similar to existing homes that we have opened successfully and where we have a positive relationship with the local community.

We believe it complies with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

We believe the home itself, and its location, are conducive to supporting local Swansea residents with their rehabilitation.

The home provides spacious accommodation with a relatively large rear garden and good parking facilities.

Dunvant itself is ideally located on the borders of the Gower, with good transport links, along with easy access to the M4 corridor and to the city of Swansea. A car will be available for our residents to access wider community facilities.

It mentions 'challenging behaviour' on your website. What does this mean?

There is a gross misperception as to what can be meant by 'challenging behaviour'. The general assumption appears to be that it inevitably refers to violence. In fact this is not the case.

In the six years we have been operating, none of Integra's residents have ever assaulted staff, relatives or the public.

The term challenging behaviour, in our context, mainly refers to the reluctance of some service users to engage, to socialise and to care properly for themselves due to the lethargy, low self esteem and other symptoms of their illness.

Not all of our residents generally will have challenging behaviours and it may be that none of the service users in the home will have challenging behaviours.

Why wasn't I consulted?

Firstly, the home has been a care home for older persons previously and when we agreed to purchase the building, as we understand it, it had been refurbished to be used as a home for children with autism and challenging behaviours.

We were told there had been no issues with the community historically in relation to these. According to the neighbours I have spoken with in passing, it was also a post office prior to that.

If we had known that there had been significant historical issues, we would have engaged with the community prior to undertaking to purchase the property. However, this is not our standard practice in the absence of known community concerns as there is no legal requirement for such consultation.

Secondly, 'small group homes' where a group of people live together as a single household (including where care is provided for residents), is no different in planning terms than a family home.

The home has the right planning consent for operating as a small group home (as a dwelling house). As such there is no additional planning permission required and therefore this means there is no required process for consultation from a planning perspective.

Thirdly, our policy is to inform neighbours, as a courtesy and to address any potential queries that can arise, once we have achieved registration.

Our experience is that neighbours and members of the local community may feel anxious until we have been open for a few months and they can see that their fears are unsubstantiated. Informing you at an earlier stage would potentially cause anxiety for a longer period of time and unnecessarily so.

We regret that our approach on this occasion, despite our efforts to avoid this occurring, may have contributed to wider community concerns partly as a result of the petition that was distributed before we spoke to you.

We have now contacted all of our immediate neighbours, are establishing contact with a local community representation group that is being formed and will continue to keep the councillors and CSSIW informed of community liaison actions. Indeed, we met with the local councillors prior to a recent public meeting (which we were not invited to).

Will you be providing nursing care?

We do **not** provide nursing care as our clients do not require it.

We are not a registered nursing home.

Like any other person living in the community, our clients may access community based healthcare facilities (including visits to their home where appropriate).

Individuals who require daily nursing support to be available 24 hours per day (physical or mental health) would not come to this home.

Does Integra have experience in managing care homes?

We are an experienced provider of residential care based in South Wales. We believe we have historically had a good reputation for delivering a high quality service.

We have several homes in South Wales all based in communities broadly similar to that in Dunvant.

We are inspected regularly by our regulator (CSSIW) and our annual inspection reports can be downloaded from their website: <http://www.csiw.wales.gov.uk/dataviewer/index.asp>. This allows all interested parties to see directly what our services are like in practice.

Our existing settings are called Riversdale (Cardiff), Ty Newydd (Cardiff), Maes Hafan (Cardiff) and Ty Nant (Rhondda Cynon Taff).

The prospective manager, Nicola Bolton, is an experienced manager. Like all residential care home managers, Nicola is in the process of being registered with the Care Council for Wales as well as with the CSSIW.

How many staff will support individuals living in the home?

The individuals living in the house will be visited by staff who will be present 24 hours per day on a shift pattern.

There will be a rota for the staff team visiting the home and this will be determined in due course (as the home is not likely to open for many months). Our existing shift patterns in other homes include a number of 12 hour shifts (from 8am to 8pm and 8pm to 8am) as well as flexible shifts (often for 8 hours) during the days and evenings arranged around the needs of service users.

The numbers of staff will depend on the numbers of service users and their individual needs, although there will be a minimum of one member of staff on duty and awake in the home at all times.

What training do your staff receive?

Our staff are trained in all statutory areas such as fire safety, the protection of vulnerable adults, health and safety etc. In addition we train our staff in many other aspects of care and support in order to maintain our high standards (including specifically mental health training) and for them to gain recognised QCF (replacement for NVQ) qualifications in care.

We hope that all this information is helpful. Please do share with us any concerns you have or suggestions for how we can hopefully address the understandable concerns and anxieties of the local community in due course.