

Supplemental commentary to be read with Petition on respite care submitted to Essex County Council on 18 March 2019

- Save Our Respite Essex simply wishes for Essex County Council to reverse their decision to half the number of bed spaces in both of their children's homes from 8 per night down to 4 beds per night. We just want both Lavender House and the Maples to operate the two flats and 8 beds as per prior to April 2019.
- We believe that each child with additional special needs is different and not all would suit the proposed shared care environment within another families' home.
- We as a group are concerned that there would be no way of knowing who is coming or going within the shared care home whilst the care for child is there, no reassurances on pets, lots of children with disabilities will not tolerate dogs or cats, our son doesn't, carees own children and security.
- Some of the children attending Lavender House and the Maples may be violent and damage their surroundings occasionally or even regularly and possibly try to escape.
- As a group we believe that children's respite homes work because the environments within these homes are very structured and routine based, can cater for each and every individual child's needs, friendly, well trained and knowledgeable staff who are understanding companionate and very trustworthy and superb with the children just superb!
- Each home has excellent security and emergency procedures and has more than adequate staff levels in the event of an emergency.
- The two respite homes are an essential part of the life of families of children with disabilities an absolute lifeline. Without this service these families simply just would not be able to function humanely and would self-destruct.
- Gives families quality time with other siblings to do things other families would do without hesitation and perhaps take for granted.
- Reducing the number of beds in these respite centres makes it more difficult to be flexible with when respite can be taken. A short break away, family gatherings that are too stressful for our special needs children to go on or to.

Gary Knowles
Lead Petitioner
Save Our Respite Essex