

County is ahead of game

26/ 6/2008

In response to Coun Adrian Collett's letter to the Star (June 12) regarding the closure of Christmas Lodge, I would like to emphasise that Hampshire County Council is ahead of the game when it comes to looking after our elderly community.

The demand for residential care has been decreasing for several years because there are more services available to help elderly people stay independent within their own homes. When people become too frail and unable to cope in their own homes they very often need nursing rather than residential care.

This was the reason for the county council's Enhance Programme which has provided an extra 500 nursing beds alongside the 739 residential care beds we provide. So we now have more beds than before the start of the Enhance Programme.

The homes that have been closed were built in the 1970s and with narrow corridors and small bedrooms didn't provide the space to meet the increasing needs and frailties of residents.

We are reinvesting in Adult Services and introducing Extra Care Housing to Hampshire which will provide a modern environment where older people can stay independent for longer with their own front doors, but with care on site 24 hours a day. I believe it will enable us to meet the wishes of our elderly residents who tell us that they wish to stay independent in their own homes.

Coun Felicity Hindson, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Hampshire County Council