

Reach's Proposal for relocation to Hawtonville Community Centre

Context

Reach Newark is a local organisation providing day service provision to over 100 adults with learning disabilities. Reach Newark is part of Reach Learning Disability (Registered Charity no.1076318) which has its Head Office in Southwell and also runs day centres at Brackenhurst College (Flower Pod), Southwell and Mansfield.

Our vision is of a community where people with learning disabilities can make a good life for themselves – a life full of meaning, challenge, opportunity and friendship. Our mission is to enable people with learning disabilities to reach beyond expectation by providing personalised support with purposeful activity and by creating new opportunities for them to lead fulfilling lives in their own community.

Reach has been located at Barnbygate Methodist Church, Barnbygate, Newark NG24 1PX since 2009. Over the last seven years, the day service has grown considerably and is seeking premises that better suit the needs of the organisation and particularly, our clients.

Reach staff have visited Hawtonville Community Centre and believe that, with the right conditions, the property could meet the requirements of the organisation. It goes without saying that the clients of Reach will be sensitive when it comes to moving premises. Many of them consider Reach Newark as their second home and transition will need to be handled with care.

We were asked to put together a proposal stating pre-conditions if we were to relocate to Hawtonville Community Centre. Naturally, it is important that this move is made in the best interests of our clients and can improve their experiences and, consequently, their life chances.

We understand that this proposal may be different from the current or anticipated model of tenancy. We have tried to be clear as possible about the things for which we need assurance but, at the same time we will understand if you have your own objectives which may conflict.

Chantelle Welsher
Newark Centre Manager

Reach Learning Disability - Essential Needs

- We would need to have sole use of the ground floor from Monday to Friday (8am – 4pm). This would include the reception room from where we could monitor people in and out of the premises.
- Due to the confidential nature of much of our work and the type of information stored, we would require some lockable rooms as offices for Manager and staff.
- Due to the obvious vulnerability of our clients we would require the door to the ground floor to have some secure entry system that could, preferably, be controlled from the reception room.
- Due to substantial disruption that such a transition can cause we would need some security in terms of lease duration. We would require a minimum of a 3 year lease.
- Reach to take over the building undertaking prime keyholder role.

Desirable Conditions

- Reach to take responsibility for existing and new bookings. This would ensure consistency of approach and clear lines of communications between tenants.
- The money that has been set aside for some refurbishment is used to update the toilets, door handles and paintwork and any other immediate needs.

Anticipated Benefits to Occupation

- Under this proposal, and combined with the current Dance School, the building would be in constant occupation from Monday to Friday from approximately 8am with the obvious benefits to the community.
- Potential for some shared contact points for local police representatives and N&S Homes in upstairs offices.
- The likelihood of reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour.
- The inevitable benefits to the building structure of constant occupation and regular maintenance.
- Onsite reception, administration and booking facility.
- Community engagement opportunities and good prospects of development of relationships with neighbours and local schools etc e.g. inviting them to watch the performances/taking part in our singing sessions etc.
- The District Council and /or N&S Homes could potentially have the security and simplicity of one main tenant.
- Creation of volunteering opportunities and potential for paid employment for community members as the charity develops.

Other Considerations

Reach Newark is currently just about financially sustainable with a very reasonable serviced rent from the Methodist church. Clearly, we anticipate being responsible for utilities at Hawtonville. We would, unfortunately, have a restricted budget to work within if we were to take over the building but we would hope that we could offset some rent liability by the provision of an administration and reception service for the Community Centre. One possibility might be to consider Reach becoming the main tenant to N&SDC or N&S Homes and allowing us to sublet to other community organisations and individuals. This would require some caretaking responsibilities and the concomitant cost.

Existing furniture would be left in the building which would enable us to plan appropriately.

We understand that some funding has been put aside for refurbishment of the building and we anticipate that this would be utilised before a main tenant took occupation to ensure the buildings are clean, safe and fit for purpose.

We do understand that the landlord will have their own future objectives in terms of community engagement for the property and we would seek to achieve these. We recognise that there would be a requirement for the continued use of the building for the general benefit of the Hawtonville community.

There needs to be a reasonable timescale. It would be useful to tie the relocation in with a natural break in our day service and therefore we would be keen to agree terms reasonably quickly to be able to prepare our clients appropriately.

RESEARCH