

With no family network for support, the thought of raising a family of my own was a daunting one to say the least. An accessible resource in the centre of my own town, that provides that much needed excuse as a lonely isolated woman to get out of the house with her child.

Somewhere I can meet other parents with the very same worries and concerns, the sure start centre did exactly what the name suggests and gave me and my beautiful child the sure footing and the confidence I needed.

So how does it make me feel to knowing this could be taken away partially or wholly?

Desperate and anxious would be a fair place to start! I personally am looking to have more children in the near future and if the wonderfully friendly and knowledgeable staff, and the second family of friends made were to be taken away, then I along with lots of other mothers would go back to a life of isolation and loneliness, bringing potential severe illness such as post natal depression and anxiety that would leave many families struggling to just survive.

The network that is vital to healthy families and in turn society would not be there to support the vulnerable people at such an important time in their lives.

Speaking on behalf of many mothers and fathers that use and rely on the centre, we are both saddened and shocked that this is even being considered an option shouldn't the children in our communities be a priority? shouldn't we be striving to continue to provide the necessary skills to the those caring for these very children?

As everyone is aware over the next few years there is a massive expansion of Keynsham town centre with approximately 1500 new homes to add to the ever-growing community this brings with it not just fuel for our economy and council tax payments it brings potentially a plethora new families with births and problems as well as successes.

The workload of the already stretched 30* internal and external groups that are based at our sure start will only be increasing thus needing financial support not abandonment at this time.

From social services to Midwives, from the police to speech therapists these are all really well utilised in the daily strive to produce a harmonious and functional community.

Having used things like the breast feeding group I know I may not have been able to feed my son for nine months without them, without the Stay and play groups my son would not have had the opportunity to mix with his peers to be introduced to other children learning how to share, play and explore with others to integrate to society.

I genuinely believe that if you start to chip away at the very foundations of a community spirit, a key stone like the centre, it will be the start of the decline of our towns worth. It will stop with the schools at the age 5 to identify those families that need the help by which time it's too late its engrained thus needing more help more resources in turn costing more to achieve this.

It is easy with the right help and determination to raise a happy child given the support beginning and in some cases before the child is even born.

I would like to summarise that the Keynsham sure start centre is a recognised institution that is utilised in every way possible to such positive effect that without it I see nothing but a decline particularly for the newest generation of Keynsham and BANES

As a mother I ask please don't take away our encouragement our support and our reassurance.

It's easier to build up a child than to fix an adult , please choose your actions carefully.

Thank you for listening.