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17a Cross Street, Oswestry, SY11 2NF

8<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**RE: Termination of Contract**

Dear

We are writing this letter now as we have heard that our conversations with Richard Kubilius since September 2017 are no longer continuing due to illness.

When we received, by email, a letter to terminate our contract in September 2017 we were shocked, particularly as the letter highlighted we were not a service priority. This felt like it was a decision made by people who have not visited our studio, read our reports or talked to us about our work. It was in direct contrast to all the communication we have had with the CCG over the last two years. We did not challenge the letter at the time as we were in continuous conversation with Richard Kubilius about a new way of working and a new contract. We now find ourselves in the situation where all that work to create a new future for mental health support in Shropshire, is lost. This is hugely disappointing and puts us in a very vulnerable position.

**We want to know who we can continue conversations with?**

Without Designs in Mind there will be increased pressure on already exhausted statutory services.

- Designs in Mind is a referral route for community mental health teams and the Redwoods acute inpatient hospital for people with severe and enduring mental illness
- As part of the STP under Fit & Well and Maximising Independence the CCG have committed to improving services to patients through the delivery of Wellbeing Centres, to enable both primary and secondary prevention of mental illness and receive proactive support. Without Designs in Mind the potential to realise this is significantly reduced.
- Removal of Designs in Mind will increase ED attendance
- Removal of the service will have a negative impact on people's recovery and emotional resilience
- Removal of the service will have an additional impact on primary care
- The current crisis in A&E will be exasperated when people have no support in the community

The CCG money is currently 40% of our income. Without support from the CCG Designs in Mind would have to close.

*We need places to refer people where they will be supported to move on, Designs in Mind does exactly that.*

Community Mental Health Team

We currently have 74 adults referred through mental health services. Referrals come through continuously and people live across North Shropshire.

Designs in Mind is a service that is designed and led by people living with mental health challenges and has the potential to expand across Shropshire.

*Mental Health services only work if they are connected to communities and are not only about the individuals. Once people are in the system it is very hard for people to get out and move on with their lives. This does not happen without support.*

### **Impact on the future of Designs in Mind and future 'Wellbeing Centres'**

In July 2017 Richard Kubulis visited Designs in Mind, to better understand our work and to see our future business plans. **You will not understand the impact of our work without visiting the studio.** We are being visited by CCG's around the UK, as a model of good practice and to replicate. To not be in partnership, known or valued by our own CCG is unthinkable.

Designs in Mind is currently a working studio open 3 days a week for over 70 adults referred through mental health services. We establish all referrals as 'members' – creating a peer group and a supportive environment where we work as a team. Through the creation of commissions to transform public and private spaces, and designing and making products for retail, members are creatively challenged and work with purpose, building their self-worth and discovering new aspirations for the future.

Our work is intensive and supports people as individuals, recognising that the recovery paths they each take is different. Our service is not time limited. Members can stay until they are ready to move on. On average people stay with Designs in Mind for 3-5 years. Our members have typically been out of work for many years, some have spent 2-3 years getting a diagnosis and in that time have retreated to a room they never leave. For most of our members we see the transition from only coming out of the house to Designs in Mind to doing their own shopping, meeting their children from school, joining other groups, volunteering or going back to work.

Our plans with support from the CCG were to open 5 days a week from April 2018 and to open for self-referral in the evenings, so that people who can't even get in to the 'system' can get support when they need it. We were to work closer with Shropshire Mind, Samaritans, SIAS & Confide to provide a comprehensive alternative mental health service that compliments and supports that delivered by the Trust, enabling people to get support when they need it.

In December 2017 we opened our first shop. This is on the high street in Oswestry and is so much more than a shop...

- A safe space within a shop ensures 'mental health' becomes part of everyday life
- Being on the high street makes it easier for people to find help without judgment, stigma, or shame
- Everyone starts talking about mental health
- The shop makes visible lives and stories that can often be hidden
- The shop sells work that has been made and designed by members of the studio
- Makers get immediate feedback seeing work they have made sold
- It is a safe space for makers to communicate and chat to strangers
- New roles and responsibilities are created from studio to shop, the first step for people who have been out of work for a long time to find appropriate work

Designs in Mind has the potential to develop more studios, more 'Wellbeing Centres' through developing shops in more areas across Shropshire- with their own income stream. All this potential is lost without support from the CCG. We cannot be 100% commercial and we can't be 100% nurturing we have to be both those things in equal balance to make this work. A working relationship that ensures we are a valued part of mental health support in Shropshire is essential to the future of Designs in Mind.

### **Impact of the closure of Designs in Mind on individuals**

(To read our impact report 2016-2017 please click here-

<https://www.designsinmind.co.uk/social-impact-report> )

*Without Designs in Mind I fear I would not be alive*

Designs in Mind Member

- Increased isolation
  - 42 of our current members would not leave the house if it was not for Designs in Mind
- Increased suicidal thoughts
  - *'Since coming to Designs in Mind I don't feel suicidal every day. It is early days, but already I can feel the difference'*
- Increased anxiety/ depression/ stress
  - In 2016-2017 our impact report highlights how 95% of members reported an increased in wellbeing
  - Life events and doing daily activity- like going to the shops, meeting children from school, attending meetings about health or potential work can often set people back- quote
  - Designs in Mind is reliable and safe. This is the one space for many people where they can breathe, be themselves, not be judged and not have to pretend.
- Removal of peer support
  - Designs in Mind is often the only place members come outside of their appointments. Making friends is the number one outcome described by all members. We are the first step to making wider connections.
  - Even when family and friends are around conversations with peers and people with lived experience are very different and vital support as people find ways to live life
- Life without challenge and surrounded by low expectations
  - Repeatedly we hear people say that they have now become defined by their mental health. With no challenge there can be no belief. At Designs in Mind people redefine who they are to take on new possibilities. This is work based recovery- this sense of purpose is essential as people find new ways to live life.
- Extinguished aspiration
  - 30 people currently at Designs in Mind are ready to take next steps into independent life. They would return back in to statutory services if Designs in Mind were to close.

### **Case Study:**

We were recently commissioned to make 3 Awards. One of our makers- M, was very keen. M sourced suppliers of materials and equipment and set to work experimenting. Within a week he had produced the finished wooden blocks and we were all stunned.

At this time M was living in his shed at the bottom of his garden. He was struggling in an abusive relationship and was very depressed. He would often come in talking very negatively, suicidal and anxious. But, he would come in. Designs in Mind is a place where M feels safe. At Designs in Mind we are supporting him through conversations and changes that are ahead with housing, police, mental health and social services- but what he comes here for is to know he is worth something and that makes everything else possible.

## Cost Savings

We believe that we can demonstrate the resource savings we offer the CCG. By operating 3 days per week for 48 weeks a year to an average of 20 members attending the equivalent of two sessions a day, we provide services that would cost the statutory sector £195,840 per year to deliver. This is almost five times the value of the annual contract offered to us by the Clinical Commissioning Group (see figure 1 below).

It costs £34 per mental health user per session to provide adult day care services through the public sector<sup>1</sup>.

*Designs in Mind* provides an average of 20 members a day a safe and supportive environment where friends, purpose and creative challenge make independent ambition a reality.

**20 users x 3 days a week x 2 sessions x 48 weeks a year @ £34.00p =  
£195,840**

Our total budget (including all our activities) for the year 2016/17 was £105,000 and our contract from the local Clinical Commissioning Group was £42,604.

We therefore provide services that would cost 4.68 times more if provided by the statutory sector. **So for every £1 the CCG invests in *Designs in Mind* we provide an equivalent return on investment of £4.68.**

***Fig. 1: The true cost of not resourcing Designs in Mind***

The amount outlined above in figure 3 does not include factoring in any other reduction in service use by our members, e.g. fewer visits to a GP, lower hospital admissions or less prescription usage. A study of these wider factors could be expected to show our extended value.

**We want to keep talking. We are an essential part of the mental health support in Shropshire. There are some things that the statutory services can't do. To make anything happen there has to be a partnership between the CCG and the voluntary sector, people that are rooted within communities.**

**We look forward to hearing from you**

**Kind Regards**



**Catherine Wilks  
(CEO)**



**Mike Edwards  
(Chair)**

<sup>1</sup> Page 38 Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2011 by Lesley Curtis, Personal Social Services Research Unit, University of Kent. 2011