

**Re attachment 2****Witness statement****Brackenridge Services Ltd (BSL)****27 June 2022****In response to Mr David Newman**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr Newman's statement. I want to acknowledge that contributing to the Inquiry will be extremely difficult for Mr Newman, his family and whānau. I am very sorry that Brackenridge Services Ltd (BSL) support for his brother Murray, caused distress and fell short of expectations and the standards we uphold today. I am confident that with the current knowledge, skills and experience within BSL, as well as in the broader sector to support us, we would do a better job of transitioning from the Templeton Centre to BSL today.

**Some context about BSL:**

BSL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canterbury District Health Board and provides community residential and respite support across the Canterbury region for over 200 people with high and complex support needs, this includes people who are intellectually disabled and/or have an autism diagnosis. Many of the people BSL support experience a mix of sensory impairments, some communicate non-verbally, some express behaviours that are challenging, some have multiple physical disabilities and / or high health needs and some have difficult social circumstances. The youngest person supported is age 7 years old, and the oldest 70 years. Service funding is predominantly provided through a range of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki and ACC contracts. We employ over 400 staff and provide care and support 24/7.

BSL was established when the former Templeton Centre closed in 1999 with 84 clients of the Templeton Centre residents transferring into BSL service. At the core of our practice philosophy is our belief in all people and the rights of all to live in and be part of the community and to exercise citizenship. Our practice is outcomes focussed and informed by the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles.

**In specific response to Mr Newman's statement:**

- The staffing issues described in the statement were real, as was the case for other service providers in the sector at that time.
- The staff team at that time worked with the local Intellectual Disability Community Team to develop and maintain a plan to support Murray.
- Decisions about who lived in which homes at the time of the transition in 1999 were made by the management and leadership of the Templeton Centre and it is assumed that these decisions were informed by detailed knowledge of the people transitioning into the new homes, including information about their individual needs and behaviours.
- The decision to admit Murray into Hillmorton was made by the mental health crisis team and our staff recall that his mother did not want him to return to Brackenridge
- We agree that for a lot of the people we support, smaller homes in the community are the best living arrangements. While this may not be the case for everyone, we are working with the Needs Assessment Service, LifeLinks and the Ministry of Health, to make these smaller, community homes more financially sustainable and achievable for more individuals.

**What we are doing to continuously improve**

- Today BSL works hard to identify, understand, and respond to the individual needs of the people we support, and we take due time and consideration when deciding who shares a home together. This includes consulting with other residents and their families or whānau. We have learnt that taking this time to obtain the right mix in a home can have a positive effect on home harmony which benefits individuals and staff alike.
- BSL would like to see funding models improved and surety provided through more accurate 'in advance' contracts so that we are able to reduce the number of clients with high and complex needs that are typically required to live together in one home. This will alleviate financial pressures so that BSL staff can focus their efforts on supporting clients to achieve their personal goals, leading to improved outcomes and benefits for their wellbeing.

- Over the past four years we have significantly increased front line staff and team leader numbers. Our commitment has always been to ensure the right levels of staff are in place. As per the rest of the sector, we are challenged, particularly in a pandemic response environment, to find enough appropriately qualified and skilled staff for these front-line roles.
- In line with broader Sector and System Transformation for the Disabled Community of Aotearoa that is underway throughout New Zealand, BSL is working its way through a comprehensive programme of work that aims to strengthen and evolve service provision. This work is aligned with the principles of Enabling Good Lives and in support of our obligations to New Zealand Disability Strategy, upholding our obligations to the Convention of Rights for People with Disabilities.