

NEWS

Council's respite cut in breach of Care Act

RESPITE care for a disabled man has been reinstated after Wiltshire Council was told it acted unfairly by the social care ombudsman.

The council was found to be in breach of the Care Act 2014 after it slashed the number of hours of overnight care for the disabled man, named only as Mr P.

The council wanted to take away 46 nights of care for the man, who lives with his disabled father and carer mother. He was also told that he would have to pay £120 a week to continue visiting a day centre for support.

The Local Government and

Social Care Ombudsman's report described how his mother was left at breaking point, looking after both her son and disabled husband.

The report said the council's cut in respite hours was in breach of the Care Act and should have been introduced to the family's routine gradually. It also found that the council's actions were part of a "cost-cutting exercise. It was not based on assessments of need and was therefore in breach of the requirements of the Care Act and was at fault".

The council have been fined

£1,247.50 for the stress and loss of care and 24 respite nights have also been given back to the family, alongside a full apology.

A reassessment will now take place, following authorised guidelines.

Claire Edgar, director of adult social care, mental health and learning disabilities, told the council's standard committee: "We are continuously working to ensure we are Care Act compliant.

"It is something that Wiltshire Council and all local authorities have had to do, and it is a constant revision."



We make breakfast

When a lie-in is a distant memory.

Some mornings just call for McDonald's.

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'Brexit will bring the West global opportunity'

ALEX ROSS
CHIEF REPORTER
alex.ross@reachplc.com

THE West Country is a sleeping giant in global exports, and businesses should take advantage of the opportunities Brexit will bring, says the boss of a multi-million pound firm based in Somerset.

Carl Stephen Patrick Hunter, chief executive of Coltraco Ultrasonics, is concerned over the uncertainty leading up to the March leaving date, but is confident it will open up markets to companies in the region.

He was talking after securing a major contract with the Indian Navy to provide ultrasonic equipment which will be used to ensure the hatches and doors of its 155 warships are watertight.

The firm has a head office in the village of Ston Easton and has only 25 workers. But it serves a customer base around the world which includes the Canadian, Danish, French, Australian and US navies.

We can now focus our country's work more on a global scale than we have done

CARL HUNTER



► Carl Hunter, CEO of Coltraco Ultrasonics in Somerset

"The South West is an underestimated region of the country," he said.

"We have leading industries, highly skilled workers and you cannot forget the historical naval reach from ports like Plymouth.

"I am proud to be part of the continued success of the region, but I think we can do more in exporting our goods and services to markets around the world."

He added: "We will be leaving the EU and we have taken action as a company accordingly, but 74 per cent of our trade is outside the EU.

"We have concerns but leaving the EU means we can now re-balance our country's trade on a more global scale and enable us to look freshly and enthusiastically at exporting outside the EU."

Exports from the South West have grown in the five years up to 2017, when 12.3 per cent of goods made in the region were sold to markets abroad.

Trade Secretary and North Somerset MP Dr Liam Fox, who Mr Hunter supports, is leading a campaign to encourage more companies to export.

In November, at a speech in Bristol, he said there was huge interest in UK

products from India and China.

Mr Hunter's firm started trading overseas with a deal in New Zealand within a year of starting up, 25 years ago.

The company was born out of an idea from his father and former naval officer, Eric, for using ultrasound to ensure the tightness of doors and hatch covers on navy and merchant ships.

It is now also used by the firm for fire extinguishing systems and inspections in areas such as rail mining, renewable wind energy and electricity distribution.

British ultrasound was first used by the Royal Navy 102 years ago to detect German U-boats.

Mr Hunter said he saw the Government as its partner in securing deals, and he has received help from the Department of International Trade's trade show access programme.

He has also been supported by the Business Integrity Initiative, which provides advice to businesses exporting to Africa and Asia.