

Briefing Paper on Care Support Independence: Meeting the needs of a changing society: The case for change – Why England needs a new care and support system

Joint report of the Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services and the Strategic Commissioning Manager

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief the Board about *The case for change – Why England needs a new care and support system*, published on 12 May by HM Government, in preparation for the Board on 16th September.

2. Overview

- 2.1 *The case for change – Why England needs a new care and support system* sets out the case for a debate about the long term future of England's care and support system. The Government wants to engage stakeholders in discussions about how the existing system can meet the challenges of the future. This engagement process will take place between May and November 2008 and the findings will inform a Green Paper on the reform options.
- 2.2 An extensive transformation programme has already been developed to improve the care and support system in the medium term, as set out in *Putting People First* and subsequent related publications. However, a radical rethink of how care and support services will be delivered and funded is needed if England is to have a system fit for the 21st century. Otherwise, there is the risk that the demands on families become too heavy and people may go without the services they need to live their lives fully and stay well.
- 2.3 This is a cross Government reform and a range of services and types of financial assistance are being considered within the scope of the debate including, social care; some elements of housing support services for older and disabled people; support for independent living for disabled people and benefits that help people with extra costs of disability in later life.

3. Key Points of the Document

- 3.1 Care and support describes the activities, services and relationships that help people to be independent, active and healthy, as well as to be able to participate in and contribute to society throughout their lives
- 3.2 The care and support system aims to promote independence and wellbeing and should be based on people being able to get personalised services that are tailored to their specific needs
- 3.3 The existing care and support system is not sustainable because of the massive challenge that changing demographics and the changing demands and expectations of people present in society. In 20 years time, the cost of disability benefits could

increase by almost 50% and it is expected there will be a £6 billion funding gap in social care

3.4 There are several problems with the current system:

- Too often the existing system: under funds preventative care that keeps people healthy and active; it has a tendency to create an over reliance on residential care or healthcare options when people would prefer earlier interventions; and social care is often criticised for penalising those who save for old age, whereas the benefits system gives the same amount to everybody regardless of their financial situation
- Lack of transparency in the system: people are currently unclear about their responsibilities and those of government and there is little information about how best to save and prepare for the costs of care and support. Often people underestimate the likelihood that they will need care and support in the future, therefore people with moderate and substantial needs have to rely on their family for support or go without vital services. Longer term, these people are more likely to need intensive services more quickly
- Unfairness in the system: people are unclear about the different roles that central and local government play in contributing to costs of care and support. Means testing is seen as unfair and different authorities have different eligibility criteria for social care. To understand how FACS varies across local authorities, CSCI is undertaking a review of FACS criteria, their application by councils and their impact on people.

3.5 Demographic, social, technological and economic changes provide an opportunity to create a new care and support system that reflects the needs of the 21st century

3.6 The vision for a new care and support system is one where people can participate in and contribute to society, stay well or get back to full health quickly after accidents or surgery, undertake practical tasks, undertake personal care and be safe at home

4. Consultation Questions for Debate

4.1 The Government is working towards the vision through an extensive transformation programme, which includes:

- Providing better information
- Improving the quality of social care
- A greater focus of prevention
- More personalised care and support

4.2 The principles of the vision are:

- **Promoting independence, choice and control for everyone who uses care and support services** – a new care and support system should focus on prevention and early intervention so that people can avoid or delay the onset of more intensive needs. Appropriate information is important for people can be independent and have choice and control. Improved information is needed to make sure people can access information and advice more quickly and clearly. The care and support system should be flexible so that it can adapt to different needs and wishes.

- **Ensure that everyone can receive the high quality care and support they need, and that everyone gets some support from government, but that funding is targeted at those most in need** – a future system should ensure that the poor are not disadvantaged and that people who have saved and planned for later life are rewarded appropriately. Everyone should know what type of support they are entitled to, what government will pay for and what other services will be provided free. The system should help people to meet their care and support needs, regardless of the particular balance of contributions by Government and the individual.
- **The system must be affordable for government, individuals and families in the long term** – there needs to be agreement about the balance of responsibility between individuals, families and government.

Question for debate: what more do we need to do to make our vision of independence, choice and control a reality?

- 4.3 There are currently three main sources of contribution to the cost of care and support - the family, the individual and the Government.

The Government are looking at how care and support should be paid for in the future, so that the system is sustainable as demand for services increases. Government feels that the principle of sharing costs between the family, the individual and government is right, however, it wants to examine potential sources of funding with the public and stakeholders and debate the appropriate levels of contributions from each source. Government also wants to examine the different ways in which it could help people to insure against the costs of care and support and what role it should play in terms of bearing the risk of high costs of care.

Question for debate: what should the balance of responsibility be between the family, the individual and the Government?

- 4.4 The development of any new system will mean making difficult choices about how to balance different priorities. Government wants to explore whether it is fair or not to protect financial support for people who have been disabled at a younger age and expect people who have more predictable care needs in older age to have made some provision to continue to look after themselves in later life. Government needs to consider to what degree it believes it is right to distinguish between different kinds of care and support needs.

Question for debate: should there be one system for everyone or different systems depending on the type of need for care and support that somebody has?

- 4.5 A key component in the current system is the role and work of Local Authorities. Local services and offers of financial support can differ for people with the same types of needs in different areas. Some people are dissatisfied with this system and have called for greater national consistency, however this may result in local people losing their right to have their say about how locally raised money is spent on care. Should there be an equal system for everybody regardless of where they live, or should local people be able to decide local priorities for care and support? Should funds raised locally and spent locally or should there be a more national system?

Question for debate: which is more important to us: local flexibility or national consistency?

- 4.6 There will be a need to make sure that the poorest people in society are supported, but there is a need to consider to what degree Government targets care and support based on an individual's financial means. At one extreme, government money could purely be targeted towards those people with the least financial means. At the other extreme, everybody could get exactly the same level of care and support regardless of their wealth. Government needs to decide which is best for society.

Question for debate: should the system be the same for everybody or should we consider varying the way we allocate government funding according to certain principles e.g. what should the balance be between targeting government resources at those who are least able to pay and having a system that supports those who plan and save?

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- Receive this briefing paper for information in preparation for the meeting on 16th September 2008