

Written Ministerial Statement

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Government's vision for adult social care

Tuesday 16 November 2010

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr Paul Burstow): We are today publishing the Government's plans for adult social care services – *A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens*. Alongside the Social Care Vision, the Department has launched a consultation on *Transparency in outcomes: a framework for adult social care* - a new strategic approach to quality and outcomes in adult social care.

The vision sets the context for the future development of social care services. It is the first step, followed by the Law Commission's work on reforming the legal framework next spring and the Commission on Funding of Care and Support next summer, towards the White Paper on care and support at the end of 2011. This will set out plans to establish a modern and financially sustainable framework for care and support, and the requirements for new legislation.

The vision sets out a new direction for adult social care, putting people, personalised services and outcomes centre stage and returning social care to its foundations of reciprocity and constructive action by individuals on behalf of the whole community. It sets a challenge for councils to provide a personal budget, preferably as a direct payment, for everyone who is eligible by April 2013. As councils devolve commissioning responsibility to individuals via personal budgets, we expect them to work with providers to broaden the market of care services, particularly small social enterprises, so that individuals can exercise real choice over care services. A consequence of personalisation is that people will increasingly take their own decisions about how to balance their new freedoms with a sensible approach to risk. The vision also calls for an increase in preventative activity in local communities, to keep people independent for longer and contribute to building the Big Society.

The vision includes examples of how councils, working in partnership with local organisations and people, can develop innovative, efficient services. It encourages people to look to themselves and their communities, not just the state, for solutions and in doing so to grow the Big Society. It alerts councils to their new leadership role in health improvement and health and well being boards and the opportunities this offers.

Councils should use the solid basis for social care funding delivered by the recent spending review as a springboard to reform services. In recognition of the pressures on the social care system in a challenging local government settlement, the Coalition Government has allocated an additional £2 billion by 2014-15 to support the delivery of social care. This means, with an ambitious programme of efficiency, that there is enough funding available both to protect people's access to services and deliver new approaches to improve quality and outcomes.

Plans for service reform were outlined in the social care consortium's Partnership Agreement, *Think Local, Act Personal* launched at the National Children's and Adult Services conference on 4 November 2010. Led by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Group on behalf of 21 social care organisations, it describes the next steps for councils to personalise services and provide more comprehensive information for people who need advice on care and support services. In addition to this, the consortium has also produced a number of best practice guides.

The key principles for adult social care described in the vision are:

prevention: empowered people and strong communities will work together to maintain independence. Where the state is needed, it helps people to retain and regain their independence;

personalisation: Individuals not institutions take control of their care. Personal budgets, preferably as direct payments, are provided to all eligible people. Information about care and support is available for all local people, regardless of whether or not they fund their own care;

partnership: care and support delivered in a partnership between individuals, communities, the voluntary sector, the NHS and councils, including wider support services, such as housing;

plurality: the variety of people's needs is matched by diverse service provision, with a broad market of high quality service providers;

protection: there are sensible safeguards against the risk of abuse or neglect. Risk is no longer an excuse to limit people's freedom;

productivity: greater local accountability will drive improvements and innovation to deliver higher productivity and high quality care and support services. A focus on publishing information about agreed quality outcomes will support transparency and accountability; and

people: we can draw on a workforce who can provide care and support with skill, compassion and imagination, and who are given the freedom and support to do so. We need the whole workforce, including care workers, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers, alongside carers and the people who use services, to lead the changes set out in the vision.

Copies of the vision and the consultation document have been placed in the Library and copies are available to hon Members from the Vote Office.