

Care and Support Conference, 19th February 2010

Today, key voices in the care and support world have come together and discussed the key issues facing the care and support system, to give their views to national and local politicians. It was a helpful, broad ranging, high level discussion that helped to build consensus towards a White Paper . This paper summarises views given by attendees at the conference and was agreed by delegates at the final session as a summary to provide to politicians.

Consensus around the Vision...

There is consensus around the vision for the **National Care Service**

- A national care service, where individuals make a **contribution in partnership with the state**
- A system which enables **assessments of need to be portable across the country**, but delivered locally with local government in the lead
- A **personalised** system, giving individuals and families maximum control of the care and support they get
- A priority for **preventative care and early support**
- A **joined-up service** where all the services that you need will work together smoothly. This includes better joined up working between health, housing social care and the disability benefits systems
- Clear **information and advice** so people can understand and find their way through the care and support system, including disability benefits and health

But we also agreed...

In addition to this Vision reform also needed to

- Give more emphasis to the vital role that **carers, families and communities** make to the system,
- Give more emphasis to the importance of including **adults of working age**, ensuring this part of the system is fully funded and better managing transition from childhood to adulthood
- Recognise that **workforce planning and development** are critical to the quality of care and support
- A wider range of high quality services to support people to experience personalised services
- Give people more detail on **delivery**, including **winners and losers**, and **no perverse incentives**
- Be clear whether it is a national **system or service**
- Not be isolated from **other services** e.g. housing, leisure, transport
- Support people as **citizens**, not passive recipients

- Promote opportunities for better integration between disability benefits and the social care system
- Recognise that a good care and support system will not only deliver quality care for the individual and their family but will also provide an infrastructure to support employers and increase wealth

However, there was concern over the **possible reform of disability benefits**

- Everyone acknowledged that such benefits provide valuable support to a wide range of people, for a range of disability-related costs. It was agreed that existing or potential recipients should not lose out
- People were fearful that reforming disability benefits would impact on their quality of life and independence
- Any reform needs to capture the strengths of the current benefits system, including universality

Comprehensive is the emerging consensus

- On balance, the majority view is in support of a comprehensive system, with a variety of ways to pay the contribution.
- An element of compulsion was supported, whether soft or hard
- Universality and fairness is important and we need to consider people's ability to make a contribution (progressive, not a flat rate)
- The contribution of carers needs to be taken into account and recognised in the payment options
- Any system needs to be simple and understandable
- There needs to be clarity over what you receive in return for your contribution
- On balance the majority view was to reject the Green Paper options of 'Partnership' and 'Insurance'
- Any change may need to be phased in over a period of time, recognising affordability
- Any system needs to work for future generations as well as the immediate cohort
- The conference regretted that the option of general taxation had not been explored