

Proposed Draft

**Central Bedfordshire Joint Response to the Green Paper –
Shaping the Future of Care Together**

Introduction

1. Central Bedfordshire Council and its partners welcome the Green Paper on the Future of Care and Support. We acknowledge the need to address the future provision of care and support for an ageing population and funding to meet the demands of a population with expectations of better services and greater choice.
2. We welcome the principles of fairness, simplicity and affordability, which will ensure that care and support is accessible to all who need it.

Question 1

3. **Is there anything missing and how should this work?**
4. Consultees felt that planning and development of housing for the older population was not included in the above list. Maintaining your independence and staying in your own home was a major priority for older people yet this has not been addressed in terms of housing development.

The Green Paper failed to highlight mechanism for monitoring and accountability particularly in relation to joined up services. It was felt that reference should be made to the instigation of a more robust regulatory system to ensure the vision for a joined-up service is successful.

Consultees felt that it is important that people are helped to live independently in their own communities.

Our Consultees welcomed the six elements of the proposed National Care Service.

Prevention Services are key to maintaining independence and it is right that a holistic approach is taken. People should have access to the right care and support so that they can regain independent living. More investment is needed for prevention services to avoid crisis.

Prevention is also key with up and coming generations where they might be increasing levels of issues such smoking, substance misuse and mental health.

The Third Sector also has an important role in prevention services. Getting communities thinking creatively about social activities and more opportunity for social contact for older people or vulnerable people would be needed. More community volunteering should be developed to encourage community well being and build social capital.

General Practitioners and other health professionals also play a big part in prevention services. Central Bedfordshire consultees felt that there should be seamless pathways between health and social care, particularly for those moving from acute care and needing longer term social care support. There is already

greater emphasis on prevention services, particularly through the transforming social care and the personalisation agenda. This needs to be extended and consideration should also be given to better and more equitable access to out of hours health care services.

Carers should be given more consideration in the White Paper. More recognition for carers should be one of the six elements of the proposed National Care Services. There should also be provision for additional support for carers.

More robust investment is also needed in assistive technology and falls prevention schemes. It is also essential that Good Neighbourhood schemes are encouraged and supported.

Re-ablement as a universal right is welcome but must be adequately funded to offer real value to people. The Green Paper fails to address how this will be funded? More investment and better training is needed particularly to ensure more effective diagnostic practice

National Assessment

We agree with the concept of a national assessment and the opportunity for consistency in the way in which people's needs are assessed and remove the widely accepted view of a postcode lottery.

The criteria on which the assessment is based needs to be very clear and robust enough to ensure consistent application and not open to interpretation. A national assessment should also include a review system to monitor and address the needs of those who initially fail to fit in with the eligibility criteria to accommodate change in circumstances for those who may not be immediately meet the eligibility criteria.

Funding was also identified as a real concern and that for a national assessment system to work; there must a commitment or assurance that government can provide the funds to enable this to happen.

The question of how portable a national assessment is within the UK remains, as the system in Scotland differs from England. What would happen in those circumstances?

A Joined Up Service

A joined approach is welcome. Services should be aligned or integrated where possible to deliver better outcomes for people and we would advocate a multiagency approach with a clear lead and clear budgetary arrangements are made. The Green Paper does not explain how services can be joined up although makes mention of the ministerial working group on integration of health and social care services.

The number of assessments an individual has between services and across health and social care is an issue. It is hoped that the White Paper will champion a single assessment process across the services and reduce the pathways for care.

Information and advice from different agencies can be conflicting and confusing. A joined up approach would address some of these issues particularly around information sharing and the limitations posed by the Data Protection Act. Joined services can provide economies of scale and more effective and timely services.

Information and Advice

Access to information and advice is a key part of enabling and empowering our communities. It is key to prevention and early intervention. Shared information and a universal base of knowledge across service providers should be promoted.

Consultees felt that there should be greater investment in more 'One Stop Shops' across all local authorities that can be easily accessed by all. This is particularly important for self funders and carers.

More use should be made of community outlets such as libraries and GP surgeries to provide and disseminate information on services such as Carer's packs and signposting to community support and advocacy groups.

Information and consultation with service users on planning new service initiatives should also be given priority.

Personalised Care and Support

The emphasis on personalised care and support in the Green Paper is welcomed. Personalisation of care and support is a key priority for Central Bedfordshire and its partners. Our consultees felt that the majority of people would opt for more choice and control over their care support needs, if given the option. It would allow people to remain in their own communities and access services which are more appropriate to their needs.

Personalised care needs to be supported by good information to enable people make good judgements about their care needs. There are however wider implications for specific care groups – e.g. young adults with learning disabilities and those who are more vulnerable and could be excluded due to lack of appropriate support. This needs to be taken into account and provision made to support this group of people.

Safeguarding is also an important issue in this context. The Green Paper does not address the safeguarding agenda within personalisation.

Fair Funding

We welcome the broad principle of fair funding and the need for a system that is fair and equitable for all, regardless of personal circumstances. However there are concerns and differences on what is 'fair'

There are concerns about the historical inequitable approach to funding and hope that the White Paper will address this.

Question 2

Making the Vision a Reality – a National Care Service

Access to timely, flexible, high quality services, which offers choice and delivered in partnership with sufficient funding, is key to making this vision a reality. It is also important to have mechanisms in place which will allow resource transfers between organisations.

Effective partnership arrangements with aligned priorities and strategies should be an integral part of this vision. Joint working poses an important challenge and has implications for the integration of services if the aspirations of a national care system are to be met. However, it could lead to better use of current resources and / or be more creative with the use of current limited resources.

Consultees felt that cooperation between government bodies could result from such an initiative. Sharing best practice to provide better outcomes for people. People would feel more confident with a visible single point of access to services, better communication, forward planning and prevention.

A National Care Service should provide a holistic approach which will cover all aspects of care needs and allow the development of flexible, skilled workforce able to respond to individual care needs across the spectrum of care provision. Offering greater choice and control to the customer.

A National Care Service should support an integrated approach to reablement and intermediate care services which can often involve a succession of different health and social care professionals.

A National Care Service should offer better support for carers.

Barriers

Consultees felt that a major barrier would be resources and the capacity to deliver these ambitions. Another important issue highlighted is the cultural shifts needed within organisations providing care and support and meeting the needs and aspirations of people. Changing public perception care and support funding will be challenging.

A lack of robust market place for social care service provision and appropriate workforce to deliver this new vision are also important barriers.

Third Sector organisations has a key role in the delivery of this vision and may face challenges in meeting the changing relationships, for example from a grant funded organisation to contractual arrangements to provide care and support to their local communities.

Consultees felt that there was a danger of targets hampering choice

Funding Options

Funding was a particularly contentious issue within the groups and many consultees felt that they were being asked to comment on how the proposals would work in practice without sufficient information in the Green Paper on which to give an informed opinion.

Almost half of the consultees expressed a preference for the 'Partnership' option, with a quarter abstaining from a choice due to the lack of detailed information available on the options. The remaining quarter were almost evenly split between 'Insurance' and 'Comprehensive'. Overall consultees felt that there was no obvious clear choice. Other options, such as a combination of Insurance and Partnership together, were suggested, as well as increased National Insurance contributions and personal taxation.

The overwhelming response to the question was that there was insufficient detailed information on the options available, such as who would be responsible for holding any insurance monies. Concerns were also expressed about how safe people's money would be and some felt that this debate should open up dialogue with younger people about preparing for their old age and possible care needs.

Some consultees felt that the insurance system would work for the majority of people of working age, provided that the scheme was administered and regulated by the government and not put solely into the hands of private insurance companies or organisations without set guidelines and conditions.

A suggestion was made that a person's primary residence should be excluded from the calculation of assets when means are assessed. This would be a popular move and would not lead to a reduction in houses owned, which could occur, if the current policy is extended to care

Some members felt that it would be a simple and fairer option to raise taxes which would negate the need to introduce funding options that will only create further anxiety and controversy.

National vs Local

We welcome the reiteration of the role of local authorities in the delivery of care and support as set out in the Green Paper. The delivery of the vision will need to be coordinated at the local level. Local authorities and partner agencies have a key role in delivery prevention services and enhanced care and support.

The majority of Consultees agreed that national government should decide how much money each local authority should get but with local authorities having clear input into the decision making process to ensure that local needs were addressed. They also felt that more clarity is needed around the definition of and what would constitute "minimum entitlement" and that any resource allocation system should be able to take into account the varying levels of need.

More clarity is needed from the government on the role of local authorities in the context of this Green Paper.