

From Paul Burstow MP
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Dear colleague,

I am pleased to let you know that Government has today published the Care and Support White Paper, the draft Care and Support Bill and the progress report on funding reform. Alongside, we have also published our response to the Law Commission's recommendations. Together, they represent the Government's ambitious plans for transforming care and support.

We heard loud and clear through the *Caring for our future* engagement that the current system is failing people. The reforms, which you and your colleagues helped shape, will begin to transform people's lives and enable people using care and support, carers and their families to pursue their goals and aspirations.

This is a great demonstration of what we can achieve when we work together.

Care and Support White Paper

The White Paper sets out a new vision for a reformed care and support system. Promoting people's wellbeing and independence sits at its core instead of waiting for people to reach crisis point. Families and individuals will have better information to plan and prepare for their future, and people and carers will have more options to keep them well and independent.

We will also transform people's experience of care and support, with high quality services that respond to what people want. People will have better control over their care and be empowered to choose the care and support that helps them live the lives they want.

A summary of the key proposals can be found at annex A.

Draft Care and Support Bill

Underpinning many of our proposals will be a complete overhaul and modernisation of care and support law. Based on the Law Commission's recommendations, the draft Bill represents the most significant reform of the legal framework in over 60 years, replacing provisions in over a dozen Acts of Parliament. By changing the law, we will place people's needs and goals at the centre of how care and support will work in future, and will ensure that local authorities work for the wellbeing of everyone in their area.

The draft Bill also includes a small number of crucial health measures, which include establishing Health Education England and the Health Research Authority as non-departmental public bodies.

We have published the Care and Support Bill in draft, for public consultation and Parliamentary pre-legislative scrutiny over this year. This is a unique opportunity to redesign the care and support statute for the 21st Century.

Progress report on funding reform

We have also made clear today that we agree with the principles of the Commission on funding of care and support's recommendations, on financial protection through capped costs and extended means test, and recognise that they would be the right basis of any new funding model. It is our intention to base a new funding model on the Commission's principles if a way to pay for them can be found.

Making it happen

This is a long-term plan for the reform of care and support. To turn this vision into reality requires everyone – Government, local authorities, the NHS, care users and their families, care providers, care workers, and communities – working together. Change will be the shared responsibility of leaders at every level of the system, from chief executives to registered managers to personal assistants.

To continue our collaborative approach to reform, I would welcome your help in driving forward the White Paper reform agenda and in getting the legislation right.

All the documents published today, including easy read versions and supporting material, can be found on the following link:

www.caringforourfuture.dh.gov.uk

Whilst today represents a great milestone, it is only the start of the reform journey. The real work starts here and I would welcome your continued support on this journey.

Yours sincerely,



PAUL BURSTOW

Annex A - Summary of key Care and Support White Paper, draft Care and Support Bill and progress report on funding reform commitments

To help people stay active and independent in their community, we will stimulate the development of time sharing schemes where people volunteer their time, skills or practical help in exchange for 'credits' that they can use to access the help of others.

We are also looking at new ways of investing in services that help people to stay independent for longer, such as social impact bonds.

We will create a £200 million capital fund over five years to stimulate the development of specialised housing for older and disabled people so people can make the right choices about suitable housing to help them live independently for longer.

We will make sure people have much better information to help them make choices about care. For the first time there will be one place - nhs.uk - to go to for national information on NHS, social care and public health. Local authorities will develop improved online information and support about the care and support options available locally.

To improve the quality of care and help people choose between different providers, from today, every registered social care provider will have a quality profile on nhs.uk. Over time, we will make it easier for people to give feedback and compare quality.

To help people understand what care they are entitled to, we will introduce minimum national eligibility for care and support and we will make it easier for people to move between local authorities, without worrying that they may lose the care they need.

For the first time ever, carers will be recognised in the law the same way that those they care for are. We will extend their existing right to an assessment, and provide a new entitlement to support to meet their eligible needs, to help them with their caring role.

We will transform people's experience of care and support, with services that respond to what people want. People will have control over their own budget and their own care and support plan. They will be able to choose the care and support that best enables them to meet their goals and aspirations. We will put people, and not institutions, in control.

We will work with commissioners, care providers, people who use services and carers to bring an end to commissioning practices that undermines people's dignity and choice.

We will place dignity and respect at the heart of new national minimum training standards and a code of conduct for those working in care. To drive up quality and bring new people into the profession, we aim to double the number of apprenticeships to 100,000 by 2017. To give the social work

profession leadership we will appoint a Chief Social Worker by the end of 2012.

To put people in control of their care, we will create a legal entitlement to a personal budget for everyone so people will be able to control the way they are cared for. By 2013 everyone needing community care will be offered a personal budget as part of their care and support plan, preferably as a direct payment. We will increase the availability of independent advice and support to help people make their own choices about care. We will test direct payments for people who choose to live in residential care.

We will consult on central oversight of the social care market, maintaining that continuity of care – not provider – is the core principle. Local authorities have a duty to ensure continuity of care, we will make this clear in the draft Care and Support Bill. This will provide people with reassurance that should a Southern Cross-like scenario happen again, no-one would be left without care.

Improved integration is a key priority for care and support. A care package should fit seamlessly around a person's needs, and not what a care provider feels is an adequate amount of care. The health system will transfer an extra £100 million and £200 million in 2013/14 and 014/15 on top of the £7.2billion already agreed in the last *Spending Review*. This, together with better arrangements for sharing people's information (set out in the DH Information Strategy) will improve joined-up working between the NHS and care and support, such as making sure that people move smoothly from being discharged from hospital back into their own home or residential care instead of feeling that they are being passed from pillar to post.

We will consult on whether any power of entry is required alongside the duty to make safeguarding enquiries. We do not want to intervene in people's lives unnecessarily. However, we are aware of the strong feeling from some that a specific power of entry for safeguarding would give an opportunity to offer timely information and advice, and ensure that people who are unable or unwilling to ask for help can have their voices heard.

We agree that the principles of the Dilnot Commission's model – financial protection through capped costs and an extended means-test – would be the right basis for any new funding model. Our intention is there if a way to pay for it can be found.

Given the size of the structural deficit and the economic situation we face, it is right the final decision on whether to proceed is considered alongside other priorities at the Spending Review.

We have accepted a number of important recommendations made by the Dilnot Commission. Most notably, we are committing to Universal Deferred Payments which will ensure that no one will be forced to sell their home in their lifetime.