

Bulletin



www.familycarers.org.uk

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National Family Carer Network
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NFCN is an umbrella organisation that aims to promote the voice and rights of family carers supporting a person with a LD. Its membership comprises both organisations and individuals but we cannot be responsible at any time for the views expressed by our members unless explicitly promoted by us.

National

1. Letter to Norman Lamb regarding IHAL funding

The Improving Health and Lives Learning Disabilities Observatory (IHAL) keeps a watch on the health of people with learning disabilities and the health and social care they receive. The Observatory was set up in June 2010 in response to Sir Jonathan Michael's Inquiry and the Ombudsman's 'Six Lives' report, which both criticised the lack of robust data on the health and access to healthcare of people with learning disabilities. The Observatory has produced invaluable intelligence and has also served as a repository for locally generated information that can be shared nationally, such as the results from the Health Self-Assessment. Such information will be even more important in future to enable people with learning disabilities, family carers and HealthWatch to hold local commissioners and services to account.

We were becoming very concerned that the contract for IHaL might end on 31st March. The National Family Carer Network with Mencap wrote a letter to Norman Lamb, supported by other major charities, about continuation of funding for IHaL. We are pleased to report that we understand funding has now been confirmed for the coming year.

<http://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/>

2. Jeremy Hunt announces government proposals to cap adult social care

On 11 Feb, the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt announced in the House of Commons, his response to the Dilnot report on funding adult social care.

- Up to 40,000 people a year currently face having to sell their homes to afford care bills such as help with washing, dressing and feeding themselves. If someone needs residential care and has more than £23,250 in savings, capital or assets, they must pay for their care in full.
- The government is proposing to cap the amount that anyone will have to pay towards their basic nursing care (such as help to get washed and dressed) in a lifetime at £75,000. This figure is based on 2017 prices – when the reform will come in – meaning that in today's money it will be about £61,000.
- This figure would only cover the cost of nursing care and people would still have to pay for accommodation and food - although some support will be provided and may be limited to £12,500 a year.
- Under the new proposals, there will now be an increase in the means-test threshold, so that anyone with assets under £123,000 will automatically receive free care. When a pensioner's assets are reduced to £123,000, the state will meet some of the costs of care. Once the state steps in, it will only pay for basic care, which will not necessarily meet the standards that the resident was previously paying for.

- Just the last £14,000 of savings are expected to be fully protected, as in the current system.
- Ministers claim nobody will be forced to sell their home in their lifetime – with everyone given the right to defer paying until after their death.
- The hope is that, by establishing the principle that the state will cover the really high costs, people will start planning for their future care needs in the way they do for their pensions in retirement. There are a variety of ways in which the elderly with the means to do so can free up £75,000, but one way that the government is hoping for is that the insurance industry will develop products that cover old-age care.
- Mr Hunt also confirmed that the plans, expected to cost about £1bn a year, will be part-funded by freezing the inheritance tax threshold - at £325,000 for individuals and £650,000 for couples - for three years from 2015.
- The means-tested threshold is higher than the £100,000 assets limit recommended by the independent Dilnot Commission appointed by David Cameron to make recommendations on the highly-fraught issue. But the cap on cost is more than double the £35,000 economist Andrew Dilnot suggested.
- Economist Andrew Dilnot, whose review into the future of social care recommended a basic care cap of between £25,000 and £50,000, said the proposals were "not perfect" but he hoped the new framework would "radically reduce" people's anxieties about how they would cope in their old age.

Proposed changes to elderly care in England: What you could pay

People affected

Care costs

Initial assets up to £123,000

eg. Property/assets worth £17,500 or less
 eg. Property/assets worth £50,000
 eg. Property assets worth £100,000

Initial assets above £123,000

eg. Property/assets worth £150,000
 eg. Property/assets worth £200,000
 eg. Property/assets worth £250,000

Means tested - proportion covered by state

Pay £0 towards care (0% of assets)
 Pay £16,577 towards care (33% of assets)
 Pay £44,611 towards care (45% of assets)

To pay - up to max £75,000

Pay £67,399 towards care (45% of assets)
 Pay £75,000 towards care (38% of assets)
 Pay £75,000 towards care (30% of assets)

*ASSETS NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AN ESTATE THAT IS GROWING. NOTE: ACCOMMODATION, IF REQUIRED, WOULD BE PAID FOR SEPARATELY - EITHER BY A PERSON'S PENSION, FAMILY OR BY MEANS-TESTED STATE HELP. SOURCE: DEPT OF HEALTH

The proposals will still face a full debate in parliament.

3. ODI publication: 'Fulfilling Potential: Building a deeper understanding of disability in the UK today'

The Office for Disability Issues has published the next document in their series: 'Fulfilling Potential: Building a deeper understanding of disability in the UK today'.

This document summarises the analytical evidence on disability. It looks at the number of disabled people in the UK, as well as looking at the way disability develops over the life course and at the fluctuating nature of disability. It also looks at the trends in outcomes and the barriers to participation in different areas of disabled people's lives.

'Fulfilling Potential: Building a deeper understanding of disability in the UK today' is published on the ODI website and can be downloaded from <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential/index.php>. As well as the main document there is also a summary version. The summary version is available in easy read, audio, BSL and Braille.

If you require a copy in an alternative format please email fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

4. Ambitious about Autism - Family Support Season online Q&As

Online community Talk about Autism will host live online Q&As, supporting parents and carers on the issues that they care most about. Each hour long Q&A will cover a topic that families have identified as being an issue they would welcome support on. Each live Q&A will be hosted by an expert in their field and will run from 8-9pm in order for them to be accessible for parents and carers.

The Family Support Season online Q&A remaining is:

- **30th February 2013 (8-9pm): Supporting your child to socialise and make friends** – with Jennifer Cook O'Toole, author of Asperkids

Transcripts of previous Q&As are also available. To access the Talk About Autism site please [click here](#).

For more information about the Q&A sessions please contact Danielle Wootton on DWootton@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk.

5. Access to communication services for disabled people

Ofcom is seeking your views and experiences on accessing communication services. They are looking to update the requirements they place on communications providers. For more information [click here](#).

The deadline for response is Friday 22nd February.

6. WELD Blog: Living in own home offered choices to people with learning disabilities but location predictive of support related choices

Choice is one of the four fundamental principles of Valuing People, the white paper produced in 2001 to guide development of support for people with learning disabilities in England.

This US study looks at this principle in practice using data from the 2008–2009 National Core Indicators Project. They looked at the impact of a number of factors on the number of everyday choices made by 8,892 adults with learning disabilities and support-related choices made by 6,179 adults receiving services from 19 state agencies.

What they found was that when they controlled for physical and sensory impairment, age, behavioural support, communication, and the state in which people lived, people in residential settings with 16 or more people had less everyday choice than those in other living arrangements.

To read the full article, please visit the WELD blog [here](#).

7. BBC Radio 3 Music Matters programme: Music and Autism

Music Matters, originally broadcast on Saturday 9th February, included an interview with Professor Adam Ockelford who has devoted much of his career to working with severely autistic children and enhancing their capacity for musical expression and enjoyment.

You can find full programme details and listen to the broadcast on the BBC iplayer [here](#).

South East

8. Gig Buddies project - Brighton and East Sussex

[Stay Up Late](#) are looking for motivated, inventive people who are positive about diversity and want to be a part of the growing community of Gig Buddies in Brighton. You will be paired up with somebody with a learning disability who has similar interests to you, to attend events, explore new music together and share your passion.

You would need to commit to attending at least one event a month with your buddy. You don't need to have experience of working with disabled people – but you need to be committed, a good listener, interested in promoting people's rights and wellbeing and keen on live music! You will gain skills in advocacy, supporting people with learning disabilities and community development. As a volunteer, you will be fully trained and supported.

This position is subject to an enhanced DBS check (formerly CRB). For more information please contact Madeline – madeline@stayuplate.org / 07827228171
www.stayuplate.org

Yorkshire and Humber

9. Learning Disability Today event

Tuesday 14th May 2013
Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield

Free to attend for people with a learning disability, unwaged carers, natural supports, and full-time students (£25 for waged)

Learning Disability Today focuses on current national objectives and how they can be translated and implemented, to provide high quality local services for people with learning disabilities.

Showcasing projects and organisations that extend choice and control for people with learning disabilities across all areas of their lives, the day of seminars cover a wide range of issues and concerns for people with learning disabilities, their families, carers and the people that work with them.

Full details are at www.learningdisabilitytodayevents.com
Register to attend [online now](#)

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