

Putting **People First** Transforming Adult Social Care

Social Care Transformation: Elected Member Briefing

There is a growing force for change in social care, driven by the desire to improve the quality of life for disabled and older people. This vision for social care fits squarely within the wider public policy reform agenda outlined in the 2006 Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and supported by the 2007 Lyons Inquiry into the future of local government. It is about the role your council can play in improving the well-being of local disabled and older people, and the choice and flexibility that you can extend to individuals and communities so that they can design solutions that work for them. Members are ideally placed to drive these improvements forwards.

Putting People First – what is it?

Putting People First is an agreement between central and local government and other key organisations about the direction for adult social care for the next 10 years and beyond.

Published in December 2007, it sets out the shared aims and values which will guide the transformation of adult social care and radically improve people's experience of local support and services. It supports partnership working between central and local government, social care professionals, providers and the regulator to achieve this, and builds on the 2006 White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'.

The vision set out in Putting People First is underpinned by 4 key themes:



- **Access to universal services such as transport, leisure and education as well as information, advice and advocacy** – planning for these to consider the implications for disabled and older people
- **Prevention and early intervention** – helping people early enough or in the right way, so that they stay healthy and recover quickly from illness
- **Choice and control** – People who need support can design it themselves, understanding quickly how much money is available for this, and having a choice about how they receive support and who manages this.
- **Social Capital** – making sure that everyone has the opportunity to be part of a community and experience the friendships and care that can come from families, friends and neighbours.

What does it mean for me as a Councillor?

Members, in their role as community champions and elected representatives can get involved and really drive this transformation of social care to ensure that it achieves improved outcomes for local people, families and communities.

Whole System and Culture Change

The requirements for this change are far-reaching and will require significant work, and a dedicated change programme. The councils social care system will be redesigned, as will many individuals' roles within it. The way that decisions are made about resources at a strategic, and individual level, will also be different. Most importantly, this is a huge cultural shift and means a change in the way council staff understand their roles, and the way they behave.

Although the overall vision for change is stated in Putting People First, it is not overly prescriptive. The local vision, what your new social services system will look like, and how you will go about making the changes are down to you, your colleagues and your community.

Potentially... happier citizens and more engaged local communities

The most important impact of delivering Putting People First should be improved outcomes for individuals, carers and families. Where people are able to tailor their own support packages to meet their needs and circumstances, they are likely to be more satisfied, and to get better results with the same money. Where resources can be shifted into services that help keep people well, and improve their well-being you will be helping to prevent crises in their lives and promote independence.

Giving all people who use social care, including self-funders, better information, advice and support will help them make better informed decisions.

Involving families, communities and third sector and local voluntary organisations in the transformation gives you another chance to engage with your community and its citizens. By moving to a system where individuals and their families can take more control of designing the support they need, and, where appropriate, over managing some of this, they cease to be passive recipients of care, and become partners with the council.

What about the budget?

This transformation will give you an opportunity to review how resources are used now, and to make strategic decisions about where they will have best impact. For examples, some councils are finding that by investing in intensive 're-ablement' approaches for some people when they come to social services, the size of packages for people who need on-going support is reduced, as are the numbers of people who need this on-going support.

Where there are on-going support needs, personal budgets will mean people will now get to know upfront and early how much money there is for this. They will get the chance to say how the money could best be spent to meet their needs and help them achieve key outcomes in their lives.

This changes the way that resources are allocated – potentially meaning fewer 'block contracts' where resources are pre-committed. This new way of allocating resources is challenging to get right, not least because it unearths inequities in the current system. However, personal budgets potentially make the link clearer between people's needs, the outcomes that are achieved and the money available to make this happen.

As mentioned above your role in commissioning will be different. Your council may do less direct commissioning of services for people, and more work to ensure that services are there that people want to buy. This is likely to involve helping new types of support to emerge, and supporting existing providers to adapt – activities that are less transactional, and more transformational, potentially involving wider strategic partners, such as PCTs.

A key challenge for the future is to make sure that the social care system can be sustained financially especially in the face of cost pressures, and this is the subject of the Social Care Green Paper currently under development. The Putting People First elements that could help this include:

- Better knowledge of how much is being spent on individuals with different levels of need
- Individuals achieving outcomes more cost-effectively than the current system is able to

- Longer term savings from prevention and early intervention activities
- Opportunities for a fundamental review of processes, taking costs out.

Change, of course, also costs money, and your council will have received its share of the government's Social Care Reform Grant (£520m over 3 years from 2008/9 to 2010/11). There are also opportunities to develop regional improvement support via your regional Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) and/or Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP).

Key tasks for Lead Members

- 1) Understand the agenda and the extent of the impact, within and outside the authority
- 2) Ensure other Cabinet Members and other councillors understand the importance and scope of the agenda
- 3) Set as a key Council priority, promoting the vision and making the transformation real – for Adult Social Care and beyond
- 4) Encourage partnership working, for example with health colleagues, district councils when they have responsibility for key services, the third sector
- 5) Provide the drive to make it happen by helping to overcome the challenges and supporting champions for change within the community

Key steps to be taking with your officers

- 1) Being clear about what we want to achieve, and putting in place a thought-through plan in place for how we deliver this
- 2) Having robust systems and necessary capacity in place to oversee the change process, and to check that the actions we are taking are having the impact we want them to
- 3) Promoting the voice of all stakeholder groups, including investing in bringing out the voice of potential service users and their families and at least one user-led organisation
- 4) Ensuring the sustainability of the budget and funding, and understanding the impact of change on costs (including for other departments)
- 5) Helping the market to prepare and develop, and working with local and national providers to help them adapt to change
- 6) Reviewing our safeguarding strategy so that as we give people more choice and control, we are putting in place proportionate checks and balances to help ensure they are as safe as possible, and the council is not at unacceptable risk
- 7) Developing a workforce strategy to ensure the right people with the right skills and resources will be available

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