

Planning4care briefing note

Putting People First: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care

December 13th, 2007

This week the Department of Health signalled the surprise launch of a “ground-breaking agreement to reform social care and support independent living” (DH press release, Monday December 10), as set out in the joint LGA/ADASS/NHS publication *Putting People First: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care*.

Over a period of 3 years from April 2008, and supported by a total Social Care Reform Grant of £520 million, councils will be required to move to a system of personal budgets for everyone eligible for publicly funded adult social care support, together with the provision of a universal information, advice and advocacy service for all people needing services and their carers, irrespective of their eligibility for public funding.

The reforms will be underpinned by the new performance framework, which will include mechanisms such as the statutory requirement on Local Authorities and PCTs to undertake a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which in turn will serve to inform the Sustainable Community Strategy – a single community based support system focused on the health and wellbeing of the local population.

The reforms are set against a background of increasing concern and publicity over the growing numbers, especially of older people, expecting to need some form of care to enable them to maintain their independence, together with increasingly stringent eligibility criteria for publicly funded care. They also, of course, come at the same time as the Wanless review into alternative models of social care funding.

The emphasis of responsibility for local councils and their partners is shifting, from the provision or procurement of services for the very limited number of people who both knock on the door and manage to pass through the restricted portal of eligibility, to a duty of care and assurance of provision for the whole population – irrespective of who is footing the bill.

Paul Snell, in his recent speech to the English Community Care Association (November 2007), stated that “As eligibility criteria continue to rise, the key role of councils is commissioning, not just purchasing or contracting for care services. Understanding people’s needs as individuals and developing the right services to meet those needs. This means that councils need to be aware not only of the quality of services they provide or contract for, but also of whether there is a sufficiency of supply for everyone in their area – commissioning for the whole community”.

The role of the Joint Strategic Needs assessment is key; understanding the *numbers* of people with different levels of social care need, and their *geographic distribution* across the different localities – together with their aspirations for how they and their carers want those needs to be met – is the bedrock of effective strategic commissioning. The more policies and funding regimes change, the more important it is to understand the underlying basis of the numbers of people needing care – because that is here to stay.

- http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081118

About Planning4care:

Planning4care provides the essential analysis for the social care element of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for older people. It is a hands-on dynamic tool providing local analysis of changing needs and the implications for services and costs.

For further information about Planning4care, please visit our website at www.planning4care.org.uk