



Japan Local Government Centre, London

Monthly Report for December 2010 (UK) – Health White and Green Papers

Capable Communities and Active Citizens

In November the Department for Health published the Coalition's "new agenda for adult social care in England", *Capable Communities and Active Citizens*. Care Services Minister at the Department of Health Paul Burstow said government wanted to make 'Big Society' adult social care "more personalised, more preventative and more focused on delivering the best outcomes", with additional funding of £2bn by 2014/15: £1 billion through the NHS and £1 billion in grant funding to local government. He added that the document was the first step towards the White Paper it intends to publish in autumn 2011, setting out a long-term solution to the funding and delivery of care and support, to be followed by legislation. The independent Commission on the Funding of Care and Support will also report next summer and feed into the White Paper and subsequent legislation.

The document sets out plans to "shift services from the state to the citizen" by:

- extending the rollout of personal budgets
- increasing preventative action in local communities, keeping people independent and helping to build the Big Society
- breaking down barriers between health and social care funding; and
- encouraging care and support for individuals to be delivered in a partnership between councils, the voluntary sector and the NHS – including wider support services, such as housing

Mr Burstow said that personalised budgets would be extended by 2013, preferably by direct payments from local authorities to those eligible. Currently only 13% of those in the care system received personalised care budgets. He gave the example of a woman who uses her personal budget to pay for an epilepsy seizure alert dog, who enables her to live independently, knowing that her dog will alert her to telltale signs of a seizure so she can get to a safe place free of hazards. He also said that plans would give carers more breaks, with time to pursue a hobby, take a holiday or have some time to themselves, with £400m available through the NHS over the next four years to support carers' breaks.

Healthy Lives, Healthy People

In November the Department for Health also published its Public Health White Paper, which envisages a formal statutory public health role for local authorities for the first time since the creation of the National Health Service in 1948.

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At a national level, a new core public health service – Public Health England – will combine experts from public health bodies such as the Health Protection Agency and the National Treatment Agency as part of the Department of Health. This will integrate leading expertise, advice and influence into one organisation. Public Health England will focus on national resilience against flu pandemics and other health threats, as well as being a ‘knowledge bank’ for the best and most up to date evidence on behaviour change techniques and monitoring data.

The majority of public health services will be commissioned by Local Authorities from their ring-fenced budget, or by the NHS, all funded from Public Health England’s new public health budget. Directors of Public Health will be employed by the Local Authority and will help decide how the ring-fenced money is spent to improve health. This will include influencing investment decisions across the Local Authority, with the goal of enhancing health and well-being. Crucially, they will be able to make sure that public health is always considered when local authorities, GP consortia and the NHS make decisions.

To make sure that progress is made on issues like obesity and smoking, Public Health England will set a series of outcomes to measure whether people’s health actually improves. Historically, money for public health has disappeared into other NHS services. Under new arrangements, the flow of money will change so that: money will be allocated from the NHS budget and ring-fenced for public health; part of this will be used by Public Health England for population-wide issues; another part will provide a ring-fenced budget to Local Authorities. A new ‘health premium’ will take into account health inequalities and reward progress on specific public health outcomes, and Government will consult on how to do this to get the detail right.

Liberating the NHS: Legislative Framework and Next Steps

The Department for Health has announced that local ‘HealthWatch’ bodies will be established to replace the local authority-hosted Local Involvement Networks (LINks) for NHS user representation. The organisations, introduced under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, were set up in 2008 to replace Patient and Public Involvement Forums, which themselves had been introduced in 2003 to replace the longstanding system of Community Health Councils. The independent LINks are financed and serviced by local authorities and are open to all interested in the NHS to make their views heard.

The new HealthWatch bodies will be able to investigate complaints and make recommendations for improvements, either at local authority level or nationally through HealthWatch England. The new system will be supervised by the Care Quality Commission. The announcement was made as part of the government response to the consultation for the recent Health White Paper, *Liberating the NHS*.

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