

Towards Gloriously Ordinary Lives

Ideas and Support for The Casey Commission



[Social Care Future](#) is a unique movement for change, with people who draw on social care and families at its heart. A broad and fully independent alliance, it also centrally involves people working at all levels in national organisations, councils, support provider organisations, academics, community, policy and development and others.

Our movement has a focus on achieving change through action and activities to shift public thinking and build support for change, to grow the voice and influence of people who draw on social care in thinking about the future and by bringing people and organisations together to address challenges and create solutions. We are founder members of the *Time to Act* Reform Group which takes our vision as its North Star:

‘We all want to live in the place we call home, with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us’

Currently, the largest part of local council adult social care budgets is spent on time and task, life and limb ‘services’ especially domiciliary and residential care - little changed in decades, often unable to support lives of connection and purpose and financially unsustainable. People who draw on social care are rarely involved in policy, system or practice developments, but when they have the opportunity, they aspire to something very different as we found in the inquiry they led [From Permanent Lockdown to an Equal Life - Social Care Future](#).

That’s why for us, real reform should not focus on finding funding arrangements to try to sustain the ways social care is currently experienced by disabled and older people. Rather it should look to change it very significantly over time, taking the Care Act Wellbeing Duty into the reality of people’s lives. More investment is clearly needed, but both now and in future it can be better spent by offering people greater control over their own support, by shifting the focus of investment to help unlock and scaffold the abundant resources and creativity in our places and communities and through earlier action and prevention.

Coproduction and changing the story

We strongly believe that, with real reform as the goal, the single most important step you can take is to bring people who draw on support directly into the work of the Commission as formal advisors and in the broader arrangements generating ideas and proposals, including in any work on the design and development of the National Care Service. We have wide and deep connections that can help.

We also believe you will be aided by careful attention to framing and communications and that you have an opportunity, through your commission, to help reframe discussions about the future of adult social care. The change we seek has and continues to be hampered by dominant narratives and mindsets concerning adult social care which fail to build understanding or to command support for change. To those ends, #SocialCareFuture, learning from other movements for social and system change and including those related to housing, homelessness and tackling poverty has carried out [extensive research and development to develop new, evidence-based framing](#). We are currently building on this work with Frameworks UK, in partnership with the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and Think Local Act Personal and will be happy to share the findings and recommendations with you, which will be finalised shortly.

Laying the foundations for change

It will take time and several phases to achieve a significant transformation of the kind we envisage. There are though recommendations that your Commission can make in its first phase that can help seed the right medium and long-term conditions while supporting very helpful short-term change.

1. **Supporting early action:** Support early action (still often called ‘prevention’) proposals that can quickly demonstrate ways that the win-win of better wellbeing and more sustainable supports can be achieved. We suggest a national demonstrator programme to take place within this parliament including support for the development of evidence that can underpin local and national investment. We have contributed ideas with partners here [Earlier action and support: The case for prevention in adult social care and beyond | Local Government Association](#) and a model for “Proactive Prevention” for older people supported by DHSC, councils and key sector groups will be ready for use this summer.

2. **Encouraging innovation** Promote [innovative approaches](#) to support and remove barriers to their flourishing. Examples include personal assistance, shared lives, micro/small supports, community businesses and co-operatives, neighbourhood networks. Innovation is also to be found in some [larger support providers strongly focussed on changing their approaches in the communities they serve](#). This can be done via supporting investment in demonstrator programmes (as above) or channelling funding mechanisms like the Better Care Fund. We would suggest the Commission recommend development of regulation and assurance approaches via the Care Quality Commission that enable best approaches and facilitate positive change, going beyond measurement of minimum standards. Some early priorities would be in relation to commissioning and direct payments. We would encourage the Commission to resist un-evidenced calls for over-regulation, favouring traditional service models and their investors which will inhibit this innovation - including as it relates to the workforce. Recent DHSC and Skills for Care Funded research shows personal assistants working with individual employers score highest on work related wellbeing and retention. We can offer practical ideas for growing this part of the workforce that could be quickly implemented at very modest cost.
3. **Reforming commissioning:** Build on work to change commissioning approaches to release and enable innovation beyond the current limited offers. Shift the focus to commissioning wellbeing, with a new framework for measurement centred on outcomes not throughput. Think well beyond formal local authority and independent sector social care commissioning and provision and embrace ‘asset based commissioning’ exemplified in ideas such as [‘Total Place’](#), [‘The Liberated Method’](#), and initiatives such as Live Well in Greater Manchester as part of the shift to Neighbourhood Health and Care, with strong connections to social care. Devolution offers the opportunity for major regional and local demonstration of possibilities, via demonstrator initiatives more likely to create impetus than traditional central government change programmes. Learning from international work and the Welsh experience, sector work is currently underway to develop proposals for national procurement guidance in support of the 2023 Procurement Act, to remove barriers and enable innovation. Support from your Commission could lead to prioritisation of this guidance which could also inform national standards on commissioning and CQC assurance.
4. **Helping local councils to fix the ‘plumbing and wiring’ underpinning adult social care:** Support policy changes that can quickly adapt elements of rules and systems that are inhibiting positive local developments enabling people to use support better in their lives. We have done work on this ‘plumbing and wiring’ and are working with policy, regulator, councils and people who draw on support to generate solutions. These include information systems and returns, assessment and planning, direct payments, finance and procurement rules and practice, charging practice. We would ask for support from your Commission to increase and speed prioritisation of work already underway in engagement with DHSC in several of these areas and generate early action in others. This work could connect very helpfully to the development of key areas of content in national standards.
5. **Co-producing national standards.** People who draw on support fear bureaucratic minimum standards for existing approaches to care and support that don’t help them live the lives they want. We have started an initiative with people who draw on support and others with academic and policy expertise, including colleagues from Time to Act to develop proposals for national standards that help advance people’s wellbeing, starting from what matters to people. We would strongly welcome support from your commission to ensure

that people who draw on social care and their families are positioned to powerfully inform the content of standards and the means and methods for their use.

While all of these changes demand the support of government, they will only be realised through the engagement of those active agents of change - professionals, workers, support provider managers, people and families drawing on social care and local leaders hungry to co-produce significant change with local people and communities building on promising possibilities. We host communities of support for these groups, connecting them and sharing glimpses of the future and how to grow and spread them. Within this parliament it would be possible, with government support and at modest cost, to invest in the work of these people and groups by promoting the ideas suggested above and investing change efforts and capacity in places ready to show that radical reform is possible. We would encourage the commission to propose the better use of change targeted funding and levers for this purpose.