

The Future of Social Care

A Meeting for Older People organised by the Manchester Older People's Network and the Manchester Alliance for Community Care

The meeting held on July 10th, in Manchester was attended by 35 older people from across Greater Manchester. The majority of participants were members of over 50s Forums and Local Implementation Teams that have been responsible for implementing the National Service Framework for Older People. The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Manchester Older People's Network; Pat Leahy.

The morning session was used to debate the question '**Who will pay for care needs in the future?**' A briefing paper was circulated in advance to members, taken from the **Caring Choices** report from the Manchester meeting, held at the end of April.

A presentation on the challenges facing the future of long-term care funding, including evidence taken from the Kings Fund report '**Securing Good Care for Older People**', opened the debate. Some of our members had attended the event at the Freemason's Hall and others had listened to the debate on 'You and Yours'. The Network organised our own meeting to provide an opportunity for older people to discuss and record their views on the future funding of social care in England. Participants agreed that the views they raised should be forwarded to the Caring Voices team at the King's Fund. The following is a summary of those views.

*For the purpose of the discussion, participants asked for clarification on the meaning of 'social care'. It was agreed that we were focussing on **personal care** and not board and lodging.*

All the participants agreed that:

- It should be the duty of the state to guarantee a basic level of care to everyone who needed it,
- The present system for paying for care is rife with inconsistencies. There should be clarity from the state about how social care will be funded in the future. We need a national framework for funding, so that different authorities could not use budgets to determine different criteria, creating a post-code lottery.

- Not only does there need to be a change in government priorities with an increase in funding for social care, but a more strategic approach between health and social care, to the way funds are used and the way services are commissioned.
- The quality and profile of social care needed to be raised and there was general agreement that the artificial boundaries between health and social care needed to be broken down. People felt that they were only in place because they were controlled by separate budgets and different funding mechanisms.
- Older people with experience of care services need to be able to influence the changing culture of care. This national debate creates an opportunity for voices of people who have had experience of the present system and services to influence change.
- Extra investment is desperately needed in the short term for older people living with dementia and their carers.

The majority of participants agreed that:

- The state contribution should come from National Insurance contributions and/or taxation. The majority of the participants wanted social care to be funded in the same way healthcare is funded.
- People who have saved or who are still earning should not be penalised. It should be a fair system for all. People who have been unable to work/save should also have fair access to care.
- Children and young people's care is paid for by taxation, why is it not for adults?
- Individuals should pay for their own board and lodging, this should be separated from the cost of 'social care' (free personal care model)
- Care vouchers paid for by 'tax breaks' should be available for informal carers in paid employment. No one should be financially disadvantaged because they provide informal care.
- There was some agreement to the 'universal co-payment' approach, where the personal care was partly funded by the state (at least 60%) and partly by the individual. People wanted to see a change in Government thinking and the state contribution funded by a redirection of resources.