



Independence, well-being and choice

A booklet from the Government about our
ideas for better social care services for adults

Easy read summary

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You can listen to this easy read booklet by playing the CD at the back of this booklet.

What is this booklet about?



There are times in everyone's life when they need help and support.

Some people need more support, because they are old, sick or have a disability.

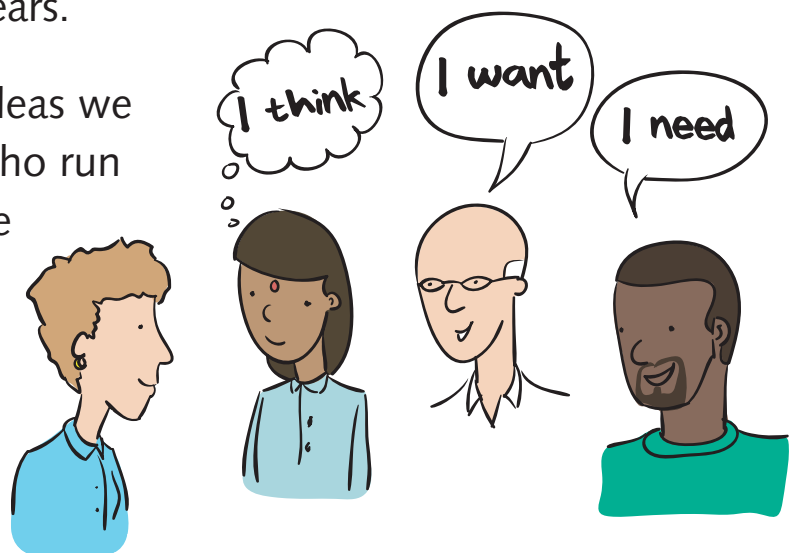
Often friends or family give help and support. But sometimes people need help from social services. This is called 'social care'.

The Government wants better social care and services for adults.

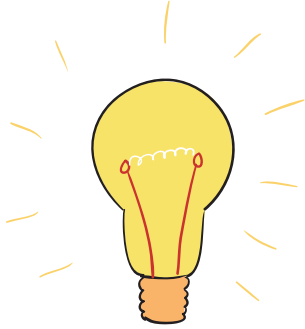
This booklet tells you about our ideas for better social care. It says what we would like to see happen over the next 10 to 15 years.

To come up with these ideas we talked to many people who run services and many people who use services.

We want to know what you think about our ideas. At the end of this booklet it tells you how to have your say.



What do we want to change?



This part of the booklet tells you about our ideas and what we think should happen to make social care better.

We want:

- to know that social care is really making people's lives better
- people to have more control over their lives
- people to have choices about the services they get and the lives they lead.

You can read on to find out more about each of these things.



Better services

We want to know that social care is really making people's lives better.

This means we need to see clearly how well services are working.

We think all social care services should be planned and checked to make sure they help people.

Services should help people:



- ✓ have better health
- ✓ have happier and more enjoyable lives
- ✓ take part and use their skills
- ✓ have more choice and control over their lives
- ✓ be treated fairly and well and feel safe in the community
- ✓ have enough money to live on and take part in things going on in the community
- ✓ live in a clean and comfortable home
- ✓ have the help they need to look after themselves and feel good about themselves.

More control

We want people to have control of their own lives and make choices about how they live.

People should not just have to take the services they are offered. We want to give people more choice about the help they get. But we still need to make sure they are safe and well.

People who use services should also have more say about how new services are planned.



Taking risks and trying new things



Some people worry that if we give people more choice and control over their lives they might not look after themselves properly. They also worry that some people might take advantage of disabled people.

But everyone has to try new things. You need to learn from your mistakes. Sometimes you need to take risks. If you always 'play it safe', it is hard to change your life for the better.

Social care workers should support you to keep you safe. They should also help you take risks and do things for yourself. But if things go wrong the social care workers often get the blame. We want to help people understand why taking risks can be a good thing.

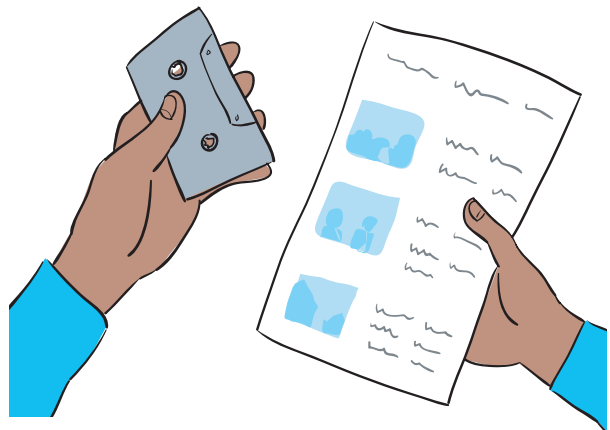
Better information

To make choices, people need **better information** about services and equipment that could help them.

If people get the right information they can take more control over their lives.

But it can be difficult for disabled people and their families to find out information. They do not know where to go.

- Information should be easy to understand. People should be able to get information in different languages or in other formats like large print or easy read summaries, like this booklet, if they want it.



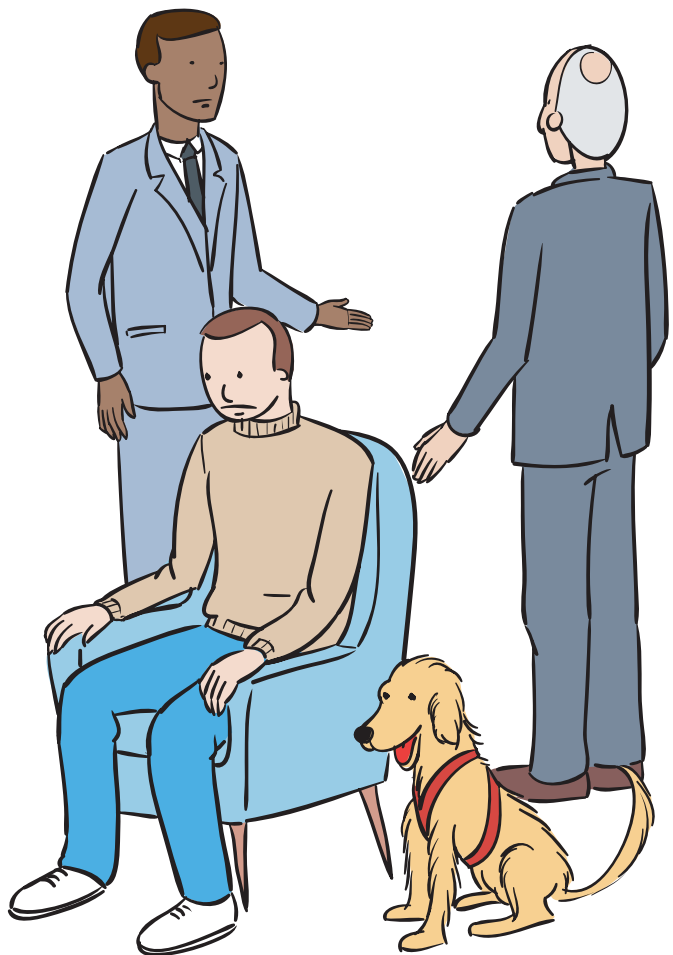
- There should also be more information about services and equipment for disabled people. We want you to have the information you need without having to ask for help.

Better assessments

When someone comes to social services for help, social services do an assessment to decide what services that person will get. This means taking a close look at their lives and needs.

At the moment assessments sometimes do not go well. People's ideas and feelings are not listened to. Or they are told that they cannot have the sort of help they want.

- It is important to find out about people's thoughts and feelings. Even people with a lot of needs should have a say about how they live. Sometimes it can be hard to understand what they want. People supporting them should try as hard as they can to find out people's ideas and feelings.
- **There should be more information about services and who can have them.** This would mean people could work out for themselves what services they can get. Social workers would still be there to help.



Sharing information from assessments

Some people get many different allowances and benefits. But to get these they have to give the same information over and over again to different people. We want to find ways of sharing this information. People should only have to give this information once to get all their benefits and allowances.



More choice

We want to give people the power to choose.

Buying services

Part of giving people more control over their lives is giving them the power to choose what services to buy.

Direct payments

We want more people to use **direct payments**. With **direct payments** people are given the money to pay for the services they need. They can choose what services to spend the money on.

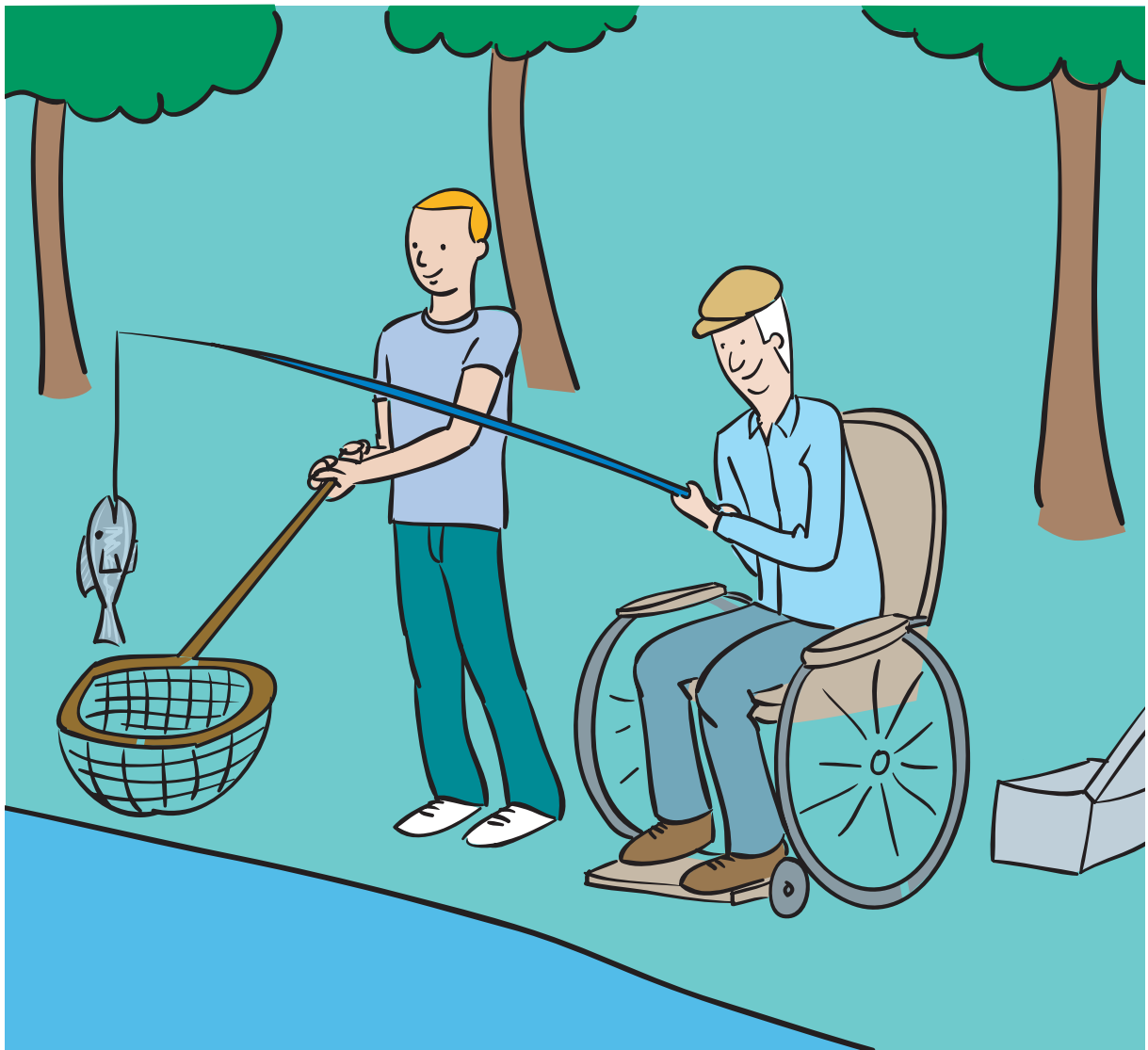
They can pay people to give them the support they want, in the way they choose. If there is not a service which suits them they can make their own.

We think everyone should have the chance to use **direct payments**. If people cannot manage **direct payments** on their own then someone else could help them. This could be a family member who could manage the **direct payment** for them.



Mr Clarke's story

Mr Clarke's wife wanted a break from caring for him. So Mr Clarke paid a supporter to take him on a fishing trip. He still got the care he needed but he enjoyed it more than if he had spent the time in a care home.

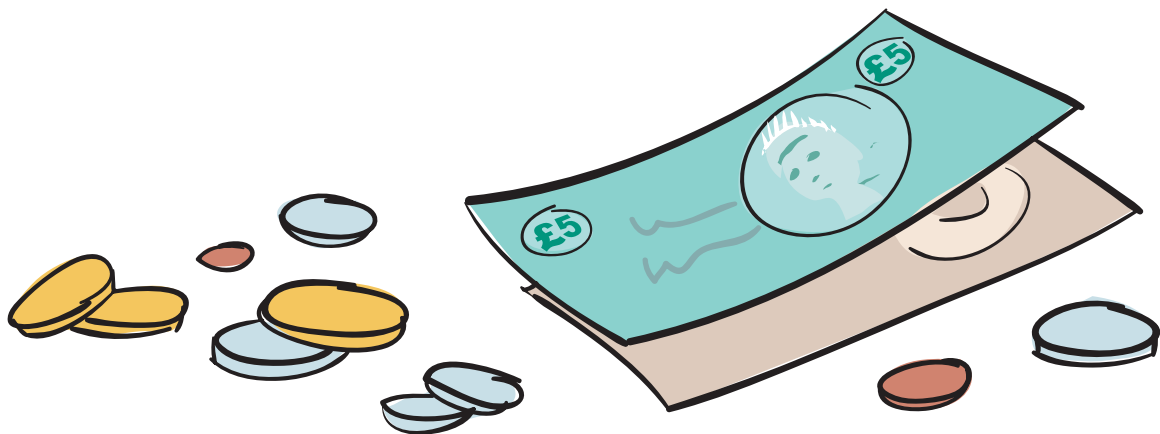


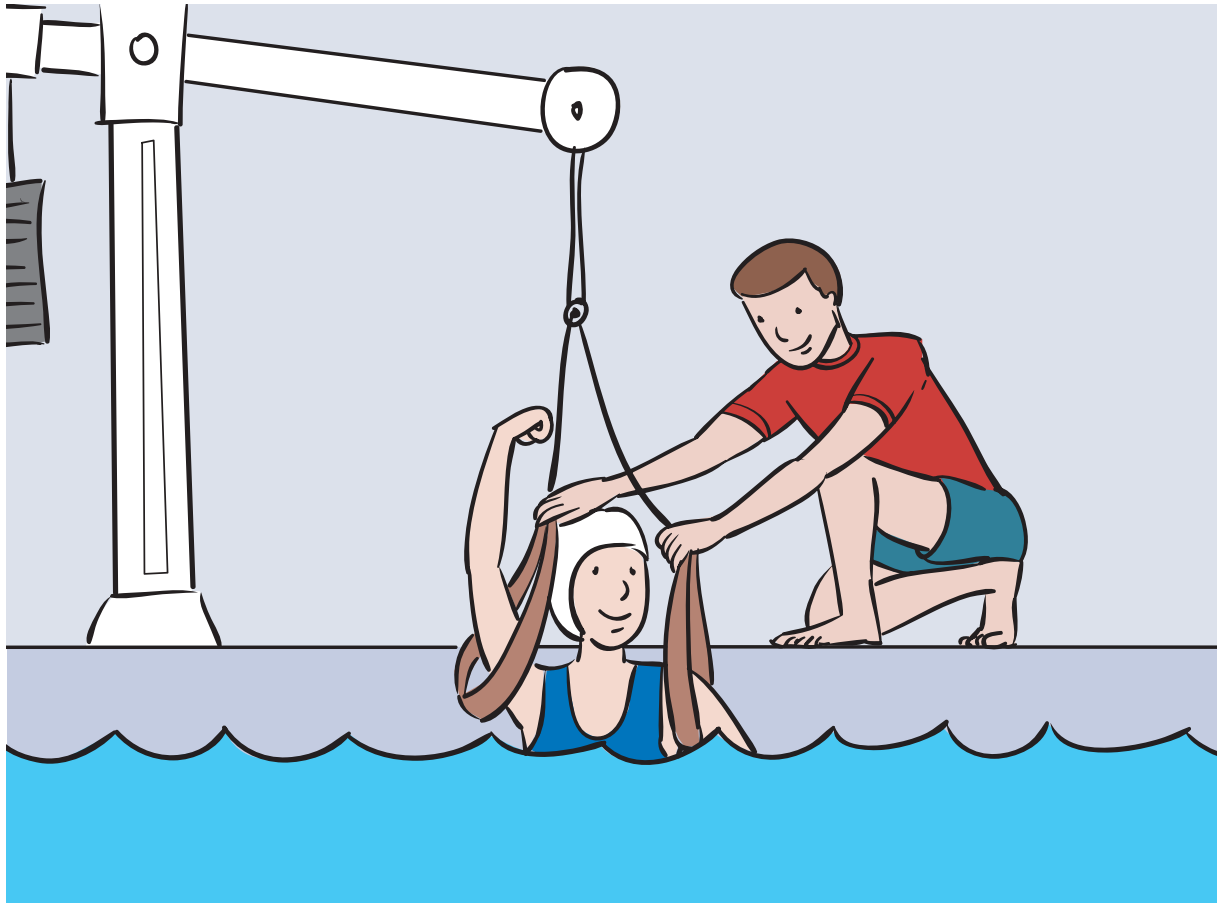
Individual budgets

We want everyone to have an **individual budget**. People are told how much money there is for services and support for them. People tell social services what services they really want and need. They do not pay service providers themselves if they do not want to. People do not have to handle the money themselves if they do not want to.

Both **direct payments** and **individual budgets** would make services better. People would use the money for services they wanted – so good services would get more money. Services would have to listen more to what people want, otherwise they would not get any money.

Social care workers would know all about the different services you can get. They could help people work out exactly what support would be best for them. The social care workers could help people think of new ways to sort out problems.





Many people can do things that they want without using social services. For example, someone who needs exercise could join a swimming class at the local leisure centre.

For this to work well, public services like libraries, colleges, leisure centres and transport services need to make it easy for disabled people to use their services.

How can we make these changes?

This part of the booklet tells you about some of the things we need to do to change things.

Directors of Adult Social Services

We are going to make a new job called **Director of Adult Social Services**.



Councils already have Directors of Children's Services. Each council is also going to have a Director of Adult Social Services. It would be their job to make sure **adults** get the care and services they want and need.

It would be their job to plan ahead, by thinking about what services will be needed in their area in the future.

Better use of money

We want to make changes to social care, but there is no **extra** money. So we need to make better use of the money we already have. We are going to think very hard about how we spend this money.

We are going to think very hard about how we spend money on keeping people happy, healthy and independent.

- We think money is sometimes spent on some services that people do not want. We think that sometimes money is wasted on paperwork.
- We could change the way we spend money. At the moment we spend nearly all the money we have on care and services for people who need lots of support. But instead we could spend more of it on helping people be independent.



For example, someone might just need some small changes made to their home. If they get the money to make these changes they will be able to stay in their home. If they do not get the money to make changes they may have to move into residential care. This could cost more money.

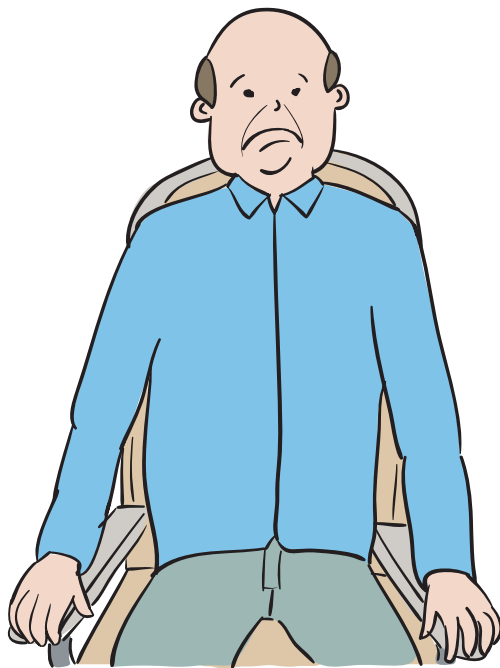
- We could help to make transport services or community services better for disabled people. This would make many people's lives easier and better.
- We could make sure that organisations that run services, like health services, councils and volunteer groups work better together. We think this will save money and make things easier for everyone.



Making services better

We are going to make services better.

One of the most important things we need to do is make sure people can get good services, no matter where they live.

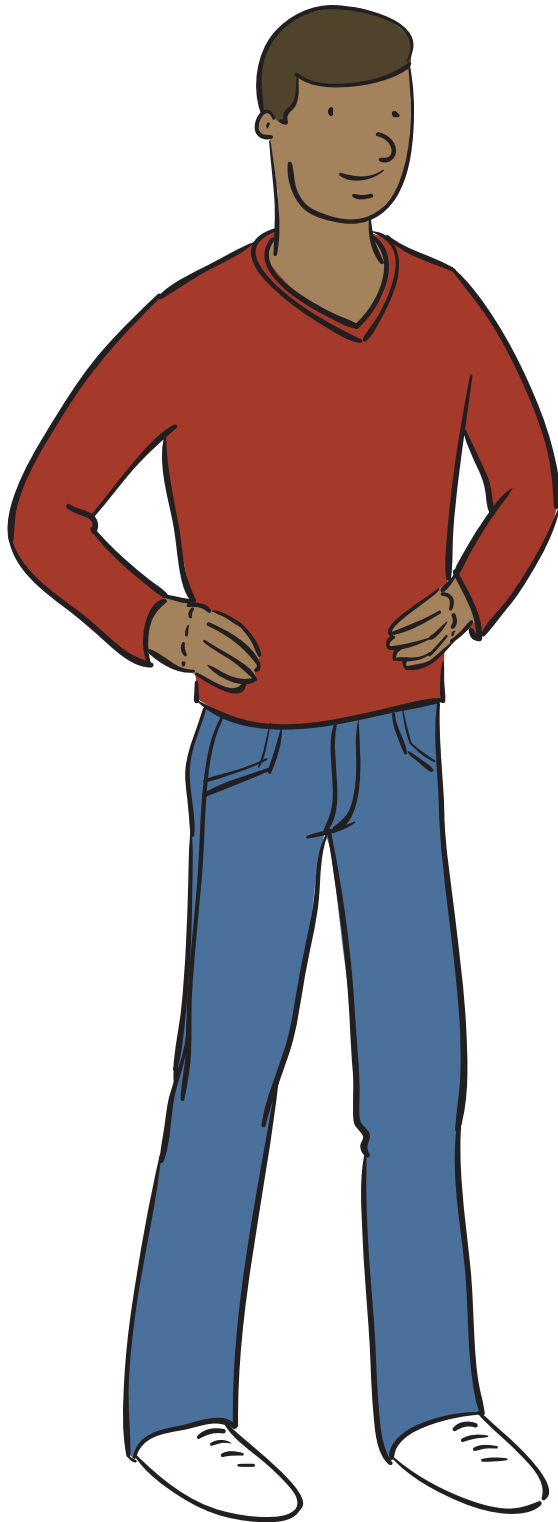


At the moment, some people live in areas that have worked hard to make sure they get direct payments. But in other places people are missing out.

- We need to make sure support staff listen to people who use their services. This will help social care workers make sure that they have the right information to support people to get the services they want.
- We need to give people who use services and their families and carers more of a say about what services there should be and how they should be run.
- Organisations who run services should think of new and different ways of solving problems.

Hamad's story

Hamad has a learning disability and lives with his family.



A good plan was made for Hamad while he was still at school. Everybody was involved – his teachers, health workers and his family.

Now Hamad has left school and is a young adult. He has all sorts of plans and ideas for what he wants to do. He might be able to buy his own home.

Although it did cost money to help make the plan early, he is now happy and healthy and will not need so much help in the future.



There will be support for organisations who run services to help them make these changes. There are some very good ideas around the country. Some of these cost more money to start with but can save money over the years.

Some services can use new equipment and technology. In Liverpool, people's homes have been set up with equipment that can tell if they do not get up in the morning or if they do not move about during the day. When this happens the alarm goes off and someone comes round to check on the person. This means people can carry on living in their own homes.

New rules and checks

We are going to bring in new rules and checks.

We need to bring the system of rules and checks up to date. We need to be able to check that services are doing a good job. The services need to give people more choice and control. They should really make people's lives better.



Family carers

We will remember that family carers have needs too.

Many people are cared for by their families. Family carers also need support. They need services that help them.

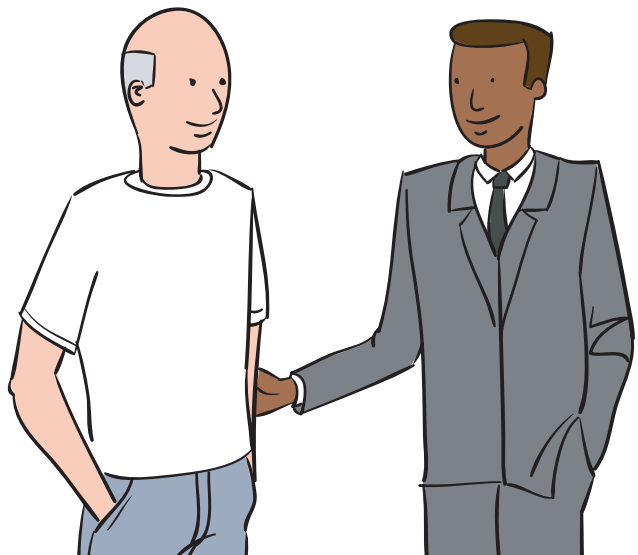
We think it would be good to offer training to family carers. This would support them to do their job as a family carer.

This training could also help them get a job once they have stopped looking after their family member.

Social care workers

We will help social care workers, like support staff and social workers, to do a good job.

We cannot make the changes we want unless we have good social care workers.



We need social care workers who are friendly, honest and easy to talk to. They must treat service users fairly and equally and with respect. They need to treat people who use services as adults.

We need good people as managers and leaders.

Most social workers are paid less than teachers or nurses. We need to show people that working in social services is a good job.

How to have your say



Thank you for taking the time to read our booklet.

We want to know what you think of our ideas.

Along with this booklet is a green booklet with some questions.



You can answer these questions and tell us what you think of our ideas. We want to know what you think makes good social care.



Please send the green questionnaire booklet with your answers and ideas to:

Adult Social Care Green Paper
Consultation Unit
Department of Health
Wellington House
133–155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG

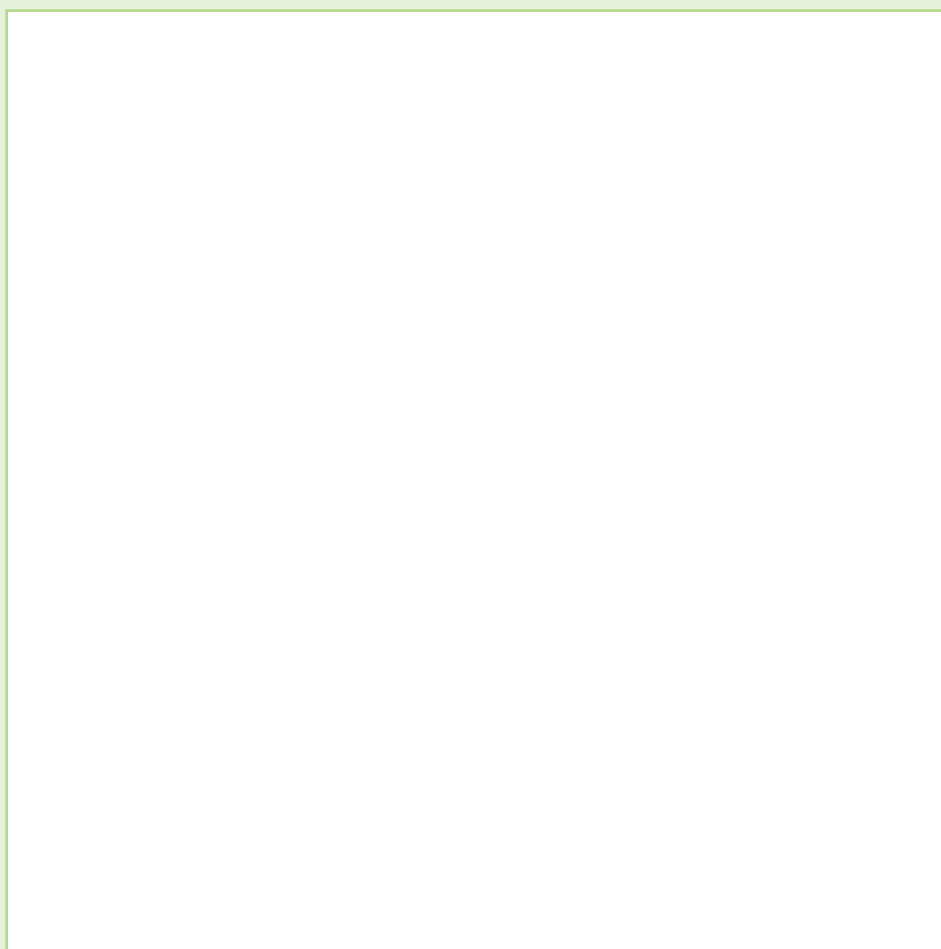
Please send the green questionnaire booklet to us by Thursday 28 July 2005.



You can also answer these questions on the internet by visiting our website
www.dh.gov.uk/socialcare

This is a CD of the easy read
booklet *Independence, well-being
and choice* and the questionnaire

Put it in your CD player to listen to it.





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