

CARING FOR OUR FUTURE

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Summary and Recommendation:

Attached as Appendix A is a housing-specific extract from the government's White Paper on the future of care and support services, published in July 2012 and titled "Caring for Our Future."

It sets out the government's approach to developing the relationship of housing with health and social care and is therefore highly relevant to the current examination of developing a Home Improvement Agency from the current baseline of the Council's service.

Appendix A is for the Panel's information and as a prelude to a forthcoming report on the prospects of Home Improvement Agency services in Copeland.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A draft Care and Support Bill was published in July 2012, the same month as the launch of the White Paper, "Caring for our Future", on the reform of adult care and support services.
- 1.2 The Bill intends the creation of a single legal framework for adult care and support to replace more than a dozen separate pieces of legislation. It also contains a number of health measures with the aim of ensuring closer working between health, social care and housing services. It intends to give effect to the principles set out in the White Paper.
- 1.3 The Bill and the White Paper therefore provide a national context for the local consideration being given following the meeting of Strategic Housing Panel on 14 August, 2012. This resolved to "support in principle the seeking of accreditation of the Council's in-house service as a Home Improvement Agency."
- 1.4 Earlier groundwork was laid by the Health & Social Care Act, which received Royal Assent earlier this year. This included the creation of Clinical Commissioning Groups for groups of between 200,000 and 500,000 residents and introduced Health & Wellbeing Boards to lead integrated commissioning and provision of health services.

2. APPENDIX A

- 2.1 Members' attention is drawn to the government's stated intention to create new duties for local authorities to ensure that adult social care (Cumbria County Council) and housing departments (Cumbria District Councils) work closer together.
- 2.2 Government states that "people told us during the *Caring for our Future* engagement that there were not enough specialised housing options for older and disabled people." Members should note that Copeland's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (sometimes wrongly referred to as housing needs study), published in 2011, made the same finding. We have an officer partnership group examining older persons housing needs with the intention of reporting to this Panel.
- 2.3 Insiders inform us that a government announcement is imminent on the bidding round for the capital funding being made available (through the HCA) for the development of more housing options (including extra care) for older and disabled people. We must make ready to argue the case for investment in new schemes for Copeland.
- 2.4 Members are also asked to note the references in Appendix A to aids, adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants. In particular, the government wish to engage with Foundations (the national body for Home Improvement Agencies) to extend services to more people who are able to fund their own adaptations.
- 2.5 Finally, Appendix A refers to assistive technology, which is a much further development of the original call systems called Careline in Copeland but also known as Lifeline or similar in other Districts. Officers intend reporting to the next meeting of the Panel on the latest developments in Copeland.

B: Housing

The Government has already set an ambitious agenda for housing, in *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*.²⁶ This will ensure that housing and planning policies positively reflect the wide range of circumstances and lifestyles of older and disabled people. The Government has secured £6.5 billion from 2011/12 to 2014/15 for housing-related support, to help people live more independently and prevent people's needs from escalating. We are investing £1.5 million in *FirstStop*, which provides independent advice on housing, care and support.²⁷ We now want to take this agenda further.

Working together at a local level

Local authorities and the NHS will need to consider housing needs and resources when assessing the needs of their local area. Where needs are identified and prioritised, local commissioning plans should take account of these. **The draft Care and Support Bill will go further, and will set out new duties to be placed on local authorities to ensure that adult social care and housing departments work together.** This will support adaptations and home repair services to join up better with people's care and support.

Integrating care and repair services in Wigan – Mears Group PLC

The home care and housing maintenance provider has been making services for older people more efficient by combining care with housing maintenance. Staff are trained to identify and report hazards that could potentially cause an accident. Older people in Wigan who have benefitted from this approach have said they feel safer knowing that trip hazards are repaired quickly, and are less likely to have an accident that leads to them having to go to hospital.

The National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012, stated that planning authorities should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, and social and cultural wellbeing for all.²⁸ To help developers and local authorities to plan effectively for the housing and care needs of older people, we are supporting the forthcoming industry-led toolkit, *Planning Ahead: Effective Planning for Housing and Care in Later Life*.

Stimulating the market for new housing options

We know that people's housing plays a critical role in helping them to live as independently as possible, and in helping carers to support others more effectively. However, people told us during the *Caring for our future* engagement that there were not enough specialised housing options for older and disabled people.

To help stimulate the development of more housing options, **we will set up a new care and support housing fund, which will provide £200 million of capital funding over five years from 2013/14 to encourage providers to develop new accommodation options for older people and disabled adults.**

Local authorities must plan for a range of accommodation to meet different people's needs and requirements. However, we believe that there is a particular need to develop a greater supply of accommodation for the growing number of older people who are homeowners. We will look at ways for our capital fund to encourage the development of specialised housing for this group. Evidence from the Personal Social Services Research Unit has shown that extra-care homes (one model of specialised housing) provide good outcomes for recently retired people who have low-level care needs, as well as being cost-effective alternative to residential care.²⁹

During the *Caring for our future* engagement, we also heard that access to suitable land was an issue for many potential developers of housing for older and disabled people. The Department of Health and the NHS are already identifying land which is no longer required for health purposes and are seeking to make this available for the benefit of the local area.³⁰ Decisions on the use of this land will be the responsibility of local authorities, but **we expect NHS organisations, working with their local authorities, to give particular consideration to developing housing for older and disabled people.**

Aids and adaptations

Aids and adaptations are crucial to help people stay independent at home for as long as possible. The Government is already supporting people to adapt their homes through the Disabled Facilities Grant, worth £745 million over the four years to 2014/15.

We are spending £51 million over the same period on handypersons services to deliver small home repairs to minimise trip hazards in the home, or to ensure adequate heating and draught-proofing. Handypersons services and home adaptations are often carried out by Home Improvement Agencies: independent, not-for-profit organisations that provide advice on people's housing options and liaise with trusted local contractors to take forward the adaptations that people ask for.

We have heard that many Home Improvement Agencies rely on referrals from local authorities or Disabled Facilities Grant applications, and do not do enough to reach out to their whole populations. **The Government will work with Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies, to extend their service to more people who fund their own adaptations and ensure that people obtain timely support in securing appropriate home modifications.**

Accelerating the roll-out of assistive technology

Assistive technology is equipment that helps people to live independently and have greater control over their health and wellbeing, improving the quality of life for both users and their carers.³¹ It can include a simple call system or more complex fall detectors.

Telecare supporting independence³²

Mr Montague was a 47-year-old man who had experienced serious epileptic fits over a long period of time. This affected his mental capacity, especially his short-term memory. His epilepsy was managed by medication but this left him drowsy. Following the installation of a telecare system, he felt enabled to move from shared supported housing to a single tenancy where he could live more independently. Unfortunately, Mr Montague had a bad accident, but he was wearing his falls alarm so the rapid response minimised the consequences of his fall.

We know that assistive technology is not yet being used to its full potential to promote people's independence. **We will therefore take forward the Three Million Lives campaign, launched in December 2011, which will accelerate the roll-out of telehealth and telecare in the NHS and social care during a five-year programme to develop the market.** This is being supported by an investment of up to £18 million over four years by the Technology Strategy Board, to demonstrate how assistive technology can be delivered on a at greater scale. We will set out the incentives and support for widespread adoption of assistive technology later this year. Assistive technology will also be considered in the integration framework (see chapter 7).