

# Community Care Services: Eligibility Criteria Consultation

## Public Group Meeting 25th January 2007

**Question/issue:** Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) was supposed to be a fairer system but its still a postcode lottery isn't it?

**Response:** Yes, there has been a differential application of the FACS criteria up and down the country with some local authorities only providing services to people with 'Critical' needs while others offering people services with 'Moderate' needs and above. There still is inequality.

**Question/issue:** So what will happen to people with 'Low' needs and what will happen to people with 'Substantial' needs?

**Response:** A person with 'Low' needs will be signposted or directed to services that they can directly access themselves without an assessment. Some people may prefer to go directly to, say, a voluntary organisation for help rather than come through us. This direct access provision may result in more balance and equality for people.

**Question/issue:** Will direct access services help you make savings because you are not assessing people?

**Response:** Yes, but the savings made will be re-invested in prevention services. This could cost more money in the long term.

**Question/issue:** How will you know who is using direct access services? What safeguards will you put in place to make sure people with high needs get the support they need?

**Response:** We will work with our partners in the voluntary sector to make sure we have a proper monitoring system in place and that anyone with high needs gets referred to us.

**Question/issue:** Won't people become more 'critical' if there is a delay in providing them with a service? You need preventative services to stop that happening!

**Response:** Its difficult to know. In a nearby local authority they estimated that by limiting services to people with 'Substantial' and 'Critical' needs they would save much more than they did in practice because social workers up-rated people's needs to make sure they got a service. We want to make sure there are good preventative services in Kingston to support people otherwise we will be dealing with more 'Critical' needs. It would be a false economy otherwise.

**Question/issue:** Do you have some ideas about preventative services?

**Response:** We do have some preventative services already but we need to identify where the gaps are.

**Question/issue:** Does this mean you may create new services?

**Response:** Possibly, we need to see what we do now and how effective it is.

**Question/issue:** Would you put aids to daily living in the 'Low' needs category?

**Response:** A social worker would need to identify the individual person's needs to determine what they were. Equipment as such does not have a needs category attached to it.

**Question/issue:** If someone needs equipment, how are they to fund it?

**Response:** We fund certain items of equipment now and this won't change but we may fund it in a different way if we were to develop direct access services. However, people could only get simple and safe items of equipment through direct access services. People with complex equipment needs would need to be seen by an occupational therapist.

**Question/issue:** If you have budgetary constraints now you might have to find even more money to put into your budget if you commission services out!

**Response:** We will need to construct contracts with direct access providers and monitor our expenditure and the take up of services.

**Question/issue:** There is a legal requirement for you to assess and provide services but is there a legal right to an assessment?

**Response:** If there is a reasonable chance that a person asking for help will receive a service then we are obliged to assess them. We will always assess people if they are likely to need a service irrespective of our resources.

**Question/issue:** The Government's FACS guidance says local authorities need to consider 'Low' level needs!

**Response:** Yes, this is important in terms of preventative services but we need to focus our resources on those people with the greatest needs. We need to achieve a balance between the two but the Government is not resourcing us to achieve this balance easily.

**Question/issue:** I nursed my husband for 10 years – most people don't get better! A lot of people just don't know what help is available. What are you going to gain by turning away people with 'Low' needs – they will become ill and more frail? Most older people don't want to ask for information or help or services.

**Response:** Some people find asking for help from the voluntary sector easier. We are looking at how we can provide information services accessibly for everyone taking into account people's sensory impairments and other needs. We are looking at developing a database of information that people can interrogate and that can be shared amongst professionals to better help people find the services they need.

**Question/issue:** Kingston Primary Care Trust says more people will need intensive care at home once they come out of hospital. This will raise costs for social care services. The NHS is putting all its costs onto local authorities!

**Response:** This is a national issue, which we have little control over.

**Question/issue:** What can you, the local authority, and the voluntary sector do about this nonsense by Government?

**Response:** Local authorities have a role in scrutinising how the NHS uses its resources. The Local Government Association campaigns on behalf of local authorities and voluntary organisations do similar work to highlight resource issues.

**Question/issue:** What happens after the consultation?

**Response:** During the consultation we capture people's views and write a report for the Executive Committee with range of options. The Executive will consider the report then decide what action it wants to take.

**Question/issue:** Kingston has good record of care. It's a big mistake to get rid of 'Low' and 'Moderate' needs!

**Response:** People with 'Low' and 'Moderate' needs will still be provided for via preventative direct access services.

**Question/issue:** Will your prevention strategy include leisure services etc, so it's all joined-up and accessible?

**Response:** Yes, we need to mainstream everything so people can easily access everyday services, maybe with some support.

**Response:** What about public transport? It's still not perfect!

**Question/issue:** We need to make public transport more flexible for people. Also we need to use our own transport more creatively, for example, offering to take people to the Bingo Hall if that's what they want rather than the Day Centre.

**Question/issue:** What about providing grants to commercial places so they can install level access facilities and adapted loos so older and disabled people can enjoy everyday services?

**Response:** Yes, good idea! We need to look into this.

**Question/issue:** If services are commissioned out to the voluntary sector then there will be less choice for people!

**Response:** Yes, we need to make sure, within our available resources, that people have a choice of alternatives.

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