

Steering Group meeting, January 2015

The Care Act 2014

Presentation from Simon Galczynski, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and Tessa Cole, Care Act Programme Manager.

Simon introduced the Care Act, which was passed in 2014 and comes in to effect in two stages. The first stage will come in to effect in April 2015 and those changes are outlined here. There will be further changes that come in to effect in April 2016 and these are still being discussed at central government level.

As people are now living longer and with a better quality of life, the care and support needs they have are different. The way care and support is provided has to change to reflect this. The Act brings about the biggest changes to social care services since the National Assistance Act of 1948. What's new is that the well-being of service users is placed at the centre of the Act, rather than simply the services that are provided, this gives a different focus.

The main aims of the Act are to help adults live as well as possible with any illness or disability they may have, for example, getting out of bed, washing, cooking meals, being part of the community or emotional support at a time of difficulty and stress. The definition of support includes help given by family and friends, as well as any provided by the council or other organisations.

Tessa emphasised that the Act has well-being at its core. Local Authorities must promote well-being in relation to people's care and support. The definition of well-being includes personal dignity, health, mental health, emotional health, access to work and training and the suitability of a person's living arrangements. There is a strong emphasis on prevention, helping people to stay well and live as independently as possible in their homes, for example reducing admissions to hospital.

A range of people will be affected by the Act. This includes people who:

- **receive care and support from your council or another organisation**, either at home or in a care home,
- **give unpaid care** and support to an adult family member or friend,
- **may need care and support in the near future**, either for themselves or for someone they help.

The Act states that Local Authorities have a key role in ensuring that services provided meet local need, are of a high quality and are diverse in range. It states Local Authorities will have a responsibility for making sure that residents (not just service users, but also potential users of services, carers, and self-finders) have access to information and advice about services. This information should be good, accurate, up-to-date and available in a range of formats. Councils will need to demonstrate that they are meeting the needs of local people.

The council has developed an on-line resource called Links for Living which provides information about a whole range of local services.

www.linksforliving.islington.gov.uk

linksforliving.islington.gov.uk

Directory home Options tool Search directory Submit service My shortlist (0)

You are here: Home

Welcome to Links for Living

Do you need help with everyday tasks?

Search Links for Living directory

Links for Living provides information and advice to help you make choices about your health and wellbeing, support needs and activities.

Use the site to find organisations that can help you find the best ways for you to stay healthy and independent.

Answer a few simple questions about the kind of help or support that you need and find out the right options for you. You can also complete this on behalf of someone you care for.

Start

Search for

Near this postcode

By Category

Search

Get help using the search

London Borough of Islington (LBI) welcomes feedback on this resource, which can be given through the site itself:

<https://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/islington/asch/feedback.page>

LBI are also re-vamping their Access Service which provides information about adult social care in the borough. The service will provide telephone advice from staff trained in Links for Living to ensure that this resource is accessible.

The Act sets out new national eligibility criteria. This will help make care and support more consistent across the country. The new national changes are designed to put service users and carers in control of the help they receive. Any decisions about our care and support will consider our wellbeing and what is important to us or our family, so we can stay healthy and remain independent for longer. The Act states that councils must provide for at least 'substantial need' (not all councils currently do this). Islington is one of 13 Local Authorities across

the country to meet 'moderate' needs, so this particular change will not affect Islington.

The focus on person-centred care will continue in the form of care and support plans, personal budgets & Direct Payments but will also include Deferred Payment Agreements, independent advocacy (for people who cannot participate in their care planning) and financial advice. Deferred Payment Agreements are where a person agrees to receive council funded support and then pay this back after their death. Islington has some advocacy support available already but is looking to expand this.

The Act also enshrines more rights for carers. Millions of people provide unpaid care or support to an adult family member or friend. All 'informal' or 'unpaid' carers will now have a new right to a carer's assessment, even if the person they care for does not get any help from the council. Carers may be able to get more help to carry on caring and look after your own wellbeing. Currently carers in Islington have access to the Carer's Hub, and the council is looking to expand this offer.

Islington is one of only 14 integrated care pioneers in England. It has been selected by the Department of Health for being 'ahead of the game' in integrating health and social care services. Being a Pioneer means that the borough will receive additional advice and guidance from the Department of Health. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to integrate these services.

For the first time we will have a law telling councils what to do to help keep adults safe from abuse or neglect. It says how organisations can work together to help keep people safe. All Local Authorities must set up an adult safeguarding board that works on keeping people safe. Islington already has this, and Healthwatch Islington is a member. The Islington Board is reviewing its structure to make sure it is doing the best it can.

Where people move from one Local Authority area to another, Local Authorities will be required to work together to ensure that there is no gap in services created because of the move.

Communications about the Act will increase nationally through radio broadcasts and leaflets in GP surgeries. There will also be some local work on this.

Questions and answers from the audience

Members wanted to know when the Act came in to effect and whether the Act had cross-party support.

The Act has been passed but it will not be fully operative until April 2015, though part of the law will not come in to effect until April 2016. The Act does have cross party support.

The Carer's Hub asked how the Council is going to make sure that the Care Act is actually properly implemented in practice, especially in regards to the person-centred challenge.

The council aims to allocate resources depending on each individual's needs.

Concerns were raised as to whether there were sufficient funds to allow this work to take place. The council responded that additional funds have been allocated as the Care Act is an important part of the council's work.

The question of how aware health services are of the changes was raised. Islington Council has strong relations with health care services and local care providers and this will make the implementation process easier. Services will need to work together to make sure that people are given choice.

There was a further question around how the Council will make sure that people with mental health issues get equitable access to services. Tessa emphasised the importance of treating people as a whole, and seeing their physical as well as mental health needs. She highlighted the importance of effective, person-centred planning for all service users.

One member questioned the content of the Act and wondered if there was some worth in going through the amendments to the Act and arguing for amendments. However, as the Act has been passed it was agreed it would be more pragmatic to focus on delivering the Act in such a way as to give the best service to local residents.

There was the suggestion that fluid collaboration between the Council and the voluntary sector would be needed to make the proposals in the Care Act a reality. The Council agreed that it is important to encourage professionals and providers to have a good knowledge about the Act and to be able to identify challenges. They are hosting an event on this in February 2015 with 170 local voluntary sector providers. The importance of close collaboration with service regulators was also emphasised.

There were concerns raised as to whether the support and services proposed in the Act would be free at the point of access. Simon assured attendees that these

support, information and advocacy services were not means-tested or charged for services.

Finally a plea was made regarding the importance of using language carefully and properly as some terminology is used differently within for example health and social care settings and this may easily lead to misunderstandings.

The presenters offered to come back to a further Steering Group meeting and update Healthwatch Islington on the implementation and to give a briefing on the 2016 changes.

For more information:

- Department of Health information
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-and-support-whats-changing>
- Islington Council website www.islington.gov.uk/careact
- Information and advice www.linksforliving.islington.gov.uk
- Skills for Care - useful resources
<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Standards/Care-Act/Care-Act.aspx>