

7 March 2007

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## **CSCI report on the State of Social Care and its implications**

### **Decisions**

1. *To receive the short presentation from Andrew Cozens, Strategic Adviser for Children, Adults and Health Services, IDeA on the recently published report and on its implications for local government.*
2. *To provide comments and consider its implications for the Board's work programme.*

*Action*

*Secretariat*

*Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn/ Andrew Cozens,*

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## CSCI's State of Social Care report

### Introduction

*The Commission for Social Care Inspection has a statutory duty to produce an annual report on the state of social care in England. This is the Commission's second annual report to Parliament, published in December 2006. The purpose of the report is to provide a complete picture of social care across all sectors and groups. The report covers the policy context of social care; uses the findings from its inspections and assessment activities to analyse expenditure and activity; explains how trends in services have changed over the last year, and reviews the quality of care services. It also looks in-depth at the state of commissioning and the support available to carers, and provides an overview of the current state of social care.*

### What the report says

*The report shows that social care continues to modernise to meet people's aspirations and government policy, with some services exceeding minimum standards and partnership working promoting the health and well-being agenda. However, the report states that this modernisation is gradual, with no major shifts in trends over the last year.*

*Although there has been improvement in some areas, for the most part commissioners are not yet achieving the range of quality of care services needed for older people. Financial restraints mean that Home Care services continue to be targeted at those with the most intensive needs. Progress in modernisation is restricted by significant pressures in both the social care and health systems and, following on from the Wanless Social Care Review, it is stated that financial constraints meant that there was a significant funding shortfall in the current system to meet most older people's needs. There is also limited support available for people who are not using services arranged by the council but who seek information and support about what may be available.*

*In terms of support available for carers, the report stresses that carers cannot be seen simply as a resource, and that many councils cite financial constraints as a barrier to developing support to carers. Councils are in a difficult position trying to balance efficiency gains with providing better support for carers and frequently carers are bearing the costs of tighter eligibility criteria and shortfalls in current services.*

### Key findings from the report include:

#### Commissioning

- *The challenges for commissioners are greater than ever. Commissioning is not yet sufficiently multi-agency and in an effort to balance budgets, councils have had to tighten eligibility criteria. Councils need to ensure those excluded from receiving funded care are able to access proper support.*

## **Leadership and Responsibility**

- *Strong local leadership and political and organisational stability are important factors to ensure effective commissioning.*
- *The Wanless Review of different options for funding social care has highlighted the debate about the appropriate balance between state and individual responsibilities regarding the care of adults, particularly older people.*

## **Financial**

- *NHS budget deficits in some areas are putting a strain on relationships at local levels and could undermine partnership working.*
- *Although the Supporting People programme made a significant difference to many people's lives, reductions in grants make it difficult to plan ahead.*

## **Standards and Performance**

- *Early evidence suggests that there was substantial growth in direct payments for 2005-06, particularly for older people. In 2004-05, the use of direct payments also increased, although they only accounted for £1 in every £100 of expenditure by councils.*
- *The average percentage of national minimum standards met in services has risen for the fourth consecutive year, but the rate of improvement has slowed.*
- *Involvement of disabled people and older people using services and carers has improved, but not uniformly.*
- *There are now fewer residential care homes for adults, but with an increase of the average number of places within these homes. There are more children's homes than there were last year.*
- *Performance of services in different councils continues to vary widely.*

## **The LGA response to the report:**

*We welcome the CSCI's second annual report into the state of social care in helping us to gain a more comprehensive picture of social care services for children and adults.*

*We welcome the CSCI's findings that councils are continuing to modernise social care services, even if modernisation is gradual. There are now no '0' star rated services.*

*We agree that funding issues are placing a huge burden on the ability of councils to commission and deliver effective social care for everyone. Central government funding, which accounts for a significant proportion of a council's budget, has not kept pace with the needs of an ageing population. Such lack of funding means that councils have been placed in the invidious position of withdrawing some services because they have been forced to concentrate resources on the individuals with the most service needs.*

*We hope that this report will be a wake-up call to government as it exposes some of the deeply worrying trends within social care which the LGA has consistently highlighted. Unless the Government takes action, older people may not receive the basic care they need to enable them to stay at home by April 2009. People could lose or have to pay for services - such as helping them to get dressed - which allow them to continue to stay at home.*

*We urge the government to consider a proper debate about the care needs of an ageing population and how these are funded. In the next three years alone there will be over 400,000 more older people (a five per cent increase), many requiring social care. Support for services such as social care through the general grant increased by just 14 per cent in real terms since 1997/98. Council tax payers, including millions of older people, have had to pick up this tab. This increase is in stark contrast with the NHS, which has seen a 90 per cent rise over the same period.*

*Through our Fair Care Campaign, we are lobbying government to provide the necessary resources to meet the expectations of people who rely on care and those that provide it.*

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