

NaCSILS RESPONDS TO THE POLICY PAPER “PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CARE: ADULT SOCIAL CARE REFORM”

Despite the years taken to deliver this policy paper and its fine words, the government have misunderstood and minimised the challenges faced by users and organisations involved in social care and support. By ignoring the key voices of disabled people, they have responded inappropriately and inadequately to those challenges.

This is no fix – it’s a con.

The amount of funding offered is totally inadequate for the needs of the service. It will not meet the needs of users, councils, providers nor carers paid and unpaid. It is probably about 20% of what is required just to make the system function adequately, let alone transform to a service we can be proud of.

Service users will still have to pay extortionate costs which many can ill afford. Although independent living is acknowledged, the paper totally fails to offer any plan for giving older and disabled people the real choice and control that NaCSILS demands. Improvements in technology for support is great for those who can use it, afford it and live in an area with good internet access but useless for those who cannot.

The need to support informal carers is acknowledged but there is little about how this will actually be done.

There is little to attract workers to the sector such as pay at the national average (currently £15), good pensions and an end to zero hours contracts. The minimal support and development outlined will never reform a system with huge staff vacancies and Brexit-fuelled shortages.

NaCSILS calls for a social care and support system publicly funded from general taxation, free at the point of use, paid for like the NHS. By contrast, this policy ties itself in knots trying to make a broken market function. Indeed, it talks about “a fair price for care” without explaining how that might work, risking destabilisation and frightening councils. The policy doesn’t even work in its own, mean, terms.

The country is crying out for a decent, fair, radically transformed system that will enable elderly people and disabled people of any age to live with dignity and independence. This policy paper not only fails that ambition but may actually make things worse.

NaCSILS vision is clear. The Government must establish a new National Care, Support and Independent Living Service (NACSILS) which is:

- ❖ **Publicly funded, free at the point of use**
- ❖ **Publicly provided - not for profit**
- ❖ **Nationally prescribed but designed and delivered locally**
- ❖ **Co-produced with service users and democratically accountable**
- ❖ **Underpinned by staff whose pay and conditions reflects true value and skills**
- ❖ **Meets the needs of informal carers**
- ❖ **Informed by a task force on Independent Living led by service users**