**Caring for our future: reforming care and support**  
Government White Paper July 2012

The new legal framework will create a single defining purpose for Care and support for the first time – to promote people’s wellbeing. It will balance the traditional responsibilities of Local Authorities towards people with higher needs with the broader role that they want to adopt for the whole local community. It will require Local Authorities to provide help earlier to try to prevent, delay or reduce people’s needs for Care and support, rather than wait for them to reach a crisis point.

The new legal framework, set out in the draft Care and Support Bill, will make the role of Local Authorities clearer than ever before, removing more than 60 years of complicated and confusing law. It will remove unnecessary legal barriers, free up time spent navigating the old laws, and provide new flexibility by focusing on the needs of local people, rather than just what services should be provided.

From April 2015 the government will introduce a national minimum eligibility threshold for Care and support in England. This will make it easier to decide what Care people are entitled to. The government will make it easier for people to move between Local Authorities, without worrying that they may lose the Care they need.

Who pays for what is still to be resolved and awaits the Comprehensive Spending Review when we should all have a better idea about the level of personal contribution to the cost of Care.

The new system is intended to promote wellbeing and independence at all stages to reduce the risk of people reaching a crisis point, and so improve their lives

**Living well**

People will be given better information and advice to plan ahead to prevent Care needs, and will be better connected to those around them.

**Low-level needs**

More support within communities, better housing options and improved support for carers will help people maintain their independence and avoid a crisis.

**Crisis**

Re-ablement services and crisis response will help people regain their independence at home after a crisis.
How will this be done? The government proposes to:-

- establish from April 2013 a new national information website, to provide a clear and reliable source of information on Care and support
- support Local Authorities to develop new comprehensive online information about local Care and support options
- introduce a national minimum eligibility threshold, bringing greater consistency in access to Care and support across England
- remove the barriers that can keep people from moving to a different Local Authority area, by ensuring that no-one’s Care and support is interrupted and
- extend the right to an assessment to all carers and introduce a clear entitlement to support so they can maintain their own health and wellbeing

People will have control over their own budget and their own care and support plan. They will be empowered to choose the Care and support that best enables them to meet their goals and aspirations. The intention is to put people, and not institutions, in control.

This will entail the government:-

- setting out what people should expect when using Care and support, and the roles and responsibilities of different organisations to deliver this
- giving people access to clear and comparative information about the quality of Care providers and the options they offer, so that people are empowered to make informed decisions
- strengthening the ways that people can comment on their experiences of Care and support by supporting feedback websites
- requiring Local Authorities to develop and maintain a diverse range of high-quality Care providers in their area, so that people have different care options to choose from
- ruling out crude ‘contracting by the minute’, which can undermine dignity and choice for those who use Care and support
- consulting on further steps to ensure service continuity for people using care and support, should a provider go out of business

To accomplish this the government will:-

- place dignity and respect at the heart of a new code of conduct and minimum training standards for Care workers
- train more Care workers to deliver high-quality care, including an ambition to double the number of care apprenticeships to 100,000 by 2017, and
- appoint a Chief Social Worker by the end of 2012, to provide a leadership role for the social work profession and to drive forward social work reform
The government also intend to:

- legislate to give people an entitlement to a personal budget as part of their Care and support plan, and will strengthen their ambitions on direct payments
- improve access to independent advice to help people eligible for financial support from their Local Authority to develop their Care and support plan
- develop, in a small number of areas, the use of direct payments for people who have chosen to live in residential Care, in order to test the costs and benefits

A new tool allowing users to search and compare any Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered home Care, residential or nursing home provider is now available online at NHS Choices.