

## Care Act Stakeholder Briefing: March 2015

### About this briefing

The following document has been put together to brief stakeholders about the forthcoming Care Act reforms.

The briefing provides a summary of care and support, the Care Act and the key changes coming into force in April 2015. It also explains the national and local campaign activity that will inform the public, care users and carers of these changes.

The aim is to give stakeholders an overview of the key April 2015 reforms and to signpost them to more detailed information to answer questions from customers or colleagues.

In South Gloucestershire we have developed online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Care Act for the public, frontline staff and stakeholders to use and refer to. We will update and amend them based on feedback, to reflect the queries that come up as the national publicity and Care Act implementation rolls out.

See our Care Act FAQs at: <http://edocs.southglos.gov.uk/careact/intro/> for more detail about the national changes the Care Act will bring and what they mean to people in South Gloucestershire and their carers.

## **Introduction**

From April 2015, care and support in England is changing. The new Care Act will introduce a number of reforms (in two phases, from April 2015 and April 2016) that primarily impact existing and new care users, their carers and families.

A national campaign has begun to raise awareness among relevant members of the public about the new reforms. Following testing with consumer audiences, the public information campaign focuses on those reforms coming into effect in April 2015. The focus will shift to the April 2016 reforms following the election (see page 4).

**At South Gloucestershire Council, we have been working behind the scenes to plan the changes locally, building on the changes we have already put in place to personalise adult care and in our approach to supporting carers. Our aim is to give people greater flexibility, choice and control over the support they receive, so that they continue to lead full and active lives, contributing to their community and benefitting from employment opportunities where they wish to.**

## **What is care and support?**

- 'Care and support' is the term used to describe the help some adults need to live as well as possible with any illness or disability they may have. It can include help with things like getting out of bed, washing, dressing, getting to work, cooking meals, eating, seeing friends, caring for families and being part of the community.
- It might also include emotional support at a time of difficulty and stress, helping people who are caring for an adult family member or friend or even giving others a lift to a social event.

## **How will care and support be provided?**

- Care and support includes the help given by family and friends, as well as any provided by the council or other organisations.
- The changes mean that more people will be able to get the care and support they need, either from the council or from other organisations in the community.

## **The Care Act: changes to care and support in England**

- From April 2015, care and support in England is changing. The new Care Act will help make care and support more consistent across the country.
- The new national changes are designed to put people in control of the help they receive.
- Any decisions about their care and support will consider their wellbeing and what is important to them and their family, so they can stay healthy and remain independent for longer.
- Some changes will be introduced in April 2015 and others in April 2016.
- Anyone currently receiving care, or supporting an adult family member or friend as an unpaid carer, could be affected by the national changes being introduced by the Care Act.

### **Why the system needs to change**

- 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 new Care Act has been passed to make care and support, and the way we pay for it, clearer, easier to access and more consistent across the whole of England.

### **Three key reforms in April 2015**

- **Changes to the care and support assessment**
  - From April 2015, there will be a national level of care and support needs that all councils will consider when they assess what help they can give people. This may result in an individual being eligible for care and support, and will make it easier for them to make plans now and in the future. And if they decide to move to another area in England, councils will also have to work together to make sure that there is no gap in their care when they move.
  - Individuals receiving care and support will be more in control of decisions that affect them. They will know how much it will cost to meet their needs and how much the council will contribute towards the cost. They will have more control over how that money is spent.
  - Everyone's needs are different. They may be physical, mental or emotional. Whatever a person's level of need, their council will be able to put them in touch with organisations to support their wellbeing and help them remain independent for longer.
- **New support for unpaid carers:**
  - In England, millions of people provide unpaid care or support to an adult family member or friend, either in their own home or somewhere else. Caring for someone covers lots of different things, like helping with their washing, dressing or eating, taking them to regular appointments or keeping them company when they feel lonely or anxious.
  - From April 2015, changes to the way care and support is provided in England mean carers may be able to get more help so that they can carry on caring and look after their own wellbeing.
  - Carers may be eligible for support, such as a direct payment to spend on the things that make caring easier, or practical support, like arranging for someone to step in when they need a short break. Or they may prefer to be put in touch with local support groups so they have people to talk to.
  - Carers can ask for a carer's assessment. As a result of the assessment, a carer may be eligible for support from the council, who will also offer them advice and guidance to help them with their caring responsibilities.

- **Deferred payment agreements now universal**
  - From April 2015, the deferred payment agreements which some councils in England currently offer, will be available across the whole country. This means that people should not have to sell their homes in their lifetime to pay for their care, as they have sometimes had to do in the past.
  - A deferred payment agreement is an arrangement with the council that will enable some people to use the value of their homes to fund care home costs. If someone is eligible, their council will pay their care home bills on their behalf. They can delay repaying the council until they choose to sell their home, or until after their death.
  - Councils may charge interest on the amount owed to them, and there may also be a fee for setting up this arrangement.

### **The key reforms in April 2016**

- Major reforms impacting on existing and new care users from April 2016 include the cap on care costs and changes to the means test.
- The public information campaign will focus on these reforms following the election.
- Some information about these reforms can be found at [www.gov.uk/careandsupport](http://www.gov.uk/careandsupport)

### **Communicating these changes to the public**

- In collaboration with the Local Government Association, The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and local authorities, Public Health England developed a series of consumer tested campaign materials and tools to help inform the public about the changes happening to care and support.
- Beginning in January 2015, national activity including radio advertising, digital advertising, door drops and a paid-for media partnership will run up to the end of March 2015 and cease for the pre-election period. As well as providing training for staff and partners, the council is developing its web pages and information and advice on care and support.
- A second part to the campaign is planned following the election, and will focus on reforms coming into place from April 2016.

### **Further information about the reforms**

- Further details about the reforms can be found at [www.southglos.gov.uk/CareAct](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/CareAct) and at [www.gov.uk/careandsupport](http://www.gov.uk/careandsupport) should you, customers and colleagues wish to find out more.
- The following websites include useful Care Act information:
  - Community Care: [www.communitycare.co.uk](http://www.communitycare.co.uk)
  - Skills for Care: <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Standards/Care-Act>
  - Social Care Institute for Excellence: <http://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/>