



Choices for people with learning disabilities

News Release

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Fears over Government's New Budget System for Social Care

A national charity says the Government must work harder to explain its new payment system for social care.

Self Unlimited – which supports people with learning disabilities - has raised concerns after research revealed more than 80% of care service users have little or no understanding of the Government's new personal budgets system for social care.

The system, which is being introduced over the next year, will give people entitled to social care a personal allowance to spend on the services they choose, rather than having them allocated by local authorities.

Patrick Wallace, Self Unlimited's chief executive, said: "These figures indicate that the Government has to do more to explain what's happening to the most important people, the service users.

"Local authorities and organisations such as Self Unlimited face a huge task preparing users for the shift to the system, and we are all anxious to avoid a difficult transition. We would welcome more Government support to explain what is happening to service users and what they need to do to ensure they get the care and support they need in future."

Of the 269 people questioned, 62% knew absolutely nothing about the new system. Among people with learning disabilities, the figure was 73%.

The research, carried out by think tank Demos and the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University, said local authorities need to be ready for a massive demand for personal assistants, education and leisure services, due to more than half of respondents wanting to change the care they currently receive in favour of such services.

Other services such as day centres – a key feature of Self Unlimited’s plans for the future - are also high on people’s wish lists.

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