



Choices for people with learning disabilities

News Release

Immediate

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National Charity Concerned Over Government's Social Care Plans

A leading national charity for adults with learning disabilities has raised questions about Government plans to offer some disabled and elderly people free personal care.

Self Unlimited points out that just 128,000 people will qualify for the Government's new funding, announced in the Queen's speech, contrasting that with the 1 million-plus people in the UK with learning disabilities.

It says the plans to give free care to some people at home will divert cash from other services at a time when social care budgets are spiralling downwards, leading to reduced levels of service elsewhere. The charity says the bill fails to address the big issues affecting social care.

Patrick Wallace, Self Unlimited's chief executive, said: "We are happy that this Queen's Speech has put social care on the agenda, but there are far larger challenges to be faced than are covered in this bill.

"The Government is pressing forward with the personalisation agenda – tailoring social care services to the individual and providing more choice – and we support that, but it is putting huge pressure on the system at a time when money is particularly short.

“Local authorities are being forced to cut social care budgets drastically, some by as much as 20%. They will now be expected to find at least another £250 million each year to fund this new proposal, and they will not be able to do this without cutting funding in other areas of social care. The fear is that this bill could drain public resources without having a real effect on quality of life for the majority of people who need social care.”

He pointed out that Self Unlimited, like other charities and organisations in the field, is undergoing huge transformations to adapt to the personalisation agenda. At the same time, they face reduced income from local authorities and greater difficulty securing funds from charitable donors due to the credit crunch. The charity is now looking for new ways to generate income so that it is less dependent on central funding.

Self Unlimited, whose headquarters are in Leicestershire, provides services to people with learning disabilities across England.

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