

LEARNING DISABILITY AND THE SPENDING REVIEW

Q&A BRIEFING

Q: People with learning disabilities will lose out under the CSR

The Government is committed to improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups including people with learning disabilities. Local councils have a duty to assess the needs of people who need support to live independently, including the needs of people with learning disabilities.

A: Will Valuing People Now end?

The Department is currently reviewing all business planning processes as part of the efficiency measures being rolled out across Government. This includes looking at individual programmes of work like Valuing People Now and we can't anticipate the outcome of that work.

But our commitment to driving change for people with learning disabilities remains. Valuing People Now has set priorities until March 2011 of improving outcomes for people with learning disabilities and their family carers around health, housing and employment. We will continue for the future to drive greater personalisation and improved choice and control to improve outcomes for people with learning disabilities. We will work with people with learning disabilities and their family carers to make sure that their views are included in the future transformation of the NHS and the new social care vision – and across other policies like employment and housing.

Q: People with learning disabilities will be affected by the cuts to disability benefits

A: DH officials are working with colleagues across government to assess the implications for people with learning disabilities of the welfare reform agenda.

Q: How can you say social care is protected when councils will get 26% cuts?

A: It is up to local authorities to choose how best to use their available funding. However, we think that the extra investment we have set out, combined with a rigorous focus on efficiency, will mean that there is funding available to protect people's access to care in the next Spending Review.

Q: How will the NHS funding get to social care – won't the NHS just keep it?

A: The NHS White Paper made it clear that the NHS and local authorities will need to work together to improve outcomes for everyone. We will set out more details about how the funding will be used to support social care in the 2011/12 Operating Framework.

Q: Why is the Learning Disabilities and Health Reform Grant not ringfenced?

A: We have rolled most other Department grants into central formula grant, but not the Learning Disabilities and Health Reform Grant. This shows the importance that the Department puts on the Commissioning Transfer and learning disability services more generally. However, in line with the localism agenda it is right and proper that local government has the ability to use funding in a way that best reflects local needs and priorities.

Q: How will you allocate the Learning Disabilities and Health Reform grant – will it follow caseload, as set out in the DH consultation document?

A: We will announce detailed allocations for the Learning Disability and Health Reform grant around the time of the provisional local government allocations.

Q: Why is it now called the Learning Disabilities and Health Reform grant – will it fund services other than the Commissioning Transfer?

A: The grant will also include funding for a small transfer of responsibility from PCTs to LAs for carrying out medical assessments for the 'Blue Badge' scheme. This amounts to around £6m per annum. It does not affect the sum available for the Learning Disability Commissioning Transfer.