

Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper response – United Response

United response is a national charity with over 40 years' experience of providing skilled social care support to disabled people. We work under contract with local authorities across England and Wales and at any one time our 3500 staff are providing support for around 3000 vulnerable people in the community.

United Response welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper. Thanks to good social care people we support are living longer, however there remains a challenge to continue the work done under the transforming care agenda to allow the people we support to continue to take part in society as good integration can improve the quality of life for people we support.

Recommendations

- **United Response calls on the Government to ensure that sleep-ins back pay is properly funded, ensuring that hard working staff undertaking sleep-in shifts are properly paid. The funding must be both paid retrospectively and funded going forward, so that all care hour rates are fully consummate with the NLW for overnight care.**
- **United Response would call on the Government to ensure that all young people have an EHCP in place at the point of transition to provide them with the opportunities to move from school to further education, internships, work experience, apprenticeships and employment.**
- **We would call on the Government to make sure the replacement SES programme strengthens previous work done through SES and reaches those furthest from the workplace.**
- **We would call on the Government to make sure that ESF funding is replaced and match funded post-Brexit.**
- **We would ask that Government to make sure that people with learning disabilities are included as one of the groups against which indicators are measured against.**

Chapter 3: The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. Do you agree with this approach?

Children and young people growing up with learning disabilities often find it harder to integrate within the community with 33% of children with a learning disability saying they find it harder to make friends while in comparison to only 9% of children without a learning disability according to Emerson and Hatton's 2007 research. It is therefore paramount that we provide children and young people who have a learning disability with the right tools and opportunities to be a part of and to flourish within their local communities. United Response welcomes the Governments proposal for meaningful social mixing between people.

Barriers experienced in childhood and adolescence can mean socialising, friendships and forming relationships in adult life can be harder, as care and support available sometimes means that people with a learning disability are supported to live, but are not supported to establish fulfilling friendships, relationships and to be fully involved in their community and the workplace. Providing the right social care support is therefore crucial to allowing young people to thrive within society. The social care funding gap is estimated to reach £5.8billion by 2020 according to LGA research; the right, high-quality support makes the difference between someone fulfilling their potential, as independently as they can, at the heart of the community or simply existing. While wages are rising and demand increases, care providers have faced huge cuts in local government funding, amounting to 40% since 2010. United Response, welcomes current funding already announced including the Better Care Fund, Improved Better Care Fund

and the social care precept, but it is not enough to maintain social care even at the current level, let alone cover the growing costs going forward, including the rising costs of paying dedicated care staff.

The crisis in social care has been exacerbated by years of cuts and has now been compounded by the single greatest threat to the learning disability sector through the 'sleep-in' back pay crisis. This critical error on the implementation of the National Living Wage (NLW) is entirely due to mistaken and inconsistent guidance provided by Government over the years. Though unintended, this error is nonetheless the root cause of the impending catastrophe in learning disability care. As a result of the sleep-ins liability, services have begun to close and a large number of services are at risk of failure, organisations are handing back contracts, and considering their ability to continue trading. Restricting their ability to deliver person-centred care and genuine choice within the community. **United Response calls on the Government to ensure that sleep-ins back pay is properly funded, to ensure that hard working staff undertaking sleep-in shifts are properly paid. The funding must be retrospectively and funded going forward, so that all care hour rates are fully consummate with the NLW for overnight care.**

In the UK 8 out of every 10 non-disabled people are in employment as compared to 5 out of 10 disabled people. However, less than 1 in 10 people with a learning disability are in employment, which can form a big part of person's adult social life. Transitional care and support between children's and adult services can fall off drastically, right at the very point in a young adults life when it is critical to enable them to progress into employment. Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are crucial to this transition taking place and in enabling young people with a disability to be part of the community. **United Response would therefore call on the Government to ensure that all young people have an EHCP in place at the point of transition to provide them with the opportunities to move from school to further education, internships, work experience, apprenticeships and employment.**

Chapter 5: The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that people, particularly those living in residentially segregated communities, have opportunities to come together with people from different backgrounds and play a part in civic life. Do you agree with this approach?

The measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. Adults with learning disabilities and complex needs are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our society. They and their families rely on social care provided by local authorities – it is their lifeline.

The Winterbourne view scandal called time on an outmoded way of delivering care. Since then, progress has been made but reforms are at risk of being undone. The Governments *Transforming Care* Agenda sets out a clear vision, this vision does not have consummate funding.

Government recognises that the community is the best place for people with a learning disability to receive care, as well being the most cost-effective solution. Community living is a critical element to ensuring people with a learning disability can lead lives free from abuse. However a report from the National Audit Office published in March 2017 found that money is not being released from hospitals quickly enough to pay for community support. It is welcome that NHS England will provide £30 million in revenue funding over three years and that this funding will be matched by partnerships and an additional £100 million of capital funding. However, this is clearly not enough as people moving into community settings are those with the highest needs.

Making sure that people we support have the right accommodation within the community is paramount to making sure they are able to live successfully in their local community. Making sure people we support have the right community based support and treatment services available is paramount for when people move out of long stays at hospitals and ATUs. Creating specialist community services can be more costly in the short-term and require substantial initial investment for the transitional period. However, over time not only would this dramatically improve the quality of life for people we support but also often deliver savings so it is vital that Government takes the long view in making those with complex needs a part of

the community by committing to the necessary funding. United Response would point out that the Governments *Transforming Care Agenda* cannot be met unless the crisis in social care funding is addressed. Local authorities cannot deliver this revolution in care without guaranteed investment in community based services to give people the opportunity to come together in the community and take part in civic life.

Our Oasis vision

United Response have developed the Oasis concept which seeks to create a lifestyle of choice for a community of local people to provide alternative accommodation and support models to enable people we support to live as part of their local community. So that their needs, aspirations and desires inclusively met by living together on the same site. Those living in this setting will have a mix of needs with approximately two thirds requiring paid support packages. The intention would be for the model to be financially viable through the provision of accommodation via social rented, private rented or private ownership, creating a true sense of community for those living there. It is envisaged that this model would be cost-effective in regards to support costs due to an economy of scale approach as staff costs would be reduced through the use of on-site teams.

Chapter 6: The Green Paper proposes measures to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be active in the labour market, to build their confidence and skills to take up employment. Do you agree with this approach?

United Response's specialised supported employment services help young people and adults with learning disabilities, autism, Asperger's and mental health problems to overcome barriers to move towards employment and other work-related activities. Within our supported living services we also support people to move towards work as well as providing in-work support for those who remain in employment.

United Response welcomes the Governments proposals to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be in the labour market. People with learning disabilities, autism and Asperger's require specialist employment support which is person- centred and delivered by local experts. Such provision should be signposted and available as part of Job Centre Plus (JCP) employment support to facilitate this integration within the local community. We also welcome recent changes to Access to Work which means employers can now apply for more funding for adjustments to the workplace and also applies to supported internships now; for this funding stream to be utilised by employers it needs to be better advertised.

Being in employment has huge benefits for someone with a learning disability including increased confidence, socialising, independence and reduced health needs. Specialist Employment Support (SES) currently delivers excellent support for people with a learning disability when there are places available and the Job Centre Plus (JCP) staff are aware of it. The SES programme is due to close in autumn 2018 and be replaced by a new support programme it is therefore paramount that this new programme strengthens the work done by SES. SES is designed to reach those furthest from the employment market but at present it does not have the capacity along with the Work and Health programme not providing the support that is needed for those it is vital that the SES replacement combats these issues. **United Response would therefore call on the Government to make sure the replacement SES programme strengthens previous work done through SES and reaches those furthest from the workplace.**

United Response is keen to continue to deliver specialised supported employment through funds currently available via European Social Fund (ESF), which forms an important part of funding (including

match-funding to SES and SFA schemes), at a time of shrinking local authority budgets. Innovation through the Dynamic Purchasing System may also be subject to additional pressure to pick up gaps in support left from the absence of ESF. We welcomed the recently published Work and Pensions Committee paper on ESF, highlighting the need for a replacement separate fund within the proposed **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** for employment support, and the Committee's proposal that there is no gap between existing funding and new funding streams. **We would call on the Government to make sure that ESF funding is replaced and match funded post-Brexit.**

ECHPs play a vital role in providing a route into employment for young people with a learning disability; and at present the these plans that are so useful in planning future career or further education routes for people with a learning disability are patchy resulting in a postcode lottery of provision. As part of the services we provide United Response facilitates Supported Internships through contracts with DfE's, Skills Funding Agency.

Chapter 8: The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?

People with a learning disability, autism and Asperger's are some of the most vulnerable people in society; core indicators are vital to measure the progress of the work being done to get the most vulnerable in society integrated and taking part in the community and forming fulfilling and lasting relationships. The measures identified must make sure they capture **all** of the most vulnerable groups in society. **We would ask that Government to make sure that people with learning disabilities are included as one of the groups that indicators are measured against.**

Recommendations

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