

Foreword Advice and information needs in adult social care



Information is power. With good information, people can be aware of available care and support services and make informed choices. They will know what they should expect and challenge when things go wrong. Good information helps people to take control of their lives – it is at the very heart of personalised care.

Unfortunately, many people who use care and support services and their carers are bemused and confused by the information available. It can be complicated, full of jargon and may not be comprehensive or reliable. This is why the Think Local Act Personal partnership prioritised Information, Advice and Brokerage as one of our key areas of work. We wanted to see whether we could help improve the current situation to make a difference to the lives of people using services and their carers.

Our working group has included people who use services, carers, representatives from local authorities and other information providers and I am very grateful for all their hard work and effort over the last year. We have concentrated on three areas:

- How people access care and support services and how information is used
- What councils need to consider when developing their information strategies
- Explaining the jargon that people who use services and their carers may encounter

We are part way through our programme of work and are now launching three resources to start to address these issues.

- 1) Advice and information needs in adult social care** – this is an interactive map of typical journeys into social care. We hope that it helps to provide some clarity about the shape of the social care environment. The map is supported by a report explaining what we know about the problems people experience in getting the right information and advice at each stage.
- 2) Principles for the provision of information and advice** – this short practical framework sets out the main issues that councils need to consider when developing a comprehensive and coherent local care and support information and advice strategy.

- 3) Social care jargon busters** – our jargon buster has 52 of the most commonly used social care words and phrases and what they mean – one for every week of the year!

Each of these resources is “work-in-progress”. Our working group would really appreciate your feedback on them and your ideas about how we could develop them further. Our initial ideas have included:

- 1)** Using the map of typical journeys into social care to develop an audit tool so that information providers can assess how well they are doing. The map could also be developed to take into account the proposed changes in the Care Bill so that people can see what will be different in the future.
- 2)** Turning the *Principles for the provision of information and advice* into a checklist that people using services and their carers can use so that they can be assured that the information provided is robust and reliable.
- 3)** Establishing a French: English type dictionary to translate social care jargon into everyday language using the Social care jargon busters. We could make this electronically available so that it is easy for documents to be written using these translations.

As I say, these are our initial ideas but you may have others or improvements of these ones. We are publishing the resources now so that you can see how far we have got and help us to shape the next stage of the development of our information resources. If you do have any thoughts, please send them to thinklocalactpersonal@scie.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you and sharing the next stage of our work with you.

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