

A DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE RECLAIM SOCIAL CARE GROUPS DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We start from our agreed position that social care/support should be:

- A universal service, available to all on basis of need, and free at the point of use to all who need it
- Fully funded through progressive taxation
- Publicly provided
- Subject to national standards
- Locally provided, locally accountable and designed as far as possible by service users
- Addressing people's aims, aspirations and choices not just bare needs
- Providing staff with training, qualifications career structure, and decent pay
- Giving informal carers support and respite care as required.

A universal service

Delivered through LAs, subject to national standards. Not integrated formally with the NHS. It would remain a separate service.

There seems to be sympathy for these key principles (which are draft SHA policy) for any future system of long-term care/support:

1. **Universal coverage** – The need for long-term care is part of the normal public sector services and should be treated just as health and education.
1. **Maximum risk-pooling** – The most efficient way of insuring ourselves against the costs of impairment or frailty is to all pool resources in order to cover that risk, as with the NHS.
2. **Equity** – The system should be equitable and should not discriminate against people because of condition, age or geography.
3. **Entitlement** – All citizens should benefit from the system and should not be disadvantaged by income or ability to pay. The system should be funded from general taxation and be free at the point of use, as with the NHS.
4. **Control** – All citizens should be able to get the right flexible support to meet their needs, to be able take the level of control that is right for them and their families.

Fully funded through progressive taxation

The newly formed RSC Funding sub-group will explore options here. But there is evidence that boosting publicly provided social care is a good investment, not a cost:

[Social care is...] a growing economic sector with the potential to meet a diversity of skills, employment and economic needs at the very heart of communities that risk being left behind by GVA-driven economic strategies. <https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/West-Midlands-Social-Care-report.pdf>

Free at the point of use to all who need it

Huge financial implications. We have a sub-group bravely up for exploring this.

Locally accountable and designed as far as possible by service users

By investing in citizenship and community, social care must offer support that people and families can shape to their circumstances, and that helps people contribute as citizens and strengthens family and community life.

We need new forms of service user involvement in deciding how best to provide services to meet local need, and to give individual service users the right to control how their own services are provided, and be directly involved in monitoring of services.

There is debate about how best to get User-Led Organisations deep into the process, including whether co-ops might be part of the solution.

The Scrutiny function could also be further democratised by including service users, workers and their unions, on an advisory basis but with full rights to speak, to have access to documentation, to make proposals etc.

We need to explore further to what extent these ideas chime with Labour's thinking on Democratic Public Ownership <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Democratic-public-ownership-consultation.pdf>

It says that the reasons for democratic public ownership are

- 1) Involving workers, the public, and other stakeholders in economic decision-making has both societal and economic benefits.*
- 2) Democratic participation can enhance the effectiveness of publicly owned enterprises by tapping into grassroots forms of knowledge from the direct experience of employees and users of public goods and services.*
- 3) Economic democracy – and specifically the active exercise of individual worker and community member ownership rights – is a critical cornerstone (and pre-requisite) of genuine political democracy*
- 4) Economic democracy can empower groups and individuals that are otherwise excluded. Genuine economic democracy should involve workers in their own enterprises, but should not stop there. While workers in some enterprises may have some participatory rights, retirees, students, the disabled, and the unemployed generally do not, as well as those who work elsewhere.*

It is mainly concerned with democracy at work, but does say: *“Democratic public ownership offers the opportunity to provide autonomy and devolve decision-making power to workers and users, neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and rural communities. But local autonomy should not be at the expense of a broader commitment to commonly agreed goals and principles at national and international levels. There will also still be a requirement for higher level strategic planning and integration of public services, particularly with regard to infrastructure and grid networks in areas as diverse as transport, energy, water, and healthcare.”*

Addressing people's aims, aspirations and choices not just bare needs

There seems to be sympathy for personal budgets as a means for people taking more control. But they have to be adequately funded and be structured in such a way that they do not provide a foothold for privatisation.

There is a demand to bring back an adequately funded Independent Living Fund.