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The Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
House of Commons
Westminster
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Dear Tessa,

16 DEC 2009

Thank you for your letter of 17 November enclosing an example of correspondence you have received from a number of your constituents about the Green Paper *Shaping the Future of Care Together*.

The Government is rising to the challenge of addressing the need to reform care and support services. People are living longer and fuller lives and rightly expect more from care services. The Green Paper *Shaping the Future of Care Together* highlights the challenges faced by the current system and sets out the need for reform to develop a high quality National Care Service that is fair, simple and affordable for all adults in England. More information about the Green Paper can be found online at www.careandsupport.direct.gov.uk.

As part of this reform, we are proposing that:

- **prevention services** will provide support to prevent care needs from worsening;
- **national assessment** will mean that disabled adults can be confident that their care needs will be assessed in the same way anywhere in England. This portability will mean that disabled people will be able to move around the country with greater ease and confidence;
- a **joined up service** will mean that all services for disabled adults, including social care, health and housing, will work together better;
- **information and advice** will be provided to ensure that disabled adults will be able to find their way easily through the care and support system;
- **personalised care and support** will mean that every eligible disabled adult who wants one can get a personal budget and a care and support plan, tailored to their needs; and
- care and support is affordable for everyone, and we have set out options for **fair funding** to ensure this.

We consulted on *Shaping the Future of Care Together* between 14 July and 13 November and sought the views of all stakeholders in developing the proposals set

out in the Green Paper. We are now processing the responses to the consultation and will take account of these views as we finalise our proposals. We expect to publish a Care and Support White Paper early next year.

We are aware of concern about the extent of the rise in the number of people with learning disabilities. The Department of Health has commissioned research into this issue from the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the London School of Economics. This research will relate to projected numbers of younger adults with learning disabilities, the numbers of social services users with learning disabilities, and the associated public expenditure. This will build on earlier work by the PSSRU into demand for care services. More information about the work of the PSSRU is available at www.pssru.ac.uk.

Whilst the Green Paper is about long-term issues, we are committed to addressing the immediate needs of people with a learning disability. *Valuing People Now: a new three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities* was published on 19 January and sets out the cross-Government strategy on services for people with learning disabilities for the next three years. *Valuing People Now* strengthens the commitment set out in 2001 in the original *Valuing People* White Paper to improve the life chances of people with learning disabilities by reshaping services around the principles of rights, independence, choice, and inclusion.

Last year, we consulted on the progress that has been made towards *Valuing People's* objectives. This allowed us to take stock of what has worked well to date and where progress must still be made. The strategy takes account of what people with learning disabilities and their families told the Department about the support they need and also reflects changing priorities across Government. We are now focused on delivering *Valuing People's* objectives through action at local and national level. We have published a detailed delivery plan alongside *Valuing People Now* that sets out how we intend to meet the aims of the strategy.

We also acknowledge concern about the application of eligibility criteria for social care. In January 2008, Department of Health Ministers asked the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to undertake a review of the *Fair Access to Care Services* (FACS) eligibility criteria, their application by councils and their impact on service users. CSCI engaged the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Local Government Association and other relevant stakeholders in the process of the review. CSCI's report, *Cutting the Cake Fairly*, was published on 22 October last year and can be viewed on the Department of Health website.

The review has highlighted the differing interpretations placed on the FACS guidance by local councils and the inconsistencies that exist in its application both between and within councils. I therefore welcome the recommendation that we should rework the FACS guidance to ensure that it is transparent, fair and focused on outcomes for service users. We consulted on revised guidance between 14 July and 6 October and the consultation document can be viewed on the Department's website under the 'Consultations' section.

I hope you and your constituents find this reply helpful.

Best wishes,

Andy
ANDY BURNHAM