

SPECIAL

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COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW NOVEMBER 2010

Making sense of the UK Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review

Since the Chancellor, George Osborne, outlined the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in late October, there has been much comment and reaction on how all kinds of people and services will be affected. The CSR sets out Government spending until 2015 and it has been made clear that its main focus is on addressing the UK's structural deficit (the Government currently takes less in taxes than it spends on services).

There is no doubt that cuts in local authority budgets will impact on services for people with mental health conditions, learning disabilities and dementia and their carers. It is in this climate that Making Space is keen to help the people who use our services to stay positive.

We know we must continue to find innovative ways to preserve our current services and tender to win

new ones. We will emerge from difficult times stronger. We have always delivered to the people who need our support and we remain committed to them.

For the people that Making Space supports there is some heartening news in that frontline NHS budgets are being protected. However the headline extra funding in other areas of social care has to be viewed more cautiously as the majority **is not ring-fenced** and may well be re-directed.

This supplement is designed to highlight the areas in people's lives where the CSR (or related Government policy) may affect them directly. We say to the people who use our services – whatever support, advice or guidance you need, please speak to your Making Space support representative to help plan the best way forward for your personal circumstances.



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THE FREEDOM TO ENJOY AN EVERYDAY LIFE



Where the CSR may affect your everyday life

In all of the following sections we have highlighted the parts of the announcements (and our reaction and advice) that we feel are most relevant to the people who use Making Space services.



CARE, SUPPORT AND HEALTH

What The Chancellor said:

- Personal budgets to support adult social care will be extended.
- The Government and NHS will give a further £1bn each over 4 years to fund joint working on social care for the most vulnerable including 'reablement services'.
- The Personal Social Services grant for social care will be increased to £2.4bn per year by 2014-15.
- £6bn will be allocated to funding the Supporting People programme over four years*.
- Provision for Disabled Facilities Grants will rise with inflation, with local authorities given more discretion for their allocation.
- Local authorities will not need to reduce access to social care services.
- A new grant - the Learning Disabilities Grant (a non-ring-fenced, specific grant worth around £1.3bn from 2011/12) will be issued.

What it potentially means for people using Making Space support services:

- 'Personalisation,' where you can make your own decisions on the best services for you, will continue.
- Investment in the Supporting People programme and Disabled Facilities Grants is potentially positive.
- The additional funding for adult social care will be helpful, as will the commitment of NHS match funding to bolster other agencies' support packages.

**The removal of the ring-fence for 'Supporting People' might mean that funding may be invested in other public services which may be considered to be of higher priority. This has to be monitored on a case by case basis.*



WELFARE AND BENEFITS

What The Chancellor said:

- The Government is going to save £7bn a year from spending on welfare and benefits by 2014-15. There is a commitment to making sure it 'pays to work'.
- The Universal Credit will replace the current system of means tested working age benefits and tax credits over the next two parliaments (8 - 10 years).
- £2 billion will be allocated over the next four years to fund the implementation of the Universal Credit. Further details will follow in due course.
- Household benefit payments for couples and lone parent households will be capped at around £500 per week from 2013.
- Household benefit payments for single adult households will be capped around £350 per week (Disability Living Allowance claimants, War Widows, and working families claiming the working tax credits will be exempt from the cap).
- The age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit will be increased from 25 to 35.
- A one-year time limit will be introduced for

contributory Employment and Support Allowance for those in the Work Related Activity Group.

- The mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will be removed for people in residential care.

What it potentially means for people using Making Space support services:

- Demand for shared accommodation will now increase. Not all housing markets offer enough shared accommodation.
- Single people under 35 who become unemployed now face losing their home just as they need stability to look for a new job (expected to affect 88,000 people nationally).
- Single homeless people will be particularly badly affected - for many single homeless people the private rented sector is the only option.
- If, under the Universal Credit, local authority involvement in housing benefit is ended, it suggests that help with housing costs will no longer be based on actual rents but on regional averages.

SOCIAL HOUSING

What The Chancellor said:

- The Government wants to make social housing more responsive, flexible and fair so that a greater number of people are able to access social housing in a way that reflects their needs and changing circumstances.
- There are no plans to change tenancy terms or rents for existing tenants.
- Social housing will be reformed to provide a more tailored response to individual needs at lower cost.
- Housing Associations will be able to offer a growing proportion of new social tenants a new intermediate rent tenure called 'affordable rent' for a fixed period.

What it potentially means for people using Making Space support services:

- Access to rents which are fixed below those available privately (so called 'sub-market' rents) will end.
- New Tenants will be assessed for the level of rent they can afford, taking into account their personal circumstances.



CARERS

Carers play a hugely positive and important role in society. By many independent estimates carers actually save the UK money by fulfilling roles that would otherwise rely on state funding.

Since the CSR, Paul Burstow MP, a minister for health (with whom Making Space attended a meeting in October) has reinforced the Government's commitment to carers:

- To support those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.
- Enable those with caring responsibilities to fulfil their educational and employment potential.
- Provide personalised support both for carers and those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life.
- Support carers to remain mentally and physically well.



NB: The Coalition Government's Commission on the Funding of Care and Support will report in the summer of 2011 on the future funding of social care. We have to wait and see whether the proposals can deliver a sustainable settlement for social care which transcends economic and political concerns and takes into account the transformation in the UK population.

In individual cases Making Space will support carers in attempting to secure other elements of social care packages which, although not ring-fenced, would provide the extra support that they need.

Some areas in the CSR for specific further investigation include:

- Funding to improve joint-working between social and health care can improve many families' experiences of caring.
- The Carers' Grant, currently £256million annually, has not been ring-fenced for some time although previous guidelines to local authorities did outline minimum levels that carers could expect.
- The Government is making £400 million available through the NHS over the next four years to support carers' breaks.

Making Space carer support services will be mindful that, although individual circumstances differ, some of the capped benefits will leave a number of carers financially worse off. We will work with our supported carers to highlight where this is a factor and support them in finding ways to redress any potential unfair hardship.

Work Capability Assessment

Incapacity benefit has been replaced by Employment and Support Allowance and people will be reassessed from April 2011 for their eligibility to work.

It is fair to say that when the 'Work Capability Assessment' (WCA) was announced not enough thought had been given to how people with mental health conditions would be assessed.

Now a review into the process carried out by leading occupational healthcare academic, Professor Malcolm Harrington, CBE, has highlighted that in their current form the assessments are "impersonal, mechanistic and lack empathy".

For people with mental health conditions the review concedes that some conditions are more difficult to assess than others. There are some positive recommendations towards personalising the process, encouraging more inter-agency communication and making sure the evidence for each individual is completed holistically.

It appears, at this stage, that the Government has taken the lessons on board and is promising to make resources available to the staff who will carry out the assessments.

In all cases people applying for the Employment and Support Allowance can have their own representatives in attendance when attending assessments.

Making Space has made a virtue of supporting the people who use our services to gain the skills, or regain the confidence to take on work. We believe work gives people focus and builds self esteem.

But we also know it's not as simple as somebody being able to pick up a pen or walk for a certain distance. The process of recovery for people with mental health conditions is more complex and Making Space will continue to work in ways which encourage people, at the right time for them, to enter or re-enter the workplace.

DEMENTIA

The UK Coalition Government's policy development document headlined 'Quality outcomes for people with dementia' which builds on the National Dementia Strategy first published in February 2009, was published prior to the CSR.

The stated ambition is to raise the quality of care for people with dementia and their carers and there are 4 priority objectives:

- Good-quality early diagnosis and intervention for all
- Improved quality of care in general hospitals
- Living well with dementia in care homes
- Reduced use of antipsychotic medication

Although there is no specific reference to funding for services for people who have dementia there is clear recognition that it is an important priority.

Much emphasis is placed on the improvement of community personal support and local delivery and accountability of dementia services. With Making Space having recently opened its first 'Dementia Café', in partnership with Bury Council's Age of Opportunities programme, we hope that we are well positioned to support more people who have dementia in the future.



MORE INFORMATION

Further detailed information on various aspects of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and related issues can be found at the

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wca-review-2010.pdf>

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_122106.pdf

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_119828.pdf

following websites. Some are general information and some are in depth review documents.



The UK Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review – *Your View*

We want to work with you to understand how the CSR is affecting you or other people you may know. We would like to build a picture of how, specifically, the people who use our services are being, or will be, affected.

You can tell us your story at www.makingspace.co.uk/personal-blogging.htm or if you prefer to write please send your written comments to The Editor, Making News Comprehensive Spending Review, Lyne House, 46 Allen Street, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 7JB

