



Cheshire West  
and Chester

# The future of adult social care

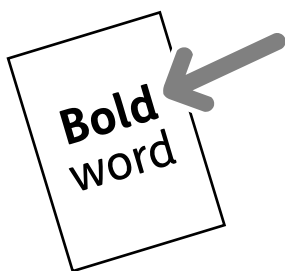
Our report for Cheshire West  
and Chester



easy  
read

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In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are blue and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

# Introduction



The **Commission** on the Future of **Adult Social Care** has been set up by Cheshire West and Chester Council.



A **commission** is a group of people who have been asked to do something official.



**Adult social care** is care and support for people to live independently.



The commission has had ideas about what adult social care should be like in the future.

This information will:



- Explain how adult social care works at the moment.



- Give some ideas of what we think should happen with adult social care in the future.



- Explain what we have learnt from listening to people who use adult social care services.

# What we were asked to do



We were asked to think about what adult social care should be like in the future.



We want people to achieve their goals and have a good life.



We think a good life is:

- Being healthy.
- Being happy with where you live.
- Being part of a family if you want to.





- Being part of the local area.



We asked people what a good life means to them and how we can make that happen.

# How we did our work



We got 8 people called commissioners together to listen to what local people who use social care services thought.

The commissioners were made up of:



- 6 elected councillors from Cheshire West and Cheshire Council.



- A leader from the local NHS.



- A leader from the **voluntary** groups.



**Voluntary** means giving your time to do something for free.

We asked people about:



- The problems that social care services have at the moment.



- Any chances to make social care better.



After we listened to people we wrote down our ideas for the future of social care.

# Ideas for the future of adult social care

We sorted our ideas into 6 main groups.

These are:



1. Understand that the way things are organised can stop people with a disability from living an ordinary life.



2. Include people who use services in making decisions about their services.



3. Keeping services simple to use.



4. Think about how more services can be provided locally.



5. Help people who are struggling with bills and the cost of care.



6. Have strong leadership and staff and use information well.



We will look into each of these in more detail, including:

- What is happening at the moment.



- Our ideas about what the council and social care services should do.



- What we have learnt from talking and listening to people who use adult social care services.

# 1. How people with a disability can live an ordinary life



We heard about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.



This is an agreement with other countries about the **rights** that disabled people have.



**Rights** are things that every person should have by law. Like the right to be safe, the right to education, the right to be respected.

We heard about the Social Model of Disability.



The **Social Model of Disability** says that the way the world works can stop disabled people from doing things non-disabled people do.

# What is happening at the moment



Around 61 thousand people are disabled in Cheshire West and Cheshire.



The council hasn't signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.



The council doesn't always follow the Social Model of Disability in its services.



The council thinks about the needs of disabled people when they are making plans.

# What we think should happen

We think the council and social care services should:



- Follow the Social Model of Disability.
- Sign up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- Focus on the strengths of disabled people not their weaknesses.
- Make new houses suitable for disabled people.
- Give training to all staff about including disabled people.



- Look at how all decisions might affect disabled people.



- Look at how disabled people's homes can be changed to suit their needs.

## What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things that we learnt:



- It is the way the world works that makes things difficult for disabled people.



- People who have experience of these difficulties should be listened to so it stops happening.



- More training is needed to help staff understand how to change to the Social Model of Disability.



- Many difficulties faced by disabled people are the same for different age groups.



- Social care should be about helping people to live independently.



- The right care for each person is important, and the same kind of care should be given to everyone.



- There should be more focus on keeping people well to stop them needing more care in the future.



- The way that buildings and services are arranged cause difficulties for disabled people.



- Staff need to change how they think about disability to make proper change at the council.

## 2. Including people in deciding about their services



Disabled people should have an equal part in making decisions about social care services.

### What is happening at the moment?



The council is getting better at talking to groups like the Carer's Forum.



The ideas and opinions of disabled people are very important to the council and social care services.



People have said it is wrong that none of the commissioners involved in this commission were picked because they use adult social care services.



Cheshire West Place Executive agree that disabled people should be part of making decisions about services.

## What we think should happen



We have some ideas about what the council should do to include disabled people in decisions.

The council should:



- Work with local groups to agree on how decisions should be made together.



- Give more people their payments directly.



- Give more people control of their care.



- Make sure there are more choices of care services for people.



- Include the opinions of service users when making decisions about how the council works.

## What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things we learnt:



- Making direct payments to people helps them to be independent and have choices.



- There needs to be lots of different social care providers to give people choices.



- Having a Personal Assistant can make a big difference in helping people to be independent.



- The work done by Empower You shows how services can be welcoming to disabled people.



- People with care needs should be part of public life, like being a local councillor.

### 3. Keeping services simple to use



People have difficulties in getting and understanding information.

#### What is happening at the moment?



The Livewell Cheshire website has information about all the services in Cheshire West and Chester.



The website needs to be easier to use and understand.



The council has a plain English guide to writing its documents.



The council is trying new ways of taking information from people who use care services.

## What we think should happen



We have some ideas about how to make information easier to understand.

The council and social care services should:



- Help people to use local services.



- Understand how local groups can help people through the social care system.



- Make information about support and services better and clearer.



- Look at how to make the Livewell Cheshire website easier to understand.



- Look at how people go through the social care system to make it less complicated.

## What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things we learnt:



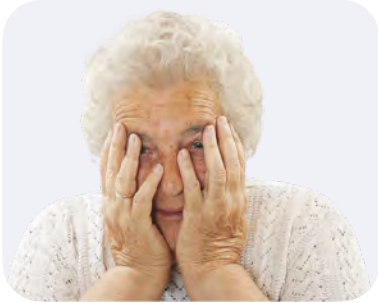
- The council needs to stop always asking people to fill in forms and talk to them instead.



- The council needs to change the language that they use to change how people think about disability.



- Organisations should have a clear reason for why they are giving social care services.



- People are often too worried or nervous to ask for help.



- There are complicated forms that are difficult for people to fill in.



- Local groups spend a lot of time helping people to find the services they need.

## 4. Keeping services local



We want to have services close to where people live that help them stay in their local area.

### What is happening at the moment



The council wants to see greener, stronger and fairer local areas.



Covid-19 showed that the council can work together with different organisations in new ways.



A Community Led Support programme is being tried out in Ellesmere Port.

# What we think should happen



We have some ideas about how services can be kept in local areas.

The council and social care services should:



- Make services stronger so they can help people to live in their local areas.



- Change how the council chooses which services get money.



- Make it easier for local organisations to give social care services.



- Help very small organisations to support people in their local area.

# What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things we learnt:



- Money should be given to the groups who are already doing good work in local areas.



- Technology could let people be independent for longer.



- There should be more organisations that are working in local areas.



- The council needs to think about how people who live in the countryside can use services.



- There are lots of different people with different needs so the same services can't be given to everyone.

# 5. Helping people with the cost of care

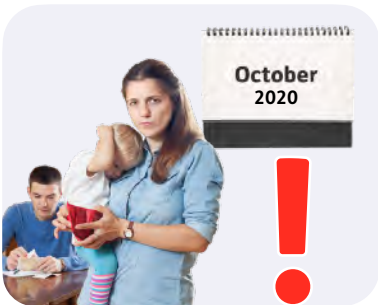


There are lots of people struggling to have enough money to pay all their bills.



This means they might not be able to live a good life.

## What is happening at the moment



The council said there was a **poverty** emergency in October 2020.



**Poverty** means not having enough money to buy the basic things you need to live.



The council has been working with organisations and people who have experience of living in poverty.



The council has checked its rules about lending money to people who are struggling with paying their bills.

## What we think should happen



We have some ideas about what should happen to make social care fairer for people.

The council and social care services should:



- Check how much social care services are charging and why.



- Collect money that people owe the council in a responsible and caring way.



- Think about how disabled people will be affected by changes to how people pay for services.



- Send out information to everyone who pays for their own care.



- Advertise chances to find work or **volunteer**.



**Volunteers** are people who give their time to help without getting paid for it.

# What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things we learnt:



- It's hard for some disabled people to live a good life without help from their family to pay bills.



- Other councils don't charge people to use services because they get more money from other places.



- When councils don't charge people for services there are lots more people who use the services.



- Some people don't ask for help because they don't think they can afford care.



- If people pay for care they might struggle to pay for other bills.

## 6. Strong leadership and using information well



We found out that strong leadership is very important to make changes happen and help staff to change.

### What is happening at the moment



The health and care services in Cheshire West and Chester are joining together.



The leadership for this is shared between the NHS and the council.



The council is open about how it gets information and how the information is shared.

# What we think should happen



We have some ideas about leadership, workers and information.

The council and social care services should:



- Make a strong plan for the future of health and care in Cheshire West and Chester.



- Make it easy for health and care services to share money, buildings and staff.



- Ask the Government to give more money for adult social care so social care services can:



- Pay staff more.



- Give staff more training.



- Make caring a job that lots of people want to do.



- Make sure health and social care organisations are given information from this commission.

# What we learnt from talking and listening to people

These are some of the things we learnt:



- Social care services need to look at how people are helped by their work more.



- Good leadership is needed over a long time to make sure change happens.



- Individual people want change to happen but organisations find it hard to change.



- The reasons for spending more money than usual on health and care need to be known.



- Leaders need to support their staff and they need to be supported too.



- Organisations in local areas need to be able to show how they are helping people.



- The council, NHS and local organisations need to get on and work together.



- Staff should be given the power to make good decisions for themselves.



- The council and care services need to find ways to keep staff in social care jobs for a longer time.

# Other information about the commission

This is some extra information about the work we have done.

## Who we are

The commissioners are:



- Councillor Val Armstrong, who is responsible for Adult Social Care at the council.



- Gary Cliffe, who is the Chief Executive of West Cheshire Voluntary Action.



- Councillor Gillian Edwards.



- Alison Lee, who is the Managing Director of Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership.



- Councillor Gina Lewis.



- Councillor Keith Millar.



- Councillor Lynn Riley.

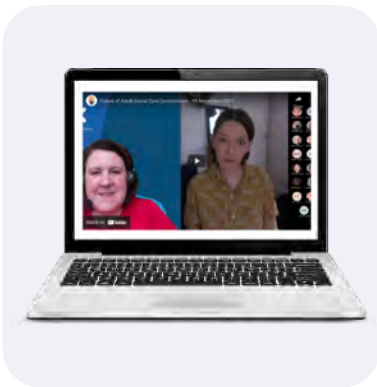


- Councillor Neil Sullivan.

# Meetings



We had 5 public meetings about different parts of the commission.



You can watch the videos of these meetings by clicking on this link:  
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/commission-on-the-future-of-adult-social-care/commission-on-the-future-of-adult-social-care.aspx>

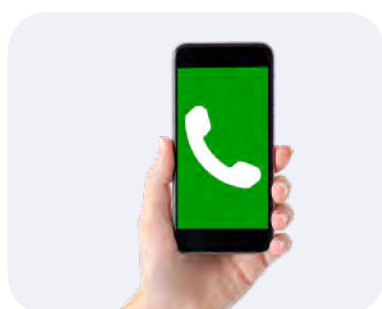
# For more information



You can look at our website here:

[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/  
residents/health-and-social-care/adult-  
social-care/adult-social-care.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/adult-social-care.aspx)

If you need more information or advice about adult social care please contact the Cheshire West Community Access Team by:



- Phone: 0300 123 7034



- Email:  
[accesswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:accesswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

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