

Charities back free personal care Bill

The charities Age Concern/Help the Aged, Carers UK, Parkinson's Disease Society and Counsel and Care have come together to call for politicians to throw their support behind the Personal Care at Home Bill which is due to have its Second Reading in the House of Lords on Monday 1 February 2010.

In a joint statement, the charities said:

“Care charges for those with critical needs are often a crippling cost to families already struggling with the financial impacts of illness or disability.

This Bill would mark an historic end to means-testing and charging for some of the most vulnerable people in our society to provide for their most basic care needs.

The older and disabled people, families and carers we represent have long called for an end to charging for care services – and they would not forget if this opportunity was missed to end unfair charges for those most in need. People want to know what care they will get and how much they will be asked to pay.”

The charities added:

“The care and support system is in need of a complete overhaul, and this Bill does not come close to solving the inequalities, inconsistencies and profound funding challenges of our creaking care system. However the principles set out in this Bill are a vital first step in reforming social care, and we urge all parties to come forward with a firm commitment to rapidly deliver proposals for an ambitious vision for a well-funded, transparent, fair care and support system.

As we move ever closer to a general election, we need the better funding of social care to be high up on every politician's agenda.”

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Notes to Editors:

- The Personal Care at Home Bill would introduce free personal care for those with the highest needs, defined as someone in the critical band of Fair Access to Care and needing help with four activities of daily living. Full year costs of the Bill are estimated at £670 million, £420 of which is coming from central Government and the remainder from local government efficiencies.
- Government estimates that around 400,000 people would benefit – 130,000 from additional reablement and the around 280,000 from free personal care. Personal care is already free of charge for those with the lowest incomes.