
Community Care Live

The Ethics and Effectiveness of
Community Care Charging

Foreword

- Thank you for inviting me to speak this morning at this august venue
 - It is, indeed, a privilege to be here among all the thinkers and doers who have the major power to move and shake community care, today
 - But I aim to do a bit of moving and shaking myself, this morning
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SPAEN

- Scotland-wide organisation
 - 350 PA Employers
 - Advice / support on Human Resources, employment law, direct payments, independent living
 - 24 hr advice and (£2m) indemnity scheme
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SPAEN

- Disclosure scheme
 - Coaching and Development Training
 - Partnership working with local disabled people's organisations
 - Consultancy to LAs and Scottish Executive
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2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade



Slavery, common as muck

- In the 18th century, at the height of the slave trade in the UK and its colonies, slavery was considered a 'normal' part of everyday life.
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Slavery, common as muck

- Slave traders were highly respected, 'God fearing' people – and they made a bob or two out of it too
 - Slavery was as common and acceptable to society as, well ...
 - Community care charging is today
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Both slavery and community care charges have their similarities

- Both are repressive regimes which create 'vulnerable' people; and keep them shackled to poverty and those in power of the system
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Both slavery and community care charges have their similarities

- Both deny dignity, individual freedom, self improvement and self actualisation
 - **AND BOTH, create and maintain dependency and disempowerment**
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2???

Bicentenary of the Abolition of Community Care Charging

What I should like to ask today is:

- When will future generations be commemorating the abolition of the aberration of community care charging?
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2???

Bicentenary of the Abolition of Community Care Charging

- When will there be the momentum within mainstream politics to finally agree that ...
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Bicentenary of the Abolition of Community Care Charging

- **“Community care services should be free at the point of delivery, because the community respects and values the contribution service users make to its life.”**
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**But at the moment I fear this is the
Government's Attitude**

Am I bovered??!!!



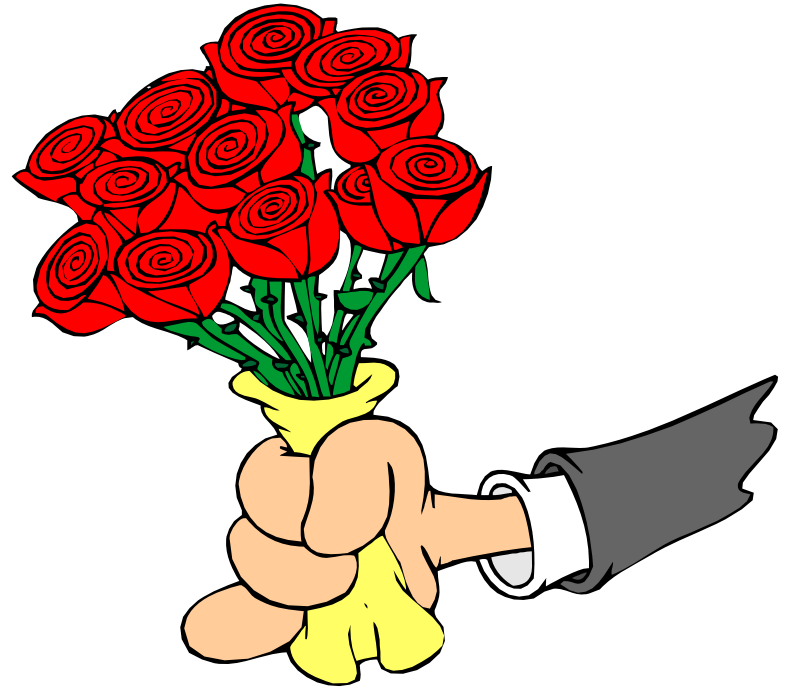
Historical content

- In 1947 'home care' was mainly for women after giving birth at home
- Disabled people were safely 'put away' in institutions
- Or, like older people, cared for by their families



Historical context (cont'd)

- So home care could have been seen as an 'extra', not a necessity
- And as such, a contribution wouldn't be out of the question



Health vs Social Care

- With the advent of modern social policy, more and more people are moving from institutional (medical) care to community based (social) care
 - This means that *the 'extra'* of 'home care' has become *the 'necessity'* of 'social care'
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Health vs Social Care

- And with the introduction of direct payments and the emergence of the new profession of 'Personal Assistant',
 - the roles of '**health care**' and '**social care**' have become even more blurred
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Health vs Social Care

- **Yet 'health care' is free, but 'social care' isn't**
 - **Can this be fair**
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What is 'health care' and what is 'social care'?

- Limb/Chest Physiotherapy
- Tube feeding
- Changing urinary drainage systems
- Stoma care
- Preventing pressure sores
- Keeping skin clean (washing)
- Maintaining basic level of hygiene (cleaning)

All of these – and more – are tasks done by both nurses and PAs



Charging Guidance says

Disabled people's incomes should not be reduced below the minimum levels of Income Support or Pension Credit,

Plus a buffer of no less than 16.5% in Scotland or 25% in England

Effect on savings:

- All the different and confusing policies on savings conflict with other Government statements encouraging 'saving for a rainy day' and prevent disabled people saving sufficient sums to meet disability-related expenditure
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Literature has called charging:

- A tax on disability;
 - A tax on economic and social opportunity;
 - A tax on participation and citizenship;
 - A financial penalty directly related to impairment and the need to use services;
 - Therefore institutional discrimination of the highest order, threatening human rights!
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Dr Laurence Clark has written a comparative study of disabled people's views on charging:

“... when people hear about charging, they genuinely think ‘that’s ridiculous’. Even social workers have responded in disbelief when I’ve told them that, out of my wages, I pay more in charges than I get to keep.”

Disabled people's views

“I think that to pay to have to get out of bed in the morning is iniquitous in this day and age. I think that to be enabled to do the basic things that everyone else can do should be a human right.”

“What you're buying with your charge is a human right, and I don't believe that anyone in our society should have to pay for a human right. No-one else pays to go to the toilet or to get out of bed in the morning.”

Philip Mason has also written:

“.... the sentiment behind means-tested charges lifts a veil on the less attractive side of society’s attitude towards its disadvantaged - and says ‘we cannot afford you; you are worthless’.”

Philip Mason argues:

“.... by not accepting responsibility for the barriers faced by disabled people by paying the full cost of their support, society is heading back to the philosophy of Social Darwinism and ‘survival of the fittest’”.

Structural / Policy Issues

- **Health and social care policies / services becoming linked**
 - **Good social care services reduce the demand for health care**
 - **As population becomes older more demand to move political interest away from acute to chronic services**
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Structural / Policy Issues (cont'd)

- **Health services are free at the point of delivery but community care isn't**
 - This is incongruent
 - **Health is seen as a 'national' concern, but 'community care' is seen as a 'local' concern**
 - Should this be re-examined?
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Structural / Policy Issues (cont'd)

- **Devolution to the local level has created post code lotteries**
 - **not only in terms of charging,**
 - **but quality of service and even services themselves**
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Structural / Policy Issues (cont'd)

- **Welfare Reform calls for more motivation among those on IB to get back to work, but if most of your income goes on community care charges**
 - **So ... what's the point of working?**
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Structural / Policy Issues (cont'd)

- **Calls have been made to take direct payments away from local authorities and place them in the hands of a unified national agency, involving service users in its management.**
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Effectiveness of Community Care Charging

- An average of 25 – 40% of revenue raised by charging is swallowed up in administrative costs
 - No evidence that charging improves quality or expansion of service
 - Merely a tool to restrict service provision
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Conclusion:

Charging service users for their right to participate equally in the lives of their family and community **is a misuse of power and a prohibition of our human rights**

Conclusion (cont'd)

- **In the light of modern social policy whereby:**
 - **Health and social care are becoming united,**
 - **Welfare Reform is transforming 'inactive' recipients of welfare into people 'actively' seeking employment,**
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Conclusion (cont'd)

- **Politicians should take cognisance of the incongruent and inhibitory aspects of community care charging.**
 - **But before I finish**
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May I ask you, here, today

What are you
doing about
abolishing
community
care
charging?



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Conclusion (cont'd)

- **Would you join the many thousands of people who want to say to politicians –**
 - **think seriously about what you are doing;**
 - **think in a joined up manner**
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Conclusion (cont'd)

- Think, if you are serious about getting disabled people back to work;
 - getting us included in society as equal citizens, contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of the community;
 - **then you should**
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ABOLISH
COMMUNITY
CARE
CHARGING
