

***AGE CONCERN'S RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL CARE GREEN PAPER -
INDEPENDENCE, WELL-BEING AND CHOICE.***

Gordon Lishman, Director General of Age Concern England said:

"Today older people are being offered a Hobson's choice - options in principal but not in practice. Direct payments will not work if there are no services for people to choose from locally.

"Offering older people more control over their own care is a step forward, but chronic under-funding means that the structure of older people's social care needs completely rebuilding. Less is being spent per person on older people than on any other age group.

"More money must be ploughed into the simple services that can make or break an older person's independence - a basic grip rail, a wheelchair ramp or help with shopping.

"It is extremely worrying that under these proposals an older person could hire a care worker who is completely un-checked. The desperately under-resourced Criminal Records Bureau should be given a cash injection so that people have the option to check the safety of care workers for themselves.

"Care is a key issue for older voters and they want to see clear commitments, which meet their real needs now."