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Individual patient budgets will create a more efficient healthcare system

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Individual patient budgets should play a bigger part in health and social care according to a major new report edited by experts from the University of Birmingham and the Centre for Welfare Reform. It argues that putting individuals in control of their own care budget will improve outcomes and efficiency.

Active Patient:The case for self-direction in healthcare suggests that the current system focuses on services rather than the needs of the individual and that the divisions between the NHS and social care providers creates disjointed provision for patients.

In the paper author Vidhya Alakeson proposes that individual budgets will improve patient care by prioritising the experiences of individuals, rather than the processes required to deliver services as the current system does.

Professor Jon Glasby, Director of the Health Services Management Centre at the University of Birmingham, said: 'The increase in long-term conditions, like diabetes, has led to significant growth in healthcare costs in the UK. By placing control in the hands of the patient decisions on the day-to-day management of these conditions can be specific and tailored to the needs of the individual - after all they know their condition best.'

Dr Simon Duffy, from the Centre for Welfare Reform, adds: 'Feedback from individual budget trials in England and the USA has been positive and improvements have been seen in patient satisfaction. The coalition government has already shown support for a personalised system, the next step would be to create more integrated health and social care services which would enable and sustain the development of individual budgets.'

Notes to Editors

One Person, One Budget: The case for self-direction in healthcare is written by Vidhya Alakeson, as part of a series of policy papers edited by Dr Simon Duffy, The Centre for Welfare Reform, Professor Jon Glasby, Director, Health Services Management Centre (HSMC), University of Birmingham, and Dr Catherine Needham, Senior Lecturer, Queen Mary, University of London and Honorary Fellow at HSMC.

In the summer of 2010 The University of Birmingham's Health Service Management Centre hosted a two day think-tank to explore whether recent innovations in health and social care might be the key to a more radical redesign of the whole welfare state. As part of the think tank papers were produced which proposed significant policy developments.

Each paper in the series has been produced by a leading practitioner and social innovator. The papers combine evidence and ideas for policy reform which are rooted in the real experience of bringing about change from the 'bottom-up'. Future papers in the series will focus on criminal justice, health, tax/benefits, local government and communities.

For more information on the University of Birmingham's Health Services Management Centre visit: **www.hsmc.bham.ac.uk (http://www.hsmc.bham.ac.uk/)**

For more information on the Centre for Welfare Reform visit: **www.centreforwelfarereform.org (http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/)**

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The Centre for Welfare Reform

The Centre for Welfare Reform is a research and development network committed to the redesign of the welfare state and the promotion of social justice, citizenship, family and community. It was established in 2009 and has a wide-ranging Fellowship who are experts in public service reform and innovation.

For further information: Office, the Centre for Welfare Reform: 0114 251 0228

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