Are co-operatives the best solution in the future of social care?

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The importance of meaningfully engaging people who use services, their families, staff and local communities in the design, delivery and review of social care services has been recognised for a considerable time. The current context of unprecedented financial pressures combined with the opportunities provided by personalisation and the forthcoming 'right to provide' mean that radical changes to the way that services are organised, 'owned' and governed are now being considered. But will externalising services into new independent organisations deliver the necessary innovation and efficiency, and do co-operatives provide the best model for all social care services?

At the annual conference of **directors of adult social care and children's services** in October, HSMC's Robin Miller chaired a policy session debating co-operatives as the future of social care. An expert panel presented the issues for and against the motion - **This house believes that 'co-operatives' provide the best hope for social care in the 21st Century** - and responded to points from the audience on the merits of each case.

A report from the event will be available shortly. For further information, please contact Robin Miller, **r.s.miller@bham.ac.uk**.

The final vote by the audience was against the motion - that co-operatives are not the best solution for social care in the 21st Century.

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