Social care: forthcoming Green Paper (England)

Published Monday, May 13, 2019

**This House of Commons Library briefing paper looks at the forthcoming Green Paper on social care for adults, whose publication has been further delayed – it will now be published “at the earliest opportunity”. A link to the full report in pdf format can be found at the bottom of this page.**

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In the March 2017 Budget, the Conservative Government said that it would publish a Green Paper on social care, in order to allow a public consultation to be held. This followed its decision in July 2015 to defer the introduction of a cap on lifetime social care charges and a more generous means-test that had been proposed by the “Dilnot Commission” and accepted in principle by the then Coalition Government – these changes have since been postponed indefinitely.

During the subsequent 2017 General Election campaign, the Conservative Party made a manifesto commitment to introduce the Green Paper and also made a number of pledges regarding how individuals pay for their social care.

The publication of the Green Paper has been delayed several times: it was originally due to published in “summer 2017”. The latest position is that it will be published “at the earliest opportunity”, although the Health and Social Care Secretary had previously said in January 2019 that he “certainly intend[ed] for [publication] to happen before April [2019]”. According to media reports, the most recent delays are attributed to the Government concentrating on Brexit and also a lack of clarity and detail about the proposals to be included in the Green Paper.

The original rationale for the Green Paper was to explore the issue of how social care is funded by recipients, and a number of policy ideas have reportedly been under consideration for inclusion in the Green Paper including:

* a more generous means-test;
* a cap on lifetime social care charges;
* an insurance and contribution model;
* a Care ISA; and
* tax-free withdrawals from pension pots.

Other topics that the Government have said will be included are integration with health and other services, carers, workforce, and technological developments, among others. The Government will also consider domestic and international comparisons as part of the preparation for the Green Paper.

Commons Briefing papers CBP-8002

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