



Notes from Open Meeting (following AGM) 12 November 2022 on Zoom

Welcome and general announcements

Mary Pearson (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced our speaker Debby Ounsted CBE, a member of the Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care, which is due to publish its new vision for social care in early 2023. Debby has had an impressive career in the social housing and charity sectors. We also welcomed her colleague, Natasha Tanner.

Camphill Families and Friends made [a submission to the Commission last year](#).

About the Commission

- The Archbishops of Canterbury and York launched the Commission in April 2021. Its membership is made up of nine experts from a range of fields relating to social care (from all faiths and none) and is supported by a staff team and specialist advisers. The background is the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent book "*Reimagining Britain, Foundations for hope*".
- The care system no longer serves needs. The Commission was tasked with reimagining care and support into the future, for our children and grandchildren, so that everyone, regardless of age or ability, is able to live a full human life. The remit of the task included a focus on all those over the age of 18, excluding palliative care.
- The Commission was not looking at money – many other studies and reports had done that and their conclusions have been widely disseminated. The goal was to develop a long-term vision for care and support in England, underpinned by a renewed set of values and principles, drawing on Christian theology and ethics. They wish to stimulate national debate about the nature and purpose of care, and to offer practical recommendations to national and local government, policymakers, the care sector and society as a whole, about how to deliver this vision for care.
- This includes addressing wider issues that affect the status and wellbeing of people in later life and adults with disabilities, with a focus on barriers that prevent people from contributing as fully as possible to their community and wider society. There is an emphasis on the importance of interdependence and mutual support.
- The team gathered information and ideas by conducting interviews, visiting stakeholders, hosting round table discussions and inviting submissions from interested parties. They also conducted an online survey asking people how things might work differently.
- The Commission's work has culminated in a final report entitled *Care and Support Reimagined*, which will be published on 24 January 2023. It will outline a new vision of care and support, addressing societal attitudes and

our roles and responsibilities, and recommend changes to the social care system.

- When published, the full report will be available here:
www.churchofengland.org/about/archbishops-commissions/reimagining-care-commission.

The Commission's vision for care and support

- Care and support should enable people to flourish and live life to the full.
- Access to and funding of care and support should be universal and fair.
- How we care for one another should reflect kindness and empathy.
- Society, including churches, should be inclusive of all people, of all ages and abilities.
- How care and support is delivered should promote mutuality and be based on trust.

The Commission's recommendations

1. Rethinking attitudes

- A fundamental shift in the way in which care is viewed is needed.
- A greater public acknowledgement is required of the varied ways in which we all need and give care and support at different times in our lives, and a realisation that care is about interdependence rather than dependence or an illusory "independence".
- We must value those who provide care – both paid and unpaid.
- These shifts in attitudes to care must go alongside a challenge to current negative attitudes towards old age, disability and mental illness.
- We are all different and we all need to have choices over how we live.

2. Rebalancing roles and responsibilities

- Government policy usually lags behind what society wants.
- The current system is mainly a 'top down' approach to care, with government allocating a budget to councils, and councils allocating budgets and packages to organisations and individuals. There are many examples of good practices and innovations, but experiences of accessing good care can be potentially a 'postcode lottery' with wastefulness overall, and limited sharing of best practice. There needs to be a shift towards viewing individuals as leading a full life by being able to participate in and contribute to their community, not just as recipients of care.
- The state needs to look at creating a framework of entitlements and rights for people.
- Social connection is extremely important – care is not just about finding someone to carry out practical tasks.

3. Redesigning the system

- We need to change the thinking for the next generation.
- People need the freedom to say how they receive care and support.
- Early intervention is important.
- Care should be seen as more than a 'top down' system. Local communities

and extended families are often extremely important in providing informal care.

An interim report with the results of the survey and listening exercises is available from the Commission: www.churchofengland.org/about/archbishops-commissions/reimagining-care/archbishops-commission-reimagining-care-listening

Debby then took questions and the following additional points were made:

- Language is important. The current emphasis on ‘independence’ has filtered through the system and can result in care solutions that create loneliness. Independence is right for some people but not all people. Very few of us are truly independent: we rely on others for support and social interaction.
- The Commission’s proposals challenge current thinking; they hope to spark a debate that – although it will take time – creates longer-term change. Moving debate along can often be a slow process but it needs to start somewhere.
- The idea of having ‘community signposters’ is a good one: a way for people to access support within their local community. Not everyone needs a formal care package to enable them to live a full life. This will be more important as government budget cuts mean less available funding for formal care.
- It was acknowledged however, that not everyone has the capacity to provide care for others in their community.
- Transparency, high standards and inspections will continue to be an important part of the care system. We must, however, be inspecting the right things and demanding the right things.
- When focusing on changing the language of care, we need to be mindful of the role of the media and social media, and how care is represented.
- The report is not intending to imply that voluntary care should replace or reduce the availability of formal care where it is needed. It emphasises that financial constraints may mean that we need to consider how people can actually access and benefit from what may be on offer on their doorstep – sometimes people just need help to connect with others. It is recognised however that community/voluntary groups are under a lot of pressure already, and that what’s on offer will differ in different communities.
- There needs to be a freedom for people to choose from a multiplicity of care options. Also, different housing options might be suitable in different stages of someone’s life. Intentional communities should be one of the valuable options available.
- There is an overlap between the Commission’s emphasis on the importance of mutuality and interdependence, and the essence of Camphill community values.
- Ideally wider communities might mirror traditional Camphill community values, with a focus on everyone supporting each other and having a role to play. A sense of belonging is very important; the importance of giving as well as getting; and the need to recognise that it’s vital for nearly all of us to be useful to others in whatever way we are able.
- Living in “an ordinary house in an ordinary street” is often the stated aim of care and support, but this aim can be very limiting.
- There was a discussion around the issue that in some Camphill communities, there has been a shift towards independence from interdependence, which is preventing people living a rich and full life. The idea of personal choice is important but sometimes those with learning disabilities may lack the ability to envisage different

choices and/or the nourishing benefits that certain options might bring. Advocacy and family support and input should be welcomed wherever possible.

Mary Pearson thanked Debby and Natasha for their time and valuable contribution to our meeting.

The meeting then continued by revisiting the topic of healthy living and weight management

As a follow up on [our previous meeting in March](#), at which we looked at how we can support healthy living and weight management in Camphill communities, we invited a brief discussion to ask for ideas as to how to continue the progress made so far.

- A reminder that we have drawn up some Recommendations following our discussion on this topic:

There needs to be a recognition that this is everyone's problem - and requires a community-wide approach. Pivotal to improving the situation is the commitment of those responsible for caring for our family members, from trustees and management downwards.

We feel that the following four actions could help to make a real difference:

1. Commit to providing one sit down meal all together per day, cooked from scratch with fresh nutritious ingredients. Encourage people to be involved in the preparation.
 2. Make healthy living and weight management an essential component of everyone's Care Plan.
 3. Commit to a programme of daily physical activity for everyone being supported. Exercise definitely affects mood, which in turn has an impact on eating.
 4. Recognise that boredom is often the main contributor to over-eating. Aim for sufficient interesting/stimulating activities to give people a sense of purpose.
- Work still needs to be done on this, as many people's relatives continue to experience problems, sometimes severe problems, with weight and maintaining a healthy lifestyle (diet and exercise).
 - There was a suggestion to recommend that Camphill communities introduce more nutrition training for staff.
 - There is a government report entitled 'Obesity and weight management for people with learning disabilities: guidance' (last updated in 2020) which may be of use: www.gov.uk/government/publications/obesity-weight-management-and-people-with-learning-disabilities/obesity-and-weight-management-for-people-with-learning-disabilities-guidance
 - It was acknowledged that this issue isn't affecting all Camphill communities – some are demonstrating good practice with continued shared healthy meals, etc.
 - It was agreed that trustees will consider the next steps.

Vote on the format of future Open Meetings

- Attendees were asked to express whether they would prefer future Open Meetings to be on Zoom, in person, or a mixture of the two formats.
- The majority of people voted to have a mix of the two.

- Trustees will endeavour to conduct one Open Meeting online and one in person, each year.

Camphill Families and Friends website usage

- Meeting attendees were asked whether they used the charity's website, with the aim of asking opinions about their user experience.
- Most people don't use the website, and so this discussion didn't continue further.

AOB

- There was a query as to whether there are plans to revisit the charity's siblings support activities.
- It was concluded that this would be a positive thing to focus on, especially with the potential plans to restart in-person meetings. Trustees agreed to address this.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.