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The logo for The Centre for Social Justice, featuring the text 'THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE' in white, uppercase letters on a dark red rectangular background.

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Dilnot care plans will leave poorest pensioners 'stranded', warns leading think-tank

Social care reforms are a blow to Britain's vulnerable elderly, according to the Centre for Social Justice

The Coalition risks abandoning some of the most vulnerable people in society if it introduces a cap on the amount of money people pay towards their care costs, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) has said.

The think-tank has warned against a widely-anticipated Government announcement on social care funding and said plans will do nothing to transform a 'broken' care system that is 'letting down' some of the poorest older people in the country.

The CSJ today publishes a [checklist](#), where it outlines a number of major failures in the current care system and re-examines whether the Dilnot reforms would make a difference. The CSJ concludes that they will not.

At present anyone with assets of over £23,250 faces unlimited costs - for one in 10 that can be more than £100,000.

A report by economist Andrew Dilnot suggested a cap be put in place for the amount of money a person spends for help with personal care. Initially a limit of as low as £35,000 was suggested, but it is thought that when the policy is implemented it will now be around £75,000. Over the life of a Parliament this would amount to an additional spend of around £3.5 billion of government money.

Whilst the CSJ is not against the Dilnot proposals in principle, it insists this measure must come further down the Government's priority list. Any new funding, says the CSJ, should be targeted at the poorest people in the current means tested system who have few or no assets. It adds that the Dilnot plans are the wrong priority at the wrong time.

It said that enforcing the cap will do nothing to address the more pressing and important failures in the current system.

The CSJ's 2012 report, *Transforming Social Care for the Poorest Older People*, found that in many cases social care provided by councils to 1.2 million older people failed them miserably.

“Flying” home care visits and underfunded care home places are products of a system which has not received the kind of investment demanded by the rapid ageing of the population. Given this crisis, the CSJ argues that protecting the assets of elderly homeowners should not be the number one priority at this time.

Christian Guy, Managing Director of the CSJ, said: “The current social care crisis cannot be leapfrogged. People delivering care services can think of much better ways to spend the £3.5 billion that is about to be invested in the Dilnot proposals.

“The Government should take a step back and seriously reconsider the purpose of only implementing the Dilnot proposals.

“The CSJ has spent years studying the social care system in the UK and the Dilnot plans set to be implemented will not improve the lives of our poorest pensioners who are already receiving sub-standard care. Surely helping the most disadvantaged must be the starting point for any reforms.

“The Coalition’s first priority should be to repair the current broken system and invest money in a way that will transform the lives of our most vulnerable pensioners. Once this is done and the situation dramatically improves, the Dilnot recommendations could be phased in so help can be extended to all.”

Instead of implementing Dilnot, the CSJ has said the Government should instead prioritise providing preventative care to help elderly people remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. It also called for an end to the neglect arising from understaffed care homes and a fair wage for care workers looking after the most vulnerable.

Mr Guy added: “Speaking to local charities working with the poorest elderly, the CSJ has heard an appalling litany of failures: of home carers who visit an older person in their house and fall asleep on the job; of care packages woefully insufficient to meet the needs of 95-year-olds living at home with dementia; of home carers leaving flats dirty and fly-infested.”

Mo Smith, founder and chair of trustees of the charity Regenerate-RISE, said: “The poorest older people are currently in a very vulnerable situation. They often put up with home care that is below recommended standards and find themselves in dreadful circumstances. Councils are simply not providing enough money or resources to keep older people independent.”

Sarah Pickup, chairwoman of the Association of the Directors of Adult Social Services, said: “While not averse to the implementation of the Dilnot proposals as a way of addressing one question, it is clear that the current system is at breaking point and in desperate need of significant investment.”

For media inquiries, please contact Nick Wood of Media Intelligence Partners Ltd on 07889 617003 or Ross Reid, from the Centre for Social Justice, on 07780 707322.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think tank established in 2004 to put social justice at the heart of British politics.

In 2007 the CSJ published its landmark report, *Breakthrough Britain*. This publication, which set out 190 evidence-based policy recommendations to tackle poverty in Britain, transformed the social policy and political landscape and was awarded Publication of the Year by *Prospect Magazine* in 2008.

Since *Breakthrough Britain* the CSJ has published over 40 reports which have shaped government policy and influenced opposition parties. These have included the seminal papers *Dying To Belong* and *Dynamic Benefits*, which has led the Coalition Government's welfare reforms.

Further to this, the CSJ manages an Alliance of over 300 of the most effective grass roots, poverty-fighting organisations.

The CSJ is able to draw upon the expertise and experience of Alliance charities for research work and media inquiries. Journalists wishing to conduct grass-roots research into social problems can be put in touch with front-line charity directors and staff.