

Sustainable Social Care Learning Network

Key findings

20 April 2010

The programme aims were to:

- consider what we mean by sustainable development in this context
- analyse what are the key challenges of developing a sustainable social care model
- raise awareness across the sector; to disseminate good practice
- recommend how sustainable social care can be taken forward, in particular to face the challenges presented by climate change.

Local Authority Learning Network

Eleven councils brought together to debate and challenge the concept of sustainable social care.

Workshop themes:

- sustainable commissioning and engagement
- resilience and adaptation
- creating the environment for care
- personalisation.

Understanding the context

Living with uncertainty



Overcoming tensions



Recognising interdependence



Recognising interdependence

Independence is core to social care policy.

At the same time we are reliant on the:

- financial system to be able to use money
- environment for air, water and food
- other human beings to be part of society.

Recognising interdependence

Building sustainable connected communities is a vital part of social care interventions.

*Confident communities, Brighter Futures
(2010)*



What does that mean for social care?

- A resilient social care service is built on a sustainable development approach
- Social care needs to recognise the mutual benefits of environmental sustainability

Think about commissioning

- £16.1 billion spent on adult social care in 2008/09
- Sustainability principles as part of the whole cycle of commissioning
- Public spending cuts makes smarter commissioning that considers the wider costs and benefits more critical

Think about commissioning

New Economics Foundation model innovations:

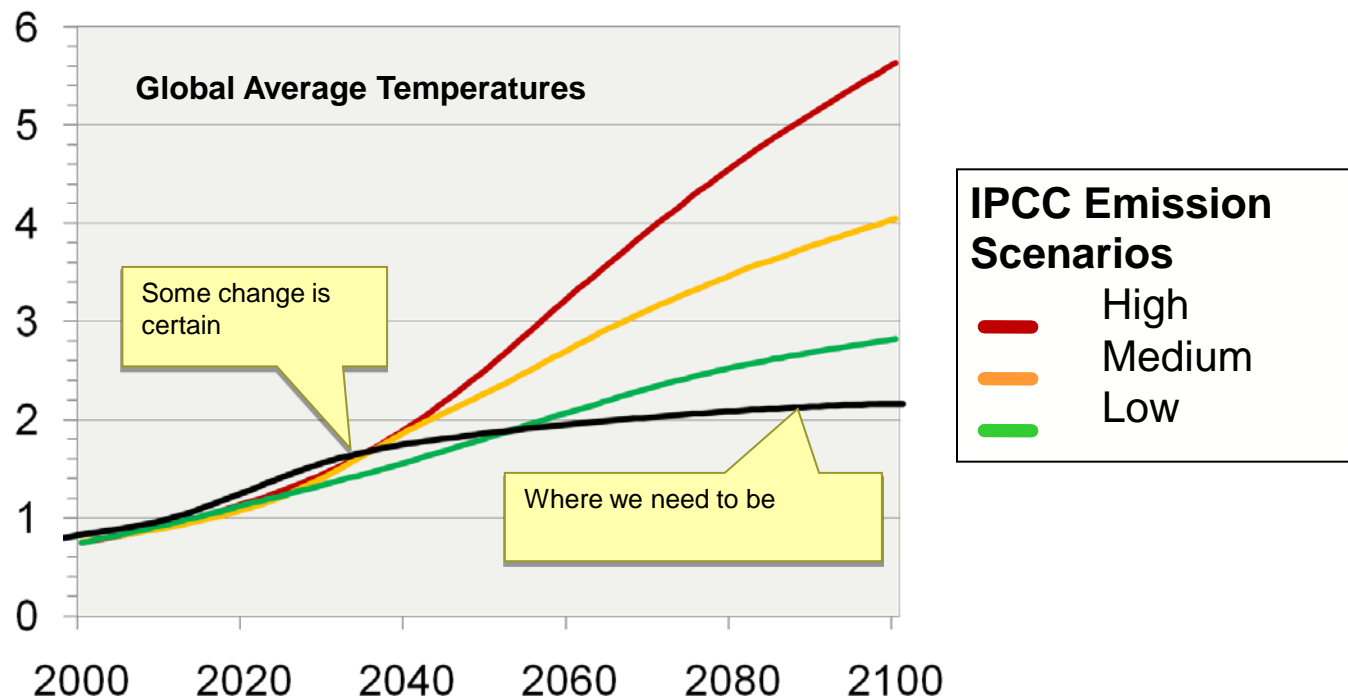
- Tender document structured around outcomes rather than activities and outputs
- Service level outcomes and community outcomes allows more impacts to be considered as part of the tender

What does this mean for social care?

- Design sustainability into services from the start
- JSNA offers potential to think strategically about the longer term
- Identify skills for integrating sustainability into commissioning

Think about resilience

Social care users may be less resilient to change and at great risk in an emergency



Think about resilience

- Hertfordshire County Council Climate Change and Adult Health and Social Care Research
- Kent County Council mapping the impact of flooding on care homes

Think about design

“A single design intervention can address the requirements of more than one of these policy objectives: for example, locating services in the community with good transport connections makes services more accessible, reduces CO2 emissions and provides integrated community services and activities. In this way, the design process can be a catalyst for policy change as well as practical improvements to the built environment.”

Future Health, 2009

Think about design

Build stronger strategic relationships with services that affect social care users lives

- Get the brief right to design accessible, sustainable social care facilities
- Provide support for sustainable homes to support independent living
- Think about the community scale

Concluding remarks

- Shared principles; such as risk assessment, harm reduction, resilience, early intervention
- Balance short term pressures with a long term horizon
- Leadership and partnership to enable a sustainable approach



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