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For immediate release

Third Sector and Local Authorities must prepare for transformation in public service delivery says ACEVO Commission on Personalisation

The Commission, made up of third sector leaders, representatives from leading think tanks and Government officials, has urged the third sector and local authorities to take immediate steps to prepare for the personalisation of public services - with key budgetary powers passing from state to citizen.

In a press conference this summer, Gordon Brown described the provision of “public services that are tailored and far more responsive to people’s needs” as one of the three central aims of his Government, while David Cameron has made “decentralisation, devolution and empowerment” in service delivery key tenets of Conservative Party policy in the recently released green paper ‘Control Shift’.

The Commission’s interim report being published today suggests ways in which personalisation, already widespread in health and social care, can be successfully rolled out across the whole spectrum of public service delivery, including welfare to work, benefits reform and support for ex-offenders. The Commission is clear that personalisation will transform the way public services are delivered, “creating a series of new social markets where people can choose from an increasing range of providers”. It also sees major scope for an extension of self-help and mutual aid.

However, the Commission’s report also warns that without a clear timetable, proper investment and decisive leadership from the Government, the benefits that could be achieved through personalisation will not be realised.

The Commission outlines a series of recommendations addressing short, medium and long-term concerns. Key short-term recommendations are that:

- Government should legislate to devolve budgetary control to individuals and communities across public services
- A new Ombudsman should be created to champion individuals’ right to control their own budgets

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- Local authorities should convene local taskforces of expert customers, providers and commissioners to plan for implementation
- A new, powerful inter-departmental personalisation delivery unit should be created to reconfigure systems across government.
- Above all, there is a need for much greater public awareness and debate about the issues involved
- Matthew Pike, Chair of the Commission, said:

“Personalisation has risen right to the top of the political agenda for good reasons. Not only does it offer people greater control and access to better services, it also helps to stretch every pound of state funding much further.

Our report explores how we can transform services right across the spectrum, but our key message is that we need to build the rail-track required for success: key systems and skills need to be put in place if the potential of this vision is to be realised”.

The Commission on Personalisation was launched in May this year to explore ways to make the personalisation of public services work for third sector organisations policy-makers, practitioners and above all citizens, across a wide range of delivery areas.

Over the coming year it will be testing out ideas with service users, providers and government agencies before producing detailed delivery plans for the new government in Autumn 2010.

Ends

Notes to editors

- By ‘personalisation’ the Commission means efforts to make public services more responsive to individual citizens’ needs, and to give individual citizens and their families greater control over those services.
- The Commission is being chaired by Matthew Pike (founder of the Scarman Trust, Unltd, Adventure Capital Fund and Commission on Unclaimed Assets amongst many other ventures)
- Its members are:

James Groves (Policy Exchange)
Jamie Bartlett (Demos)

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Dame Denise Platt
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- Personalisation has received support from both the Labour government and Conservative Party. The Conservatives have indicated that the pace of implementation will be speeded up if they form a Government in 2010

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