

Simon Duffy, Founder & Director of the Centre for Welfare Reform, discussed why the cuts to social care are so deep (50% and counting) and why civil society has failed to offer any effective resistance. He argued that the true purpose of social care is to advance citizenship, strengthen family and enrich community life.

Social care is NOT just a cheap way to reduce 'bed blocking'. We need to ask deeper questions: in particular how to achieve the underlying constitutional changes necessary to sustain social justice and a welfare state that works for everyone.

He gave the example of Australia, where a rights-based approach had led to the formation of 'Every Australian Counts,' a disability activist movement which has achieved social care reform - national fully funded, non means-tested, self-directed, social care system for children and working age adults, paid for through a 'hypothecated' (specific, dedicated) tax.

Simon was critical of the "one-eyed approach" to social care - always forgetting about children's services, and constantly repeating the empty mantra of 'system integration'.

He argued it was important to examine the long-term policy failures that have led to the current crisis in social care, and not to fall into the trap of believing 'integrated care' will solve the problems.

"Social care charges are basically taxing people for their social care needs. Social justice has flown out the window. People - not profit - needs to be at the centre of a new national model to creating a new model for social care