

OGP Policy Working Group: Background to Social Care

What is happening in Oxfordshire now

Social care in Oxfordshire is terribly inadequate, as it is all over the country. Adult social care is now completely privatised. There are no local authority care homes or domiciliary care. All social care is therefore in the hands of profit-making companies, over which the local authority has very limited power. Because councils are not properly funded, they only pay the social care costs of the poorest in society, and most individuals have to pay the cost themselves. This situation can really only be tackled nationally because tight local authority budgets leave almost no room for manoeuvre. And health and social care need to be reorganised into one properly integrated system.

Some care companies are good, others not. The county council keeps lists of care homes and domiciliary-care businesses but is not permitted to make recommendations.

Carers are poorly paid, and there is a large turnover over staff in consequence: 30–40% of domiciliary staff.

For children in care: not all are provided for within the county. Some children's homes are still run by the county, others are outsourced to private providers. Looking after a child in a residential home is hugely expensive. Some fostering is also outsourced to private fostering companies.

What the Green Party needs to do

Provision in care homes could be improved with more monitoring by and involvement of residents' relatives, therefore OGP can press the council to encourage the setting up of a community support group in every home.

Rising unemployment provides an opportunity for more carers to be trained and employed, if the system can be better funded.

There should be no further outsourcing of children's homes.