

## **Adult Social Care Secure and Sustainable: messages for the new government**

Social care has the power to transform lives. It provides care, support, and safeguards for those who have the highest level of need, and for their carers. Nearly two million people in England rely on these essential services and around 6.5 million carers provide support alongside and beyond formal social care. Social care contributes £43 billion to the national economy in direct and indirect costs.

The last year has seen unprecedented media coverage of adult social care. The role it plays in supporting healthy independent lives is now more widely recognised, as is the vital role it plays as a key partner of the NHS. We welcomed the injection of the £2 billion short term funding announced in the 2017 budget – this is being used to increase the number of people receiving care, to make sure there is funding to deliver good quality care, and to make sure that the right services are available to prevent patients being 'stuck' in hospital and other health services when they don't need to be there.

However, more needs to be done, and soon. The number of people aged over 85 will more than double in the next 20 years, to over 3.4 million; more profoundly disabled young people with increasingly complex and costly needs are coming into adulthood every year. So, demands on the system will increase. And the new money invested in adult social care, while welcome, is non recurrent, and comes in the context of wider pressures in local government and NHS finances. There are currently higher levels of unmet need; Age UK now estimate that 1.2 million people aged 65 and over, do not get the help they need and 30% of over 80s have unmet care needs. At the same time some of those providing services are giving up because they find it impossible to deliver a safe, good quality service with the resources available.

Adult social care spending as a percentage of GDP (UK) in England has fallen from around 1.2% in 2009 to around 0.9% in 2020. This trend is set to continue – that cannot be right.

We believe that establishing a strong and sustainable health and care system should be the government's top domestic priority. This must deliver:

**A sustainable funding regime.** All the main political parties have acknowledged the need for a sustainable funding system for social care and the current government promised a Green Paper on the options to be issued later this year. But we have been here before with successive governments promising reform but in practice unable or unwilling to find a long term solution.

We now urgently need a solution that will work for everyone, regardless of their means, or nature of their disability. This solution must guard against unintended consequences of encouraging people to delay gaining the help and support they need, and it must bring greater certainty and stability to our care provider market so everyone can rely on continuity of care.

We believe this needs a wide ranging public debate, encompassing a conversation about the relationship between individuals, their families and the state. We need an answer that transcends political differences to create a fair, affordable, and sustainable long term solution.

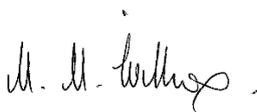
**A strong model of health and social care delivery.** We must continue work to build a 'joined up' model of care which includes:

- Good information and advice to enable those who can to look after themselves, and to have access to the right help at the right time.
- A focus on prevention to reduce and delay the need for more formal care.
- Recognition that we need to build supportive relationships and resilient communities.
- Services that rehabilitate after illness and support independence.
- Services that are personalised and address mental and physical wellbeing.
- Services that value and support unpaid carers, recognising their needs.

**A model where quality matters.** We must all continue to focus on the quality of care, so that people are treated with dignity and can trust that they will be safe from harm.

**A sustainable workforce.** Good quality social care requires well trained and committed staff that are valued by their employers and by wider society. We must continue to promote social care, making it more attractive as a career.

The willingness and capacity to provide good quality social care is a test of a civilised 21<sup>st</sup> century society. With our partners we stand ready to work with the new government to ensure we have such a system for the long term.



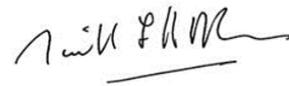
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Chair



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Chief Executive

