

## KEY MESSAGES

**Under investment means that more people are in need of social care and support but fewer are getting it and many are getting less.** From 2017/18 to 2019/20 the proportion of people accessing long-term support has fallen by 3% for people aged 65+ and 1% for people aged 18-64. Relentless real-term reductions in social care funding to meet the needs of those of us who are older and disabled, care for family members or work in social care were apparent before the pandemic. Covid-19 has exacerbated this and hit those of us who are in the most vulnerable circumstances hardest. This will increase over the year to come. The levels of unmet and undermet need will continue to grow without urgent action from Government.

**Delays to assessments and reviews are having a detrimental impact on people's lives:** 54,783 people (extrapolated nationally) are waiting for a social care needs assessment for care, support or safeguards and 12% have been waiting for more than six months. Another 159,271 people are waiting for care reviews (annual). These assessments and reviews are vital and each and every one is a person waiting for care, support or safeguards, or at risk of their well-being deteriorating, or of abuse or exploitation.

**Government funding through the Adult Social Care Precept and Social Care Grant are insufficient to fund the costs of Demographic Pressures and the National Living Wage (NLW).** In 2021/22 Directors have indicated that NLW and demographic pressures amount to £1.15bn. Adult social care will not access the £1.09bn in full as not all local authorities took up the option to use the precept to its maximum level. Directors indicated that they have received 52% of the additional Social Care Grant, totalling £156m, meaning that there is a shortfall in funding of at least £204m just for local authorities to stand still in the current financial year.

**Local authorities are increasingly reliant on local taxation and short-term and unsustainable funding sources:** Many local authorities are drawing down council reserves and relying in one-off and temporary sources of funding to cover adult social care locally. 34% of Directors report that overspends in 2020/21 were funded from council reserves (compared to 1% in 2016-17 and 4% in 2018-19) and 75% using Covid-19 funding. This appears to be a trend that has been exacerbated by the pandemic, rather than an unusual set of circumstances.

**We must prioritise funding for care and support for working age adults as well as for older people:** Whilst much of the media and political focus is on care and support for older people, 49% of Directors report that they are most concerned about funding increasingly complex care and support for working age disabled people, compared to 3% for financial pressures relating to older people. Care and support for people aged 18-64 also now accounts for 63% of demographic pressures, the amount of additional funding required to meet the same level of need as the previous year.

**There is a growing disconnect between increasing adult social need and the financial ability and confidence of Directors (on behalf of local authorities) to meet that need:** The [ADASS Activity Survey 2021](#) found evidence of increasing need and referrals across most aspects of adult social care. This survey adds further evidence with spending on adult care £61 million over budget (all local authorities) in 2020/21, and Directors expected to collectively find £601 million in savings in 2021/22. This translates into low levels of confidence amongst Directors in their ability to meet what they are required to do by law.

**Directors want to prioritise investment in earlier intervention and prevention and new ways of working, but do not have adequate resources to do so:** Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Directors identified investing in prevention as the second most important approach to delivering savings. They want to invest in housing-based options with technological support to offer more home-based support as alternatives to institutionalised care. However, 50% of Directors state that they are less than confident about meeting their statutory duty in respect of prevention in 2021-22.

**Much of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector is at risk over the next year:** VCSE organisations sit at the heart of care and support. We know that Covid-19 has had a [profound impact on the sector](#) and this survey finds that Directors, seemingly driven by the need to prioritise funding on meeting their statutory duties and pressures on discretionary spending, have budgeted for a 6.1% reduction in VCSE funding. Looking ahead to 2022/23, just 30% of Directors plan to increase VCSE funding.

**Care markets have been further hit by the pandemic:** 82% of Directors report that they are concerned about the sustainability of some of their home care providers, and 77% about some of care home providers. Covid-19 short term funding has helped to prevent failure but there is profound uncertainty about the future.

**There is an impending crisis in the retention of social care staff. We must reward as well as recognise the role that staff in adult social care play:** Society has recognised the contribution social care staff have made during the pandemic. We now need to properly reward them for the invaluable work they do. Directors indicated the most important factor in recruitment and retention is an increase in salary, followed by improved terms and conditions and improved career structures and progression opportunities. Even since collecting the data for this survey we have reports of staff leaving for better pay in retail, hospitality and the NHS.

**We will only enable the NHS to recover post-Covid by prioritising adult social care:** Our [Activity Survey](#) showed that local authorities are receiving increased numbers of requests for support from people unable to access hospital services, or after being discharged after a stay in hospital. Covid-19 has left many people with additional long-term care and support needs. However, Directors report that fewer people are being assessed as eligible for NHS funded Continuing Health Care. NHSEI is prioritising recovery, however, it will only achieve this by supporting more people at home. There needs to be a recovery plan for social care, as well as the NHS.

**This is about people, not numbers:** This survey and the experiences of the pandemic show why we need to put adult social care on a firm, sustainable footing for the future. Meeting the needs of older and disabled people, carers and families must be pivotal in rebuilding the economy through the creation of new and rewarding jobs in all parts of the country.