

FOREWORD

Every Prime Minister since 1997 has promised reform and sustainable funding for adult social care but all have left office without delivering on that ambition. This is the eighteenth year that the ADASS Spring Survey (previously known as the ADASS Budget Survey) has tracked the financial position and adult social care budgets of local authorities in England. This year, we have changed the title of the survey as increasingly this survey has looked at so much more than budgets.

Covid-19 has had a profound and disproportionate impact upon those of us with care and support needs. Those who have sadly lost their lives to Covid-19, who have lost family members, those who have been required to shield in many cases for more than a year, who have been unable to access vital services, and those who have taken on additional caring responsibilities, have endured an intolerable year and it is important that we collectively acknowledge and recognise every single one of them. We also owe to all of us as a society to push for sustainable funding and a once in a lifetime transformation of care and support.

It has been an extraordinary year by any set of measures. Additional funding from the Government has been welcome and it has helped mask the worst of the issues that we would otherwise have seen. However, it has largely helped paper over the cracks that we have long known existed and without a commitment to longer term sustainable funding the reality is that the current budgets will not stretch.

Every year we have seen the pressure on local authorities grow, with ever more difficult decisions being required. I and my fellow Directors are acutely conscious that every one of these critical decisions affect the lives of millions of us, whether we are disabled, older, homeless, at risk of abuse or exploitation, experiencing mental ill health, or caring for a family member with care and support needs.

Earlier this year we undertook an additional survey of our ADASS members to gauge whether care and support needs were changing as we emerge into the next phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our [Activity Survey \(June 2021\)](#) painted a picture of growing levels of need and requests for support across most aspects of care and support. This survey provides further evidence of unmet and undermet need. It also underlines that the money is not there to address increasingly complex needs despite the ingenuity, commitment, compassion and courage that have been demonstrated by those who work in care and who care for family members, and despite the forbearance of people needing care, support and safeguards, people who are, in many cases, least able to make their voices heard.

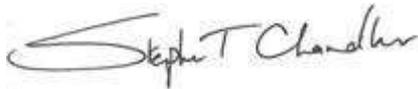
This will increasingly mean that more people in this country will miss out on the support that we need. This is vividly illustrated in this survey by the finding that more than 75,000 older and younger disabled people are waiting for assessments which will determine the type of care and support that they get. While they wait, there are significant risks. Whilst social work teams do their best to prioritise based on the information they glean, it is inevitable that many people will deteriorate, become mentally or physically unwell, lose confidence, fall, or that unreported or concealed abuse or neglect will worsen.

This survey lays bare that that local authorities will continue to have to make increasingly difficult decisions, paying less than they want to for care, providers will continue to offer prices that are less sustainable, millions of people will miss out on care and support, and there will be ever growing pressure on millions of carers. It makes clear that local authorities are increasingly having to rely on short-term funding and use of reserves to deliver care and support. This is not sustainable, and it is not in the interests of any of us or our communities. Even since this survey was completed and as people are returning to work and the country is opening up we are hearing of further significant requests for support and care at home and staff leaving care for retail and hospitality. This all leads to fewer people getting less care and support. We will be left to continue to manage decline.

Directors are working hard with their partners to transform local models of care and support, to supporting the extension of person-centred models of care, promote independence and connectedness and enable their local care markets to evolve. However, these ambitions are being thwarted by resource constraints.

Prioritising care and support is essential; millions of lives, the well-being of our communities, the performance and recovery of the NHS post-Covid and our economic recovery are all dependent upon it.

Adult social care has the ability to fundamentally transform lives. It enables us to live, to work, carers to care, for us to be active members of our communities and to ultimately live good lives. Every year that we delay reform and sustainable funding means fewer people getting less care and support. We need to unleash that potential. Over the coming year, the Government has the chance to do exactly that by publishing its promised plans and using the upcoming Spending Review to prioritise the funding of life-enabling, life changing, life enhancing care and support. We stand ready to work with the Government and those across the political spectrum to transform how care and support is delivered and most importantly experienced.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen T. Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Stephen Chandler
ADASS President