

Briefing paper from ADASS

About the Association of the Directors of Adult Social Services

The Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) is a charity. Our members are current and former directors of adult care or social services and their senior staff, including principal social workers. Our objectives include:

- Furthering comprehensive, equitable, social policies and plans which reflect and shape the economic and social environment of the time
- Furthering the interests of those who need social care services, regardless of their backgrounds and status, and
- Promoting high standards of social care services.

Each year we conduct at least one survey of Directors of Adult Social Services, which is sent to all English councils with adult social care responsibility. Response rate is typically over 80%, from which we extrapolate to represent the estimated circumstances of 153 councils. The majority of the data in this briefing is from our Spring Survey 2023 and Autumn Survey 2023, which you can find on our website here.¹

We hope you find this information useful for your debate. If you would like to discuss this or any other area of our work please do get in touch with charlotte.newman@adass.org.uk.

1. The challenges facing the NHS are well documented. In recent years, the challenges facing the adult social care sector and the interdependence between health and care have also become increasingly prevalent. In 2019, the Government promised to fix social care but there is clearly still a lot of work to be done. In our 2023 [Autumn Survey](#) of Directors of Adult Social Services we found:
 - a. **470,576** people were waiting for an assessment, care & support to begin, or for a review of their care plan on 31 August 2023, an **8%** increase from March 2023
 - b. **249,589** people were waiting for an assessment of their social care needs
2. Increased pressures in the NHS are adding to this workload. This year:
 - a. **99%** of Directors agreed that increased NHS pressures in 2023/24 will result in additional pressures on adult social care.
 - b. **70%** of Directors reported that social care staff are undertaking activity that would have previously been done by the NHS
3. National policy and investment has predominantly focused on addressing issues relating to discharge from hospital. A consequence of a continued focus on hospital discharge is that more people who are discharged consequently are sicker, have a high level of need and more intensive support is required in the community and via council-funded adult social care. It is clear that a more rounded approach is needed; one that focuses on keeping people as healthy and independent as possible for as long as possible, which can be achieved by shifting policy and investment towards early intervention and prevention.
4. This year ADASS commissioned the independent report, [Time to act: A roadmap for reforming care and support in England](#). Prevention was one of 10 key areas for action and the report contains a range of short, medium and long-term actions to be taken. These include, but are not limited to:

Improving access to rehabilitation services and intermediate care to help people stay well in their homes.

- In our Spring Survey, **30%** of Directors said people in their area did not have access to effective rehabilitation or reablement services.
 - **70%** of Directors report that social care staff are undertaking activity that would have previously been done by the NHS
- For residential reablement services, **75%** of Directors said that the majority of services enable people to return home.
- For reablement services at home, **52%** of Directors reported that the majority of services reduce the level of long-term need.

Improve interoperability of digital systems to support integration across health, care and other services

- In our Spring Survey 2023, **60%** of Directors reported that there is limited access to timely, shared and trusted data.
- Over a third of Directors disagreed that data on admissions and discharge, transfer of care pathway decisions and post-discharge outcomes is collected and shared.

Work across local authorities and with health bodies to establish integrated support offers and pathways of support across health, social care and especially housing.

- In our Autumn Survey 2023, **98%** of Directors say more accessible and adaptable homes would improve outcomes in their area.
- **70%** of Directors say more supported housing in their area would save them money on ASC, enabling them to reinvest.

Working with ICSs to build capacity across the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector to provide wellbeing support for everyone whether they also draw on formal care and support or not

- In our Spring survey, only a third of Directors said their council was able to invest in the VCFSE sector for adult social care.
- Data for 2022/23 shows that only 1 in 5 new requests for social care support originate from hospital discharge, the rest are from the community.
- Unpaid carers play a crucial role in supporting people to stay independent at home. We urgently need more support for unpaid carers. This year, over two thirds of Directors reported an increase in referrals relating to carer breakdown, with burnout being a primary driver of these referrals.

Adult Social Care should be recognised as a vital service in its own right, rather than an adjunct to the NHS. It enables millions of us to live independent lives in our communities, avoiding the need for more expensive acute care.

Please do get in touch with charlotte.newman@adass.org.uk if you would like to discuss any of this brief in more detail.