

## **Alzheimer's Society briefing – The future of research and development funding.**

This briefing includes:

1. **Suggested questions to the Minister**
2. **Background**
3. **The Dementia Moonshot**

### **1. Suggested questions to the Minister**

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- *We know that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the finances of medical research charities. Given this, how does the Minister plan to support dementia research funding, in the absence of any Dementia Moonshot being delivered?*
- *In December 2019, the Government committed to doubling dementia research funding. When will the Government be setting out a timetable for the implementation of the Dementia Moonshot?*
- *Government investment in research can help drive the post-Covid-19 economic recovery: every £1 of public or charity investment in medical research delivers a return equivalent to around 25p every year, forever. Can the Minister set out when the Government intends to deliver on the Dementia Moonshot, which would boost our economic recovery and help us discover new cures and treatments for dementia, the UK's biggest killer?*

### **2. Background**

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Dementia is one of the greatest healthcare challenges we face in the UK, with over 850,000 people living with the condition, dementia has a considerable effect on the UK economy - the total cost of care for people with dementia in the UK is £34.7 billion, and by 2040, it is estimated dementia will cost the UK economy £94.1 billion.<sup>1</sup>

Without life-changing treatments, the number of people living with the condition is set to grow to a million people in the next five years. Furthermore, the tragic, disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people living with dementia, who, as of January 2021, have accounted for 25.3% of deaths from Covid-19, has reinforced how there has never been a more critical time to invest in dementia research.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. The Dementia Moonshot**

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#### Context

Alzheimer's Society was pleased to see the Conservative Party commit, in their 2019 General Election manifesto,<sup>3</sup> to double funding for dementia research (known as the 'Dementia Moonshot').

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<sup>1</sup> Alzheimer's Society. How many people have dementia and what is the cost of dementia care? [Online] 2019. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-scale-impact-numbers>.

<sup>2</sup> ONS. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/monthlymortalityanalysisenglandandwales/january2021#pre-existing-conditions-of-people-whose-death-was-recorded-with-an-underlying-cause-of-covid-19-deaths-registered-in-2020>

<sup>3</sup> Conservative Party. [https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba\\_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf)

The Moonshot would double Government funding for dementia research to £166m per year, for each of the next 10 years.

Dementia is one of the greatest health challenges facing society, both in the UK and around the world. Of the top ten causes of death, dementia is the only one that can't be cured, stopped or even slowed down. There are currently over 850,000 people in the UK with dementia and this is expected to grow to over 1.6 million by 2040.<sup>4</sup> The total cost of dementia to the UK economy is £34.7 billion a year, and this will continue to rise, reaching £94.1 billion by 2040. This includes costs to the NHS, paid social care and unpaid care.<sup>5</sup>

The Covid-19 pandemic has repeatedly demonstrated how vital the life sciences sector is for the UK, and the success of the vaccination programme has shown what is possible with appropriate support from Government.

**The promise to deliver the Dementia Moonshot has not yet been realised. Alzheimer's Society believes the Government should bring forward this funding as a priority.**

### Dementia research and the economy

The field of dementia research has been hit hard by the pandemic: in November 2020, nearly 40% of the NIHR dementia clinical research portfolio had been delayed or paused, stalling momentum gained in recent years.

Since 2013, the Government has provided increased investment in dementia research. This has included the establishment of a world-leading UK Dementia Research Institute (in partnership with Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer's Research UK) with centres in London, Cambridge, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

The last decade of investment in dementia research has built a strong foundation which has ensured that the UK is primed for accelerating progress in understanding dementia.

Government investment in research can help drive the post-Covid-19 economic recovery: every £1 of public or charity investment in medical research delivers a return equivalent to around 25p every year, forever.<sup>6</sup>

### Priorities for the Dementia Moonshot

Alzheimer's Society believes this vital funding could be used to help researchers:

- Better understand the causes of the disease.
- Perform clinical and drug discovery research, providing hope of a cure in future.
- Undertake public health research to address the care needs of today.
- Pioneer technological innovation in health and social care.

*If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact Jordan Clark at [jordan.clark@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:jordan.clark@alzheimers.org.uk).*

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<sup>4</sup> Wittenberg, Raphael et al. Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019-2040. [Online] 2019. Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science.

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec\\_report\\_november\\_2019.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec_report_november_2019.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Alzheimer's Society <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-scale-impact-numbers>

<sup>6</sup> British Journal of Family Medicine. Every £1 invested in medical research returns 25p per year, forever. [Online] 2018. <https://www.bjfm.co.uk/every-1-pound-invested-in-medical-research-returns-25p-per-year-forever>.