

Public Accounts Committee – Adult Social Care Markets Inquiry

For more information contact Alex Osborne at alex.osborne@alzheimers.org.uk.

This briefing includes:

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1. Suggested Questions

To DHSC:

- How do the Government's forthcoming social care reform proposals focus ensure there is appropriate personalised care for people living with dementia?
- Will there be a ten-year plan for social care to mirror that of the NHS, including a workforce plan, and what opportunity is there for experts in the sector to input into such a plan?
- Would the Department think there is sufficient capacity in the care sector enable innovation? How could this be further developed?

To CQC:

- What role does and should the CQC have in tackling the 'gaps in data and insight' around adult social care markets recently identified by NHS Digital?

2. Background

There are an estimated 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK¹. Dementia is a progressive, long-term health condition with huge care costs attached. It has been estimated that 70% of care home residents² and over 60% of home care recipients are people with dementia³.

LSE figures, commissioned by Alzheimer's Society, show the cost of dementia care will nearly treble over the next two decades. The total cost of dementia to the UK economy, including costs to the NHS, paid social care and unpaid care, has risen to £34.7bn and will rise further to £94.1bn by 2040.⁴

The report predicts that as our population ages, a higher proportion of people with dementia will have higher care needs for longer, driving up the average amount spent on care.

During the General Election campaign of 2019, the Conservative manifesto pledged that an extra £1bn a year would be given to social care until 2024/25 and that the party "will build a cross-party consensus to bring forward an answer that solves the problem, commands the widest possible support and stands the test of time."

The Coronavirus pandemic has exposed the failings in the social care system further and only highlights the need for urgent social care reform to be brought forward by the government in 2021.

3. Stabilising the adult social care market

Personalised care

To improve the quality of care, we need the Government to **set out a robust vision for delivering personalised care** for people with dementia and everyone who may draw on social care, with appropriate accountability in order to uphold the ideals of the Wellbeing Principle held in the Care Act. Any potential Green Paper on social care reform must ensure reforms consider not just funding but also improving the quality of care that people receive. We need a **clear ten year plan for social care** with the goal of supporting people to live well. We then need to invest in the system to meet that vision.

¹ https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec_report_november_2019.pdf

² Alzheimer's Society. Dementia UK: Update. [Online] 2014. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf.

³ Alzheimer's Society. Dementia UK: Update. [Online] 2014. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf.

⁴ https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec_report_november_2019.pdf

Investment

The social care sector is **stretched, almost to breaking point, and needs investment**. One-off funding initiatives and one-year spending reviews have left local government unable to properly plan for care costs beyond the current year.⁵ The Local Government Association indicate **a further £2.6 billion will be needed** to cover the cost pressures and non-tax income losses due to Covid-19 in 2020/21.⁶ Such an immediate injection would go some way to stabilise the system from the impact of 2020.

Integration

Alzheimer's Society welcomes the proposed new powers from the *White Paper: Integration and Innovation* for CQC to assess whether local authorities are failing to meet their duties under the Care Act and for providers to present data on their care to provide a more complete overview of the national and local picture. The increasing role of Integrated Care Systems in sharing resources and understanding on a wider footprint could lead to benefits in some areas to support and enhance councils' current responsibility to shape and stabilise markets.

Quality and innovation

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's biggest funder of dementia care research and is a founding partner of the UK Dementia Research Institute. As well as developing treatments, the DRI aims to improve the lives of people living with dementia today through care, technology and public health research. The centre brings engineers, doctors and researchers together with people affected by dementia to use technology such as artificial intelligence, robotics and wearable sensors to see how dementia-friendly homes could help people with the condition to live well at home for longer.

There are also existing networks which provide insights into innovative practice which require funding to share findings more widely, such as the Department of Health and Social Care funded Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) and Shared Lives Plus' Social Care Innovation Network.⁷

A **dedicated care innovation and improvement fund** could be established to enable the implementation and testing of pilot products and services to deliver quality care, with effective evaluation. This could be used to address issues such as maintaining social connection, improving use of wellbeing assistance, implementing digital services and novel infection control.

Lack of data

Covid-19 has starkly demonstrated **how much we don't know about what's happening in our social care services**. NHS Digital has recently collated several data sources in social care and illustrated the 'gaps in data and insight' such as levels of unmet need, informal care, self-funders and part-funders, data on providers, limited data on outcomes and quality of care, limited data on seldom listened to cohorts and pathways of integrated care.⁸

Until NHSE required use of the Capacity Tracker and CQC's establishing returns for domiciliary care during the pandemic, we had a very limited picture of what happens nationally. Locally, ADASS notes that 72% of DASSs disagree or strongly disagree that national sitreps record sufficient information to manage the local care market.⁹ It is no wonder that councils cannot sufficiently manage their local markets without the requisite data.

⁵ National Audit Office (2021) The adult social care market in England, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/adult-social-care-markets/>

⁶ Local Government Association (2021) Final Local Government Finance Settlement House of Commons, 10 February 2021, <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/final-local-government-finance-settlement-house-commons-10>

⁷ <https://www.scie.org.uk/transforming-care/innovation/network>

⁸ NHS Digital (2021) Adult Social Care Statistics in England: An Overview, 2020 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-statistics-in-england-an-overview/2020/gaps-in-data-and-insight>

⁹ ADASS Budget Survey Part 1: Covid-19 Response full report, p.19, available at: <https://www.adass.org.uk/adass-budget-survey-2020>