

Commons Debate – Consideration of a Ways and Means Resolution on Health and Social Care Levy – 8 September 2021

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1. Suggested Interventions

- The Government's Build Back Better plan promises to provide 'an outstanding quality of care, with a seamless experience of integrated care [...] delivered by a skilled and valued workforce.' Can the Minister confirm when the Government will announce a more detailed plan for social care reform that addresses not just cost, but the accessibility and quality of care?
- Given that only £5.4bn of the £36bn that is to be raised via the 1.25% NIC Levy will be allocated to social care, how does the Minister intend to ensure that social care is on an equal footing with the NHS throughout the reform process?
- Ahead of the Government's planned White Paper for reforming adult social care, how will the Minister ensure that stakeholders, including those who draw on care and who provide care services, are meaningfully involved in its co-production?
- Can the Minister clarify, given that from October 2023, nobody starting care in England will pay more than £82k over their lifetime, whether anything will be done to support people currently drawing on care, or who may develop a need for care in the next two years?

2. Background

There are an estimated 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, with this number set to rise to nearly 1.6 million by 2040.¹ Dementia is a progressive, long-term health condition with huge care costs attached. It has been estimated that 70% of care home residents and over 60% of home care recipients are people with dementia.²

People with dementia have been worst-hit by the pandemic, accounting for over a quarter of all Covid-19 deaths.³ Their experiences, as well as the experiences of exhausted unpaid carers, have highlighted even further the urgent need for social care reform in the UK. **The Prime Minister's announcement on health and social care reform on 7 September could be a historic moment for people living with dementia, their carers, and their families, who for too long have struggled without affordable, accessible, and high-quality personalised care. Alzheimer's Society welcomes that progress is being made after decades of inaction, and looks forward to engaging with Parliamentarians on the Government's plan.** However, reform of how social care is funded is just the first step in reforming the system as a whole: **the Government must now establish a clear timetable on how social care itself will be reformed.**

3. Social Care Reform - #CuretheCareSystem

During his speech on 7 September, the Prime Minister set out a plan for health and social care funding reform. **Central to his plan was a 1.25% NIC levy from April 2022, which will raise £36bn**

¹ Wittenberg, Raphael et al. Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019-2040. 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.

² Alzheimer's Society. Dementia UK Update. 2014. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf; <https://www.uhca.co.uk/pdfs/UKHCA-DementiaStrategy201202final.pdf>.

³ González, Livingston et al. Impact and mortality of COVID-19 on people living with dementia: cross-country report. 2020. International Long Term Care Policy Network, Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics. <https://itccovid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/International-report-on-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-people-living-with-dementia-19-August-2020.pdf>.

over the next three years, of which £5.4bn will go to social care. It was also clarified that people with assets worth less than £20k will not have to pay for social care, and that those with assets between £20k and £100k will be eligible for at least some means-tested support; that self-funders will be able to ask local authorities to arrange their care to get better value; and that **£500m will be provided for social care workforce development. From October 2023, nobody starting care in England will pay more than £86k for this care over their lifetime.**

While this provides a significant platform for change, **reform to how social care is funded is a vehicle for further social care reform, rather than a solution in and of itself. The Government must now follow up with a detailed long-term plan for reform, coupled with a clear timetable for delivery,** to ensure that people with dementia can access the best quality of care and live with meaning, purpose, and connection, and have choice and control over the care they draw on to live well with their condition.

As well as addressing issues around access and quality of care, this plan must tackle longstanding issues faced by the social care workforce.

In response to the specific figures provided by Government, Alzheimer's Society believes that:

- **A cap on care costs needs to be considerably lower than £86k to make a difference to more than a just handful of people living with dementia paying very high costs.** While a cap to end catastrophic care costs is welcome, the proposed £86k is less generous than original proposals made by Andrew Dilnot.
- **The distribution of the £36bn that is to be raised through the NIC Levy must be rebalanced to ensure that social care is treated on an equal footing with the NHS,** otherwise it will be impossible to deliver meaningful social care reform for all those who need it.
- At face value, £500m seems a very small amount to dedicate to the social care workforce given its size. Clarity is needed as to whether the Government's 'plan to support professional development and the long-term wellbeing of the workforce' will be accompanied by additional associated funding and **a long-term workforce plan for the sector.**

4. Stabilise, Energise, Realise: A long term plan for social care

Just days before the Prime Minister's announcement, Alzheimer's Society launched a new report, [***Stabilise, Energise, Realise: A long term plan for social care***](#). Building on our #CureTheCareSystem campaign, which sees a better, brighter future for social care, **this report offers a pragmatic, stepped plan on how to move forward with social care reform.**

Stabilise, Energise, Realise sets out a three-part programme of change that any Government long term social care plan should deliver. This includes the need to **stabilise the system following the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic, energising the system through new levers and assets** such as technology, housing and personalisation, **towards a final phase of full transformation by the end of the decade** that will see a wide range of benefits realised.

The report is backed up by 30 recommendations across seven key areas: funding, workforce, public engagement and information, quality, integration, carers, and new technology and investment. It was written following a series of roundtables with experts across social care and interviews with people affected by dementia, with a particular focus on **delivering more personalised care that offers choice and control and that's tailored to people's wants and needs.**