Care and Support Alliance Party Conference Briefing Autumn 2022

About the Care and Support Alliance

The Care & Support Alliance represents over 60 of Britain's leading charities campaigning alongside the millions of older people, disable people and their carers who deserve decent care.

Key Message – Increasing pressures

The CSA is calling for urgent funding and reform to address the increasing pressures on the care system caused by shortage of money and staff. There is a chronic workforce crisis and increased funding is needed to ensure that the workforce is adequately paid for the crucial work they do. Social care providers are facing increased costs, and skilled, low-paid carers are leaving the profession in droves, often to work in retail or the NHS, where terms and conditions are more favourable.

At least 2.6m people go without the care they need and social care provision has slipped far below an acceptable level and the sparsity of service is having very real consequences, not only for the individuals whose lives are at best diminished, and their families who often have to pick up the pieces, but for other public services too, especially the NHS. Social care is chronically underfunded, and many local councils struggle to meet the care needs of their communities. An ageing population as well as a growing number of disabled people of working age, means problems are escalating with central Government funding not keeping pace with the consequent growing demand for care.

Things look set to get even worse this winter, with increasing costs and the state of the workforce, where vacancies are increasing month by month. All the evidence shows how fragile the care sector is. Care users, unpaid carers, care workers, care providers and care commissioners are united in calling for an urgent need for an urgent injection of cash.

MPs can:

- Write to the Prime Minister to highlight that with more than 2.6 million people living with some form of unmet care need in England, our social care system is in desperate need of increased investment, an ambitious and properly funded workforce plan, and long-term reform.

The Government's Commitments on Care

This week the Government committed £500m extra for social care to support hospital discharge and the social care workforce. The Chancellor confirmed the cancellation of the National Insurance increase from this November, but committed that the additional funding, £13 billion a year to fund health and social care, would remain. The Government committed to keep the cap on care costs introduced last year.

Thérèse Coffey MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, says her priorities are ABCD - ambulances, backlogs, care (social care), and doctors and dentists.

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto said that older and disabled people, and their unpaid carers, deserve the support they require to live decently.

CSA's View

While this week's additional funding is welcome it probably didn't go far enough to achieve its stated aim of securing social care through the winter. Hospital discharge is only one of the many symptoms of a system which is failing after years of underinvestment.

The social care reforms announced by Boris Johnson in Sept 2020 did not fulfil the promise he made to 'fix social care' because they did not improve quality and availability of care – things that really matter if you or a loved one needs support. The reforms focused on subsiding the cost of care for some people who pay for

their own services, especially if they need them for a long time – a good thing to do but not nearly enough on its own to fix social care as promised.

With more than 2.6 million people living with some form of unmet care need in England, our social care system is in desperate need of increased investment, an ambitious and properly funded workforce plan, and long-term reform.

Labour's Commitments on Care

The Labour Party has commissioned The Fabian Society to develop a roadmap towards a national care service for England. The study will make recommendations to the Labour Party Policy Review and to Wes Streeting MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The idea of a 'national care service' was developed in the final year of the last Labour government. In a 2009 green paper, Labour proposed a service that would deliver: prevention services; national assessments; a joined-up service; information and advice; personalised care; and fair funding. The service was to be universal, fair and affordable, helping everyone who needed care and support. The review will look at the structure of the care home market and how a Labour government would guarantee good standards of care for all and professional standards for carers across the sector.

Key Statistics

2.6m aged 50+ have some unmet need for social care[1]:

The 2.5 million over-50s in this position are equivalent to 12%, or one in eight of the entire same age population in this country.

70% (1.8 million) of those with an unmet need for care have difficulty dressing

47% (1.2 million) of those with an unmet need for care have difficulty bathing or showering

36% (930,000) of those with an unmet need for care have difficulty getting in and out of bed

7% of people in their 50s have an unmet need for care, 12% in their 60s, 15% in their 70s, 21% in their 80s and older

21% (540,000) of people with an unmet need for care are often lonely, compared to 6% of people who have no need for care and 12% of people who have a need for care which is met.

Three quarters (73%) of Social Services Directors are reporting more breakdowns of unpaid carer arrangements (ADASS Spring Survey 2022) - with family members struggling to continue providing high levels of care without sufficient outside support.

According to ADASS, six hundred people a day are joining growing waiting lists to be assessed for care and support in England[2]. Almost 300,000 people are now waiting for an assessment of their needs by social workers, an increase of 90,000 (44%) in five months. One in four has been waiting longer than six months. At this rate of increase, the number waiting will hit 400,000 by November – double the total 12 months previously.

There has also been a sharp drop in the number of unpaid carers in England reporting that the person they care for has used services, allowing them to take a break from caring for more than 24 hours - 19.6 per cent (57,280 people) in 2018-19 compared to 13.3 per cent (42,800 carers) in 2021-22[3]. The number of carers who said there had been no discussions about the support or services provided to the person they care for in the last year grew from 31.2 per cent (91,250) in 2018-19 to 36.1 per cent (116,360) in 2021.

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[1] Age UK and CSA analysis of data from wave 9 of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, scaled up to the population of England using data from the 2021 Census, August 2022

[2] ADASS Survey Waiting for Care, August 2022

[3] Personal Social Services Survey of adult carers in England report, 2022