



ASK THE EXPERTS

Government plans for social care: implications for the sector

Following the Government’s announcement for plans for social care do we now have an unfair tax and no plan? How does Social Care ensure that it has the funding for the future? Will Social Care continue to be the ‘Cinderella’ to the NHS?

In light of this we are asking a group of Great British Care Award winning care providers: “Following the Government’s announcement for plans for social care what are the implications for the sector, the workforce and people in receipt of services?”



“It is ridiculous that it costs less to stay in a care home than in a bed and breakfast.”



Neil Russell
Chairman
PJ Care

“I would argue that the Government has merely introduced some policies that benefit the wealthy, paid for by the less well off, including our care staff. What we need to see is social care reform that brings together commissioners, local authorities, the NHS and the sector to offer a joined-up approach to the benefit of all.

It is ridiculous that it costs less to stay in a care home than in a bed and breakfast. This is no way to recognise the importance of a sector that has been undervalued and unsupported for far too long.

Without social care, the NHS would collapse and the only way that social care will be able to continue is with proper funding, enabling providers to employ and pay staff at rates that reflect the importance of the work they do and they need to do. So, without penalising the less well off, adding 0.5% to the higher tax bracket will raise more and be felt by fewer.”

“There is a risk that more care providers may exit the industry due to continuing rising operational costs and underfunding.”



Mehul Shah
Director
Centrum Group

“It’s no secret that social care has been underfunded for several years now, and whilst the intention of the government’s plans is to make up for it, only about 15% of the anticipated funds raised will go to the social care sector. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to go far enough in helping the workforce and recipients of care. The industry is already facing a recruitment challenge, and with no clarity on how the funds will help address the current staff shortages, there is a risk that the workforce will be further stretched. More needs to be done to attract and retain talent in the sector. With the intended changes, more recipients of care are likely to benefit from the £86,000 lifetime cost of care cap. However, in situations where the Government does take over paying for their care costs, the choice of care home or hours of care to be provided will be decided by the local authority. This may not always benefit the recipient. There also lies a risk that more care providers may exit the industry due to the continuing rising operational costs and underfunding. This in turn could leave even less choice for people in need of care. It’s not going to be easy to fix the system, and the sticky plaster approach doesn’t work. If a larger portion of funding is used to support the recruitment and retention in the industry, this should have a better follow-on effect on the sector and recipients of care in general.”



Barry Sweetbaum
Managing Director
SweetTree Home Care Services

“Staff shortages in other parts of the economy, like HGV and fuel tanker drivers, are more visible.”

“Most of the £12 billion a year that will be raised from increased taxes will be going to the NHS – but the care sector needs the money too, if we can’t care for the elderly and frail in their own homes, then sadly their only option will be to use the NHS which is already suffering from over stretched resources. Even though SweetTree has been rated as Outstanding by CQC twice and has a string of accolades, including three times being voted as one of the UK’s Best Companies to work for, we are struggling to recruit support workers. The SweetTree team is known for providing an incredibly high quality of care and as a result demand for our services exceeds supply. We could easily double in size if staff shortages were not crippling the care industry. I am extremely concerned that this is a hidden crisis as it happens behind closed doors. Staff shortages in other parts of the economy, like HGV and fuel tanker drivers, are more visible, with queues at the petrol pumps and empty shelves in the supermarkets. But the people struggling in the community cannot be seen or heard.”

“A holistic and person-centred approach should be in place and not a slide rule.”



David Thompson
Recruitment and
Training Manager
Unique Homecare

“It was noticeable that during the pandemic that the social care sector was not given the respect and support it deserved. I acknowledge that our NHS is very important and is under supported, but this current white paper was to address the needs of our social care system. No reform within social care will be effective until it has been entirely reviewed and that should be undertaken with the involvement of all areas of the independent care home sector. Investment should be placed in areas that best support the care sector, these areas should include a recognised personal development path this will encourage a stronger and more stable employment opportunity and highlight the sector as a profession. Training should be invested in to ensure a higher standard of consistency in care is achieved in all areas. The goal is to provide the highest standard of care for every person who requires it irrespective of age or ability. When assessing the cost of care for anyone who requires it, a holistic and person-centred approach should be in place and not a slide rule. These are real people we are supporting, and they deserve the best care and resources available.”