

2. The Future Funding

We welcome the opportunity presented by the forthcoming Social Care Green Paper and this inquiry to focus on sustainable future funding. The crisis in social care is deep and systemic, however it is also urgent. Before progress can be made on addressing long term challenges, policymakers need to acknowledge a system struggling to cope with the demands of today. Recent social care funding announcements are a fraction of what is needed to provide services that are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. Local government estimate an immediate injection of £1.3 billion is needed to stabilise the current system²¹. By 2019/20 the King's Fund estimates the 'stand still' funding gap will have grown to £2.5 billion²². We believe Government should show a sign of good faith through immediate funding increases to allow the consultative process to focus on reforming the system in the longer term.

Looking ahead, establishing a sustainable system for the future cannot mean more of the same. A model of social care, capable of meeting the needs of a growing older population and taking its place as a fully functioning part of an integrated health and care system, needs to address the challenges of unmet need, sufficiency and quality of care as well as mechanisms to protect individuals from high and unlimited costs. It will need to work in partnership with individuals, their families and carers, based on a realistic and fair understanding of what each can contribute alongside the state.

We believe a consensus can be reached on the future funding of social care if there is belief that measures put in by this Government will address today's system pressures whilst building a platform for sustainable long-term reform that offers all older people access to high quality care and support when they need it most.

Age UK has recently run a series of focus groups with older people in receipt of care, mostly domiciliary care, and their carers, in partnership with the local Age UK and in the presence of their local MP, about what they want to see from the forthcoming G

The sense from these focus groups was that older people may be prepared to pay a bit more towards care, if they can afford it, and as part of a broader settlement in which everyone makes a contribution across our society, but only in exchange for a care system that is appreciably better than what is on offer today.

It was clear from what they said that by this they meant especially the quality and quantity of front line services, including care homes and nursing homes as well as domiciliary care, and the support available to help informal carers – whether they are the adult children of older people with care needs or their ageing partners.

Measures to cap catastrophic care costs and/or a ‘floor’ were of some appeal to older people who had assets, but by no means all older people do and, in any event, since schemes of this kind take time to develop and embed it seems unlikely that today’s older people in need would be likely to benefit from them. They would, therefore, risk being seen as of benefit to future generations but not to them, and the focus groups made it clear that older people are unlikely to be persuaded that it is in their interests to pay more towards their care simply on this basis. They themselves would need to receive a tangible return in terms of the quality and quantity of services on offer.

When it came to the question of how more resources could be invested in social care and their own place in this, older people and their families in the f

Social care is in crisis and only by acceptance of this will a sustainable solution be reached to fund its long term future. Furthermore the need to find a solution is urgent – trends driving growth in demand are only going to accelerate and become more acuty over the next decade. Successive governments have kicked this issue into the long grass, but we have reached a tipping point