



The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

28 November 2022

Dear colleagues,

The House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee will soon publish its report concluding more than 10 months of inquiry, during which we took evidence from many disabled adults, older people and unpaid carers. All of them shared their hope that social care can be profoundly transformed, so that it can enable better and richer lives for everyone.

Although our inquiry did not focus specifically on funding, it has been impossible not to be systematically brought back, not least by Mr Hunt, to the crippling failure to sustainably invest in our social care system. This is why so many questions have been raised by the Government's Autumn Statement. In this letter, we would like to prompt the Government to address those questions.

Insufficient funding and the lack of a strategic vision

During our inquiry, we saw the mental anguish felt by people who face excessive costs and receive inadequate care, as well as the despair of partners, children or siblings who are living in poverty to provide unpaid care to their family members, facing additional costs with insufficient support. Unfortunately, we do not believe that the funding settlement and the proposals in the Autumn Statement will successfully relieve those who need it most.

We welcome the additional £4.7 billion that has been unlocked for social care in the next three years. But this falls short of what was recommended to our Committee by Mr Hunt himself only a few months ago, when he pointed to the estimate produced by the Health and Social Care Committee, which he Chaired at the time, and indicated the need to reach an additional £7 billion in funding for adult social care in 2023/24.¹

In addition, in a context marked by significant inflationary pressures including increases to the national living wage and growing energy prices, we remain concerned about the real-term impact of this additional funding. It does not constitute the sustainable and long-term investment that the social care system desperately needs.

Even more importantly, the announcement reflects a failure to grasp a strategic approach to meeting the challenges faced by adult social care. Increasing funding through Council Tax is a regressive solution which will not allow for a properly and sustainably funded system. It does not translate as ring-fenced investment dedicated to adult social care. It is likely to create further inequalities from one locality to the next. In short, it is not a long-term plan for funding.

¹ Health and Social Care Committee, [Social care: funding and workforce](#) (Third Report, Session 2019–21, HC 206) p 37

Equally regressive is the Government's decision to delay the long overdue cap on care costs and extension to the means test. Although this is intended to unlock more funding for local authorities and provide them with breathing space, it also reflects the lack of a coherent strategy across adult social care. Delaying one policy to support another will ultimately compound problems; and it certainly does not allow for any priority to be given to choice, control and equality in the provision of adult social care. Everybody deserves an equal opportunity to live a rich and fulfilling life, and this should be at the centre of ambitions for adult social care policy.

Similarly, the announcement made no reference at all to unpaid carers, even though they constitute the backbone of our health and social care systems. The evidence we heard showed, shamefully, that the families and friends that provide unpaid care and support for each other are at breaking point and we cannot afford to push them further. Yet no targeted financial support has been announced to provide unpaid carers with the modest additional support they might need to continue to care. This comes on top of the failure to honour previous promises, for example to provide Carer's Leave. This is wrong – and it weakens the very foundations of the entire system.

Instead, the Autumn Statement has made one message very clear: adult social care needs funding not in its own right, but to relieve the NHS. A significant proportion of the additional funding has been set aside to accelerate discharge into community settings and help free up hospital beds. While, of course, we support faster and smoother discharge from hospital, we believe that this should not be the single perspective. Nor is it the right strategy to adopt for future reform. Improving adult social care should be seen not only as an investment that we make in the NHS, but also in ourselves as a resilient and caring society.

More clarity is needed

With the exception of the investment that is specifically dedicated to accelerating discharge from hospital, no information has been shared to explain what use will be made of the additional funding set out in the Autumn Statement. For example, there does not seem to be any commitment to achieving the promises made by the Government in the *People at the Heart of Care* White Paper, including a £1.7 billion investment in improving social care.²

In his speech as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Hunt said that the increased funding will enable the social care system to help deliver an estimated 200,000 more care packages over the next 2 years.³ But without a better definition of what constitutes a care package, without knowing what size these packages will have, how this number compares to the number of care packages currently delivered, or to the estimated number that is needed, this is an empty promise.

² Department of Health and Social Care, *People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper*, CP 560 (December 2021):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061870/people-at-the-heart-of-care-asc-reform-accessible-with-correction-slip.pdf

³ HM Treasury and The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, 'The Autumn Statement 2022 speech' (17 November 2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-autumn-statement-2022-speech>

The Autumn Statement leaves many questions unanswered, both in terms of the breakdown of the funding that has been made available, and in terms of the Government's strategy and vision for adult social care. We ask, therefore, the following questions:

- 1. What is the exact breakdown of the additional £4.7 billion that has been made available for adult social care in 2024/25?**
- 2. What assurances can be given that the planned additional funding, for example raised through increases to the Council Tax, will be ringfenced for adult social care?**
- 3. What provisions, if any, have been made to provide targeted support for unpaid carers?**
- 4. What provisions, if any, have been made to protect the £1.7 billion investment in social care pledged by the Government in the *People at the Heart of Care White Paper*?**
- 5. What assessments have been made of the impact of this additional funding for adult social care? Have these assessments accounted for inflationary pressures?**
- 6. What does the Government mean when it says that 200,000 more care packages will be delivered in the next two years? What is the size and nature of a care package? How does this number compare to the number of care packages that are currently delivered, and to the number of care packages that are needed?**
- 7. How will the impact of this additional funding be monitored?**

We look forward to receiving your response as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Andrews OBE

Chair, Adult Social Care Committee