



Health and Social Care Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP

17 February 2021

Helen Whately MP
Minister of State for Care
Department of Health and Social Care

Sent by email

Dear Helen,

Thank you for providing the Government's response to our report into adult social care funding and workforce, and for yours and your team's engagement throughout the inquiry.

I am grateful to the Government for the support it has provided to the social care sector throughout what has undoubtedly been its greatest challenge, and I very much welcome the progress that has been made on vaccinating people in receipt of social care as well as the staff who have been working so hard under terrible circumstances for the past year.

However, I am disappointed that the Government has provided no more detail on its long-term plans for social care in its response to the Committee's report, nor its process or timeline for developing these plans beyond stating that they will be brought forward 'this year'. In particular, I was disappointed that the Government's response failed to substantively address our recommendations that:

- **The Government should increase investment in social care by £7bn per year by 2023/24.** As the Chief Executive of NHS England recently highlighted to the Committee, this figure now looks "relatively modest" compared to some of the emergency funding that has been provided during the pandemic and is an essential starting point for putting social care on a more sustainable long-term footing.
- **The Government should bring forward a plan to streamline the training of social care workers.** The Government has acknowledged the vital contribution made by social care workers during the pandemic and provided some short-term support. But while some social care workers will benefit from increases to the National Living Wage, the Government has not provided any detail on its long-term plan for the workforce.
- **The Government must urgently tackle the problems in the care sector as a priority.** Despite repeated promises to this Committee and its predecessor over several years, the Government appears to have made no progress towards a genuine long-term solution to the crisis in social care. I appreciate that this is a difficult question without easy answers, but it is far past the time for concrete action.

It is clear that long-term issues in the social care sector left it particularly vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic, and hampered the Government's ability to respond to the crisis in social care. It has never been more urgent to bring forward a long-term solution to the issues facing social care and after so many false dawns it is vital that 'this year' means exactly that.

I am very pleased that you are joining us on 24 February to discuss workforce burnout in the NHS and social care. I hope you will be able to provide more detail then on how the Government is developing its plans for the social care workforce, and for social care more generally, in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy". The letters are cursive and connected.

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee