

What London Needs from the Social Care green Paper



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**LONDON
COUNCILS**



Overview

Adult social care in London is under considerable pressure, meaning the government's recent Budget announcement of additional investment in the sector is very welcome. However, increased levels of demand from a growing and ageing population pose a major long-term challenge, and London boroughs still face an adult social care funding shortfall of up to £100 million in 2019/20.

The government's forthcoming green paper on adult social care, due to be published this autumn and promising proposals to "ensure that the care and support system is sustainable in the long term", is therefore a crucial opportunity.

This briefing sets out London Councils' asks from the green paper, based on our response to the Local Government Association's own 'green paper' consultation on this issue. We believe the government's green paper should remain focused on achieving high-quality social care provision, funded in a fair and sustainable manner, that enables Londoners to access the services that are right for them and to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Three questions for the government's green paper

Transformation of health and care will require the green paper to be ambitious in addressing a wide range of issues. London Councils believes there are three key questions for the green paper and its vision for the future of adult social care:

- 1. Will the system be fair for all social care users across London?** Access to support should be fair and based on needs without anyone being disadvantaged because of age, type of need, or location.
- 2. Will London's social care sector be financially sustainable?** Funding allocations to local government should be sustainable over the long term.
- 3. Will social care in London become more effective?** Services should be personalised and more efficient through integration of health and care services, delivering an improved experience for service users.

Background

Addressing how social care should be paid for has become a pressing issue for the sector. Moving to a more sustainable funding approach will provide greater certainty for all those involved in the system, including local authorities, health partners, providers and the individuals and families using social care services. Clarity regarding the long-term funding of care will empower individuals to plan for their care needs.

The scale of the funding challenge in adult social care is such that it has required numerous funding interventions in recent years. The Adult Social Care Precept (ASCP) was announced in December 2015; changes to the ASCP and reallocation of £240 million from the New Homes Bonus were announced in December 2016; and £2 billion in additional grant funding in March 2017.

The government recently revealed £240 million of investment in adult social care to ease NHS pressures this winter. London's share of this will be £37 million.

The 2018 Budget brings a further £240 million to the sector in 2019-20 – again, London’s share is expected to be £37 million. On top of this, an additional £410 million was awarded to local government in 2019/20 to be spent on both adult and children’s social care nationally.

These funding interventions will help ease the immediate pressures. However, London Councils estimates that boroughs will still have to manage an adult social care funding gap of up to £100 million in 2019/20, and short-term interventions do not answer the question of how the sector will be funded in the long term.

The green paper is an opportunity to address the long-term funding of adult social care, as well as the sector’s other challenges that go beyond the issue of funding.

The NHS is due to publish its 10-year plan in November 2018. The government should take steps for ensuring this long-term plan for the NHS and the adult social care green paper are aligned and mutually reinforcing. London local government needs to be engaged in decisions about investment intended to deliver better integrated and more preventative health and care provision for the years ahead.

Priorities for the future of adult social care

London Councils believes the following priorities should be at the heart the debate on the future of adult social care:

Integrated, person-centred services

Care should be focused on the needs of the person rather than the needs of the service provider. The individual’s choices should be at the centre of decision-making – and this person-centred care will be better facilitated by health and adult social care coming together to provide a seamless, integrated service. This means breaking down the existing barriers between organisations, allowing for easier movement of funding across different parts of the systems and a flexible workforce. Integrated personal budgets and direct payments must become standard across health and social care.

Prevention and wellbeing

Ensuring that local areas have strong prevention and wellbeing strategies in place will be central to the future sustainability of health and social care services. People should be empowered and supported to live healthier lives – with public health and early intervention as core principles in the delivery of local services.

Supporting family and friends to care

Family and friends who are carers must be better supported – including on issues such as staying in work or returning to work when they feel the time is right.

Empowering the public

Councils are the custodians of social care delivery and the public have the opportunity to influence local developments through democratically elected council structures. However, many social care service users also use health services, and more should be done to empower public oversight of health provision. Health and Wellbeing Boards should be strengthened to do this more effectively.



Place-based governance

The integration of local health and social care services requires stronger democratic governance structures led by local authorities.

Fair access to social care across the regions

Specific issues that must be taken into account for London are the significantly higher cost of living, lower home ownership rates, and severe deprivation. Disposable income and savings are often lower in London, impacting how much an individual is able to pay towards their care.

Taking account of changing demographics

Any new funding system must take into account the projected growth and changes in demographics. London is expected to face higher levels of growth among key groups of adult social care users, such as adults of working age with learning and/or physical disabilities.

Improve the flow of funding in the system

The flow of social care funding needs to be simplified so that money more easily follows the person from one part of the system to another. This will help improve the experience of people by offering seamless services.

Long-term certainty of funding

The government needs to provide greater certainty and stability in the sector by setting out longer term funding arrangements going beyond 2020.

Conclusion

The green paper is an important opportunity for the government to help address the challenges facing adult social care. In London, where adult social care resources have not kept pace with fast-rising levels of demand, there is a clear need for reforming the current approach to funding.

However, while a commitment to sustainable funding is needed, the transformation of adult social care goes beyond the issue of additional investment.

Successful transformation requires change across different parts of the health and care system. It must break down the barriers between health and care provision, ensuring that people receive an integrated service focused on their individual needs – enabling them to live in comfort, dignity, and good health for as long as possible.



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