

Service assumptions

What will be required of the workforce in the future?

To develop a Workforce Strategy, we need to understand the current and likely future expectations of those working in adult social care. Shown here are a set of

In some cases, the extent and type of support provided has widened in the last 20 years to include more bespoke or targeted provision. This includes the ability of people to employ their own carers and determine the support they require (once assessed as eligible) and the growth of reablement as a response to people who

The principles are:

- a) Empowerment - people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions with informed consent
- b) Prevention - it is better to take action to maintain people's independence and choice of control, delaying the development of needs for care and support
- c) Proportionality - the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- d) Protection - support and representation for those in greatest need
- e) Partnership - local solutions through services working with their communities
- f) Accountability - in practice, particularly in relation to safeguarding.

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Figure 3: Local authority spending has been increasing since 2014-15. Source: The
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Figure 5: Where the money has gone fees have gone up in real terms (2). Source:

The

the trend is upwards and the projections of increased need through demographic changes suggest this will continue.

Figure 6: Working age adults are the only group to see an increase in long-term care receipt.

Figure 7: Working age adults have seen the biggest

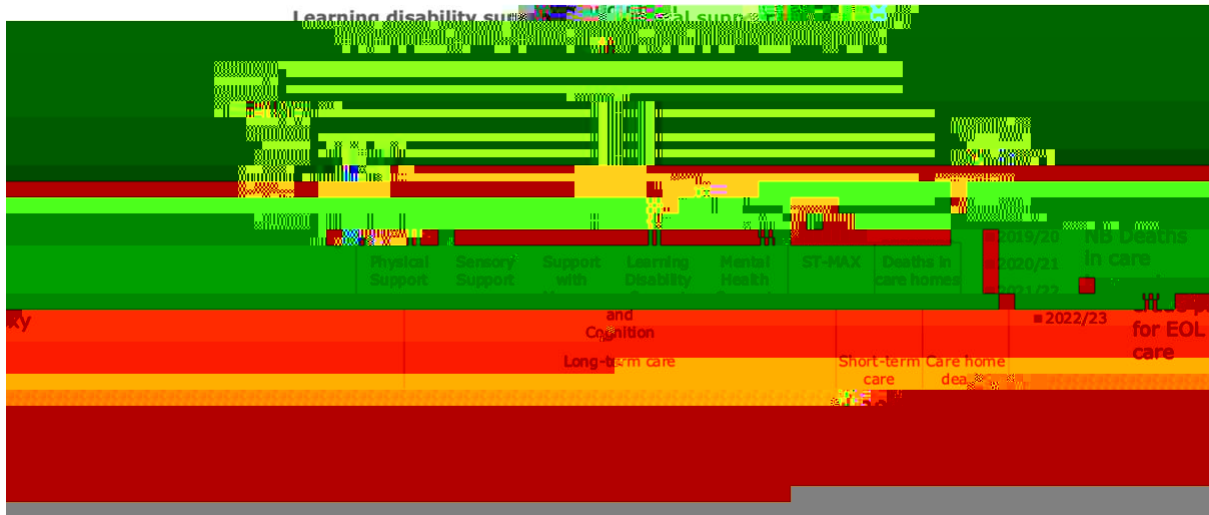


Figure 8: Learning disability support is the biggest long-term care need for working age adults.

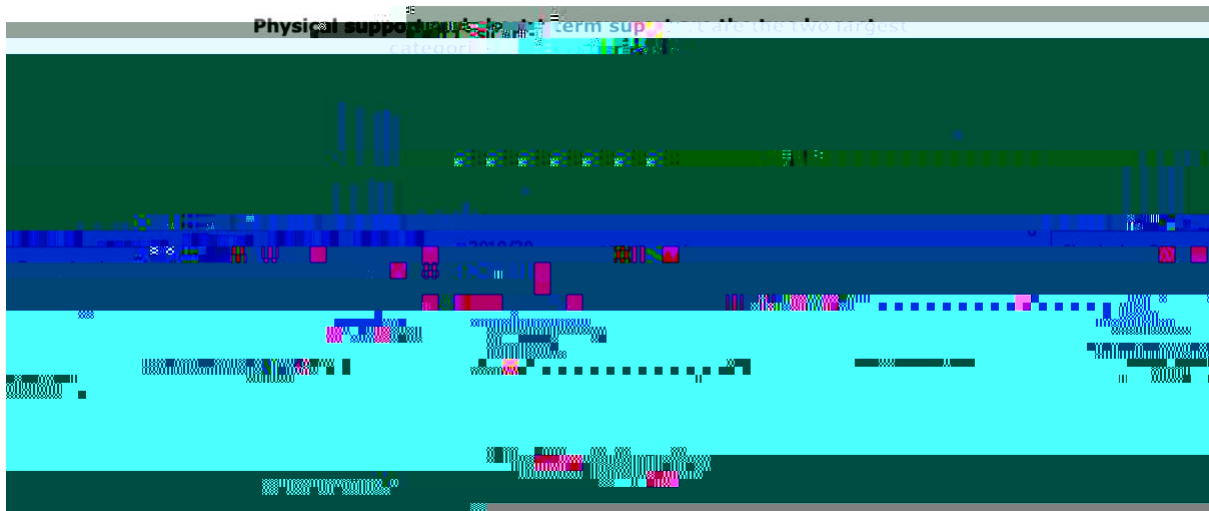


Figure 9: Physical support is the biggest long-term care need for older adults.

As indicated above, whether the level of support available to older adults is adequate to meet need is a matter of debate. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the greatest need is support for people with their physical needs. The data shows the increasing level of short-term support which will be allied to the use of reablement where there is good evidence of its ability to promote independence following a health crisis or deterioration. Given the increasing prevalence of dementia among older people, it is surprising that support with mental health needs is reducing.

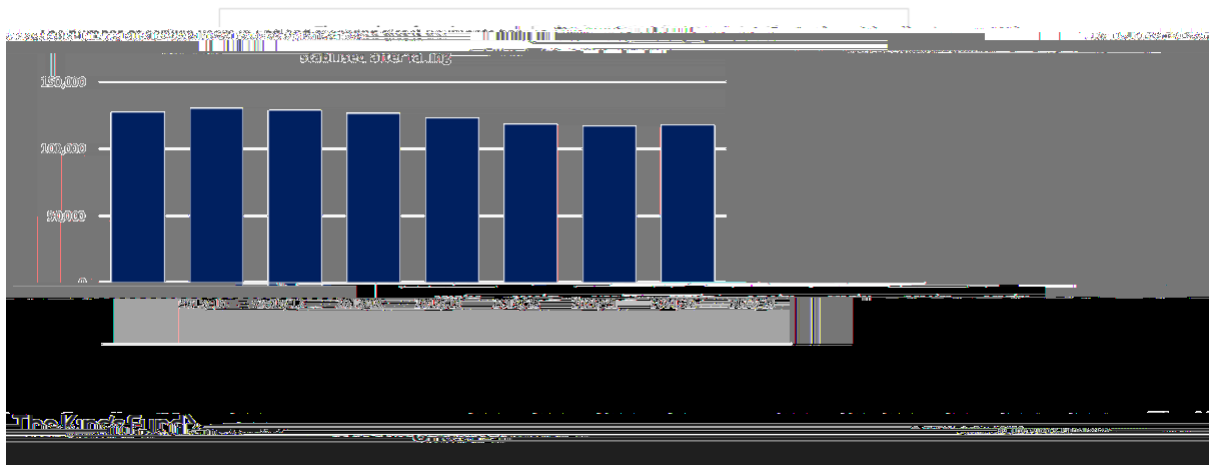


Figure 10: Fewer people receive support through direct payments. Source: The

Given the emphasis in the Care Act and Government policy towards increased choice and control and promoting independence, it is surprising that the level of direct payments has reduced. Direct payments can be used by the public to arrange their own care (or in the case of people who do not have the capacity, it can be arranged by those acting on their behalf). This emphasises the need to recruit, retain and develop personal assistants as an important requirement of the Workforce Strategy.



Figure 11: In care settings, only nursing and community care for working age adults have increased.

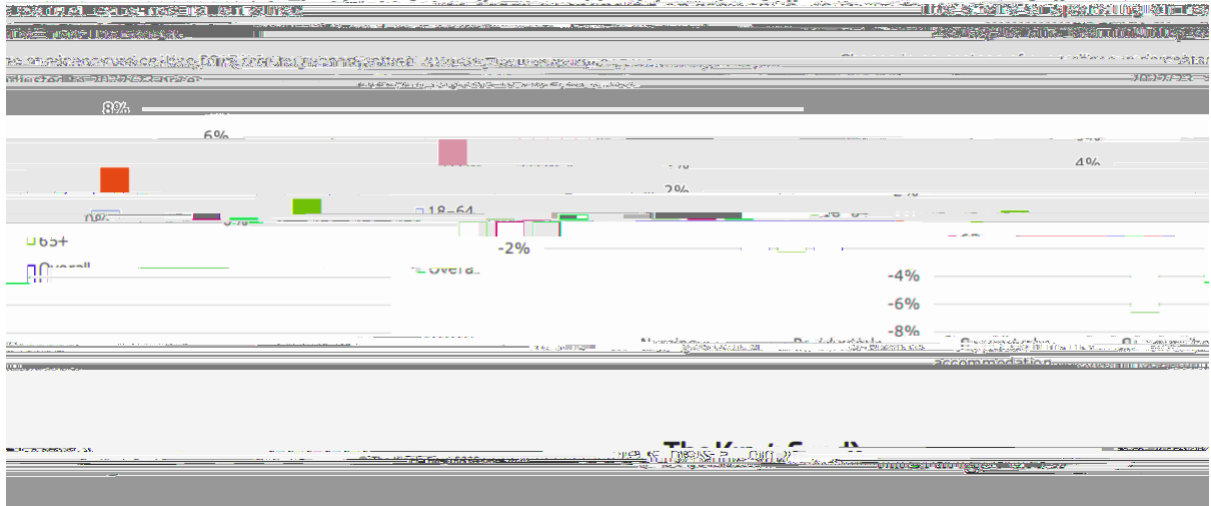


Figure 12: Local authorities have shifted spending towards community services.

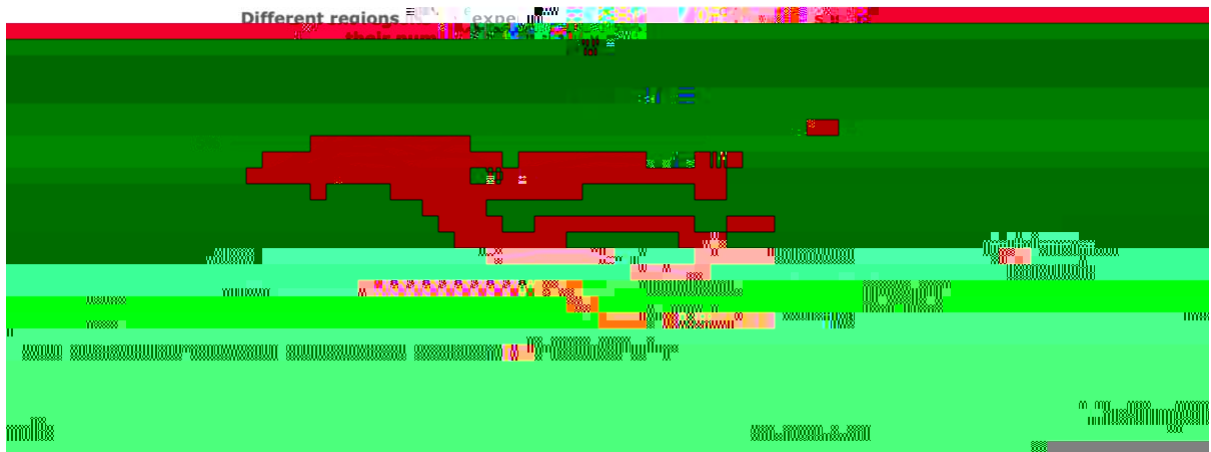


Figure 13 Increase/decrease in nursing home places (beds) (1). Fund.

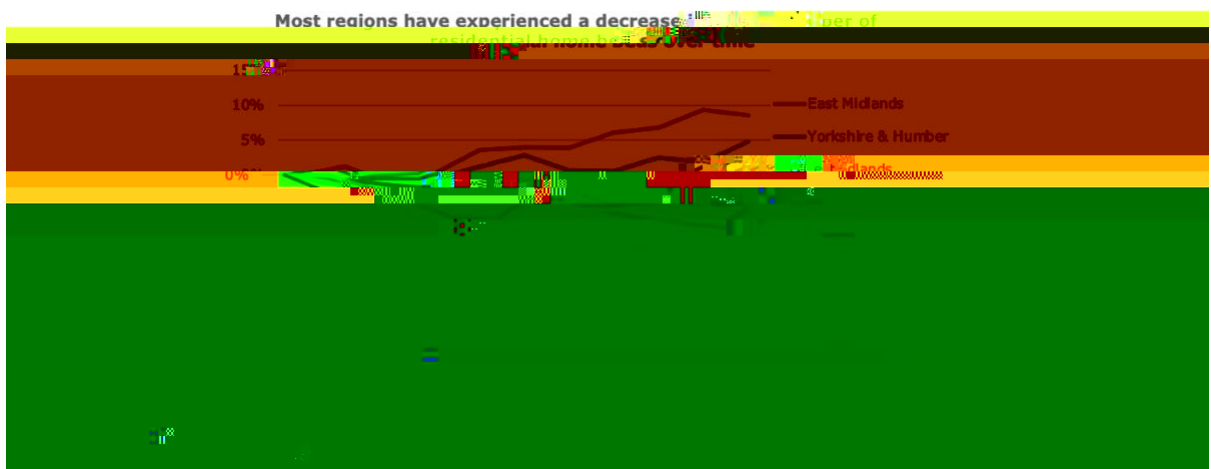


Figure 14 Increase/decrease in care home places (beds) (2). Fund.

Future policy

Previous Conservative Party policy was set out in the Government's *People at the Heart of Care*³. One key area of reform is the introduction of a cap on lifetime care costs, together with changes to eligibility for care. Introduction of these was intended in October 2023 but was postponed to October 2025. Workforce reform was a key part of the strategy, albeit the funding for this has been scaled back from £500m to £250m, and plans were outlined for development of career pathways for care workers and an improved workforce training offer. The Conservative Government announced the launch of a two-year £46m 'Accelerate Reform Fund' to promote innovation by local authorities. A significant part of this fund was to focus on innovations to support unpaid carers. A further announcement saw a drive to improve the uptake of digital social care records among care providers, with a current (at time of writing) 60% uptake against a target of 80% by March 2025.

Prior to the election of a new Labour Government in July 2024, their manifesto spelt out their aspirations for social care. The new Government is committed to ensuring everyone lives an independent, prosperous life. They state that social care is vital to achieving this, but hundreds of thousands of people suffer without the care they need for a dignified life. It adds that the sector needs deep reform: there are inconsistent standards, chronic staff shortages, and people are not always treated with the care, dignity and respect they deserve.

They commit to a programme of reform to create a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country. Services will be locally delivered, with a principle of 'home first' that supports people to live independently for as long as possible. New standards will ensure high-quality care and ongoing sustainability, and ensure providers behave responsibly. Labour state they will develop local partnership working between the NHS and social care on hospital discharge.

They commit to enhancing partnership working across employers, workers, trade unions and government and to establish a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care. This sector collective agreement will set fair pay, terms and conditions, along with training standards. The new Government says that it will consult widely on the design of this agreement, before beginning the process and learning from countries where they operate successfully.

They state that they are committed to ensuring families have the support they need and will guarantee the rights of those in residential care to be able to see their families. As part of the efforts to move healthcare into local communities and professionalise the workforce, they will task regulators with assessing the role that social care workers can play in basic health treatment and monitoring.

Alongside these changes, they intend to build consensus for the longer-term reform needed to create a sustainable National Care Service. This will include exploring how we best manage and support an ageing population; how integration with the

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/people-at-the-heart-of-care-adult-social-care-reform-white-paper>

NHS can be secured; how to best support working age disabled adults; and how to move to a more preventative system.

There is also a commitment to workforce planning:

“Getting the NHS back to working for patients means ending the workforce crisis across both health and social care. When one in seven people in hospital do not need to be there, joint working is essential. Labour will ensure the publication of regular, independent workforce planning, across health and social care. We will deliver the NHS long-term workforce plan to train the staff we need to get patients seen on time.”⁴

The Liberal Democrats are the third largest party following the 2024 General Election. As part of this review of policy options over the next 15 years, it is relevant to reference them here. Their policies on social care include:

- Introduction of free personal care modelled on the system introduced in Scotland
- Introduction of a more generous means test and assistance for those unable to pay for their accommodation costs in residential care
- Improvements to pay, conditions, career progression and training for care workers
- A more preventative approach to care so people can stay at home for longer
- Introduction of national minimum standards for care with locally tailored service delivery
- Building on the 2014 Care Act, a-6()7(so)Tm0 g0 G00008866 0 595 842 reW*nBT2y595 84

