



advice and support for older age

**Independent
Age**

www.independentage.org

Registered charity number

210729 / SC047184

Improving Social Care

By 2030 there will be twice as many people aged 85 and older compared to 2010. While the fact that we are living longer is good news, this will inevitably put increasing pressure on a social care system already under severe strain: at present there are around 1.2 million older people in England living with an unmet care need.

Recently, we asked MPs about their confidence in the current social care system and found that nine in 10 MPs in England believe our social care system is both unfit for purpose, and unable to deal with the UK's ageing population.¹



The social care green paper

We want a social care system that allows individuals to thrive rather than just survive. This means partnering with social care providers, charities and people who have experience of care. The green paper should set out an ambitious plan of action with realistic targets and a clear timeframe for implementation. The reforms should ensure that no care need is left unmet, and it needs to be really clear what the responsibility of the state is and what is down to the individual.

For the green paper to truly be a success, it must:

- 1** Set out an ambition for a social care system that is fairer, more transparent and more sustainable than our current system.
- 2** Be based on a thorough understanding of people's experiences of using and delivering the services today.
- 3** Go beyond narrow questions about social care funding and finance and tackle problems related to housing, regional variation and the social care market.
- 4** Demonstrate a clear aspiration to end poor quality and to create real choice for all users.
- 5** Identify the key questions to address, commit to the widest possible consultation and set out a clear plan for action.
- 6** Create an urgent plan for action, with reforms underway by the end of this parliament and a clear vision for future sustainability.
- 7** Be politically feasible but also command the support of all parties so whatever reforms are proposed they have a strong prospect of lasting for more than a single parliament.

The green paper is an important opportunity not to be wasted but it must not distract from the immediate funding crisis. The funding gap in adult social care currently stands at £1.3 billion and is set to reach £2.7 billion by 2020/21. The Government must act now if older people are to live with dignity, choice and control at present and in future.

¹ <https://www.independentage.org/ComResJuly>