

***Briefing***

***Social Care***

**November 2018**

**Scottish Labour Debate: Investing in Social Care for Scotland’s Future**

**Introduction**

Age Scotland welcomes the opportunity to brief MSPs in advance of the above debate. Social care is a vital service to many older people, enabling them to live independently in their own home. In Scotland, 75% of social care users are aged 65 and over, and in 2016- 48,920 older people received care at home.[[1]](#footnote-1)

With the proportion of the population aged 65 and over expected to increase by half a million over the next 20 years, and a projected rise in the number of people living with dementia to increase to over 120,000 by 2040, **it is essential that the Scottish Government resource social care properly.[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Social Care in Scotland today**

Free personal and nursing care is often described as a ‘flagship policy’ in Scotland, and we should rightly be proud of it. Not only does it make a profound difference to the lives of over 76,000 older people in Scotland it also makes good economic sense, by preventing emergency admissions to more intensive and expensive forms of care.[[3]](#footnote-3) Over the next decade it is likely that more people will require Free Personal and Nursing Care, and with the implementation of Frank’s Law next year the **Scottish Government needs to support local authorities in light of this, both in terms of financing and how the policy is implemented.**

Every week our Freephone helpline, which provides information, friendship, and advice, hears of instances where the wait for social care is excruciatingly long, and families really struggle to ensure that their loved ones get the support that they need and are entitled to. Local Authorities cope with demand, both in the assessment of care needs and the delivery, to varying degrees of success.

Lack of social care also has a direct impact on other vital services, such as the NHS. In September 2018, figures show that **four in ten people who were ready to leave hospital waited more than a month to do so**.[[4]](#footnote-4) That’s too many older people at risk of losing their mobility and independence, putting their health and wellbeing at risk. **The Scottish Government must urgently take action to reduce this, and ensure that health and social care is adequately funded for every older person who needs it.**

Figures from the latest Care Home Census show that Care homes are also buckling under financial pressure. The number of residents in care homes run by the local authority has decreased by 24%, and 21% in the voluntary sector.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, the number of people still receiving free personal in a care home has remained the same.[[6]](#footnote-6) We know from calls to our Freephone helpline that older people and their families are struggling to find suitable care homes that are still accessible for family members to visit without having to travel long distances.

The sector also faces major challenges due to the high turnover in the social care workforce. Scottish Care’s Annual Care Home Workforce data found the average turnover figure was 22% in 2017, compared to 17% in 2015.[[7]](#footnote-7) This indicates a worrying trend, and an issue likely to be further compounded by Brexit.

**About Age Scotland**

Age Scotland is the leading charity supporting older people and promoting their rights and interests. We aim to help Scotland’s people enjoy a better later life. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances, wants and needs.

That’s why we work to make later life the best it can be. We think Scotland can and should inspire, engage, enable and support older people to change their later lives for the better and ensure that there is support for those who are struggling as they live longer to achieve better, happier and healthier lives.

We work in partnership with other charities within the Age Network – Age UK, Age Cymru and Age NI – to pursue these aims across the UK.

**For more information:**

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1. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-care-services-scotland-2016/pages/4/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://news.gov.scot/news/statistical-news-release-7> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Scottish Government: Free personal and nursing care, Scotland, 2016-2017](https://agescotland.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=479296d7e37b3f189c80c67f0&id=e6443198c4&e=e5b32284f8) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Table 3a: Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland – September 2018](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Health-and-Social-Community-Care/Publications/2018-11-06/Census_Tables_To_Sep_2018.xlsx?11:15:15) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Health-and-Social-Community-Care/Publications/2018-09-11/2018-09-11-CHCensus-Report.pdf?2721804381> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00538801.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [http://www.scottishcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Care- Home-Workforce-Data-2017.pdf](http://www.scottishcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Care-%20Home-Workforce-Data-2017.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)