

Alzheimer's Society Briefing – House of Lords debate on the state of social care in England, and the case for a comprehensive social care strategy and further support for unpaid carers – Thursday 10 October 2024

For more information about this briefing, please contact Carlotta Rauch, National Influencing Officer at carlotta.rauch@alzheimers.org.uk.



1. Suggested interventions

- *People living with dementia make up around 60% of people drawing on care at home in the UK¹ and 70% of residents in older age residential care in England². However, only 45% of care staff in England have any kind of dementia training³. Alzheimer's Society are calling for mandatory dementia training for all social care staff- a call reflected in the sector Workforce Strategy for England published by Skills for Care in July⁴. **Can the Minister respond to this ask and advise how her Department will ensure that care workers have the training they need to care for people living with dementia?***
- *Alzheimer's Society research has found that an additional 76,000 people with dementia are projected to be living in a residential home and 30,000 in a nursing home by 2040⁵. With a sector-wide social care vacancy rate of 8.3% in England⁶ and providers already finding it challenging to recruit new staff, **can the Minister provide re-assurances that a long-term social care workforce strategy will be brought forward as soon as possible, to ensure that we have the staff needed to provide good-quality care?***
- *A recent Alzheimer's Society survey found that two thirds of unpaid carers received no help with their caring responsibilities, with only 8% having received a carers assessment- despite this being a statutory requirement⁷. The charity also expect 43% more people living with dementia to need unpaid care by 2040⁸. **Given these stark statistics, can the Minister advise which measures the Government will bring forward as part of their promised National Care Service to ensure that unpaid carers of people living with dementia receive the support they need- both now and in the future?***

2. The impact of dementia on the system

- Dementia costs the UK economy £42bn. This figure is set to increase to £90bn by 2040⁹ unless action is taken.
- Insufficient capacity in adult social care continues to contribute to delays in discharging people from hospital, placing further, potentially avoidable, pressures on the NHS¹⁰.
- Through investment and prioritisation in the right areas, we can make significant progress in improving social care for people living with dementia and their carers across the UK.

3. The change Alzheimer's Society would like to see

Mandatory dementia training for the social care workforce

¹ UKHCA/Homecare Association (2015). [Dementia and Homecare: Driving Quality and Innovation](#). P.8.

² Wittenberg, R (2018). [The Costs of Dementia in England](#), Int J Geriatric Psychiatry, Vol 34. Iss. 7. pp.1095-1103.

³ Skills for Care (2023). [The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England](#). P.141.

⁴ Skills for Care (2024). [A workforce strategy for adult social care in England](#). P.43.

⁵ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia. Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.12.

⁶ Skills for Care (2024). [A workforce strategy for adult social care in England](#). P.21.

⁷ Walnut LTD, Alzheimer's Society (2024). Personal Experiences of the Dementia Journey.

⁸ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia. Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.12.

⁹ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia. Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.11

¹⁰ Care Quality Commission (2023). State of care report: the state of health care and social care in England 2022/2023. Available online at: [State of Care 2022/23 - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

- Given the prevalence of dementia within care settings, it is concerning that many social care staff lack training to effectively support people living with dementia.
- While we know that only 45% of care staff in England have any kind of dementia training¹¹, this data does not record the level of training that these staff received.
- Skills for Care data also shows that social care staff who receive regular training have a lower turnover rate than those who do not, with training being a key factor¹².
- **The Government should enact a statutory duty for all care providers registered with the CQC to ensure their care staff undertake dementia training. This training should be mapped to the [Dementia Training Standards Framework](#).**

A long-term social care workforce strategy in England

- With no current cure for dementia, quality social care is a lifeline for people living with the condition. However, the current system is not set up to meet their needs.
- In addition to the high vacancy rate, in 2022/23 the turnover rate was 28.3% across the sector¹³. This has led to an over-stretched workforce, who are often unable to focus on providing the personalised care that people living with dementia need.
- **To ensure we have enough of the right people with the skills to provide high quality care, the Government should develop and implement a long-term social care workforce strategy.**
- The Workforce Strategy for Social Care, published by Skills for Care in July 2024¹⁴, has strong support across the social care sector, and Alzheimer's Society would urge the Government to consider the report's recommendations.

Improved support for unpaid carers of people living with dementia

- There are currently 1.8 million people providing some form of care and support for people living with dementia¹⁵.
- Unpaid carers play a crucial role in supporting individuals living with dementia, as current needs are not being met by social care¹⁶. The economic value of the care provided by unpaid dementia carers is £21.1 billion across the UK¹⁷.
- However, these carers often receive insufficient recognition and are not adequately supported with their role or with maintaining their own wellbeing. Only 14% of unpaid dementia carers are estimated to have had some form of respite care¹⁸.
- **Alzheimer's Society is therefore calling for improved support for unpaid carers, through proactively offered needs assessments and access to dementia-specific respite care.**
- **Alzheimer's Society is also supportive of calls for a cross-Government strategy on unpaid carers.**

¹¹ Skills for Care (2023). [The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England](#). P141.

¹² Skills for Care (2024). [A workforce strategy for adult social care in England](#). P21.

¹³ Skills for Care (2024). [A workforce strategy for adult social care in England](#). P20.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ CEBR (2019). [The economic cost of dementia to English businesses – 2019 update](#). P.4.

¹⁶ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.11.

¹⁷ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia. Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.12. *Carnall Farrar states that unpaid care costs were calculated by taking into account both the replacement cost of hiring a professional carer, and the opportunity cost of hours of work foregone*

¹⁸ Alzheimer's Society and Carnall Farrar (2024). [The economic impact of dementia. Module 1: Annual costs of dementia](#). P.15.