



# 2017 GENERAL ELECTION: VODG position statement

# VODG position statement

**With the general election set for 8 June 2017 VODG (the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group) is calling all parties to put human rights, social care funding and the workforce at the heart of manifesto commitments.**

The direct economic value of the adult social care sector in England alone is worth more than £20 billion per year<sup>1</sup>. Yet the pressure on funding to support disabled and older people who rely on social care services has caused the sector to reach a tipping point<sup>2</sup>.

This position statement builds on VODG's membership and sector intelligence, as well as work being undertaken to manage the risks, issues and opportunities as the UK prepares to leave the EU<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> IFC GHK (2013) *The economic value of the adult social care sector in England*. Accessed: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/NMDS-SC,-workforce-intelligence-and-innovation/Research/SfC-Economic-Impacts-Report-FINAL.pdf](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/NMDS-SC,-workforce-intelligence-and-innovation/Research/SfC-Economic-Impacts-Report-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Care Quality Commission (2016) *State of health care and adult social care in England*. Accessed: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/561730/State\\_of\\_Care\\_15-16\\_web.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561730/State_of_Care_15-16_web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> VODG (2017) *Managing sector issues and risks as the UK leaves the EU*. Accessed: [www.vodg.org.uk/campaigns/managing-the-risks-and-issues-post-brexite/](http://www.vodg.org.uk/campaigns/managing-the-risks-and-issues-post-brexite/)

VODG – the national charity that represents leading not-for-profit disability organisations – is encouraging people who use services, care providers and their staff to collaborate and unite in the aim of ensuring social care issues are high on the general election agenda.

Social care organisations will be supporting people who use their services to take part in the election. It is imperative that all the political parties do the same when publishing manifestos and discussing policy proposals.

# Tackling inequalities



What action will the next government take to help people who rely on care and support?

**Disabled people face inequalities – in education or employment, health, social care or housing – and many are living in poorer circumstances<sup>4</sup>. Cuts and funding constraints have fallen hardest on groups that are already disadvantaged. Around a quarter of people in families where someone is disabled are living in poverty<sup>5</sup>.**

Social policy should significantly strengthen the rights of disabled people and promote inclusion, address inequalities and injustice. Enabling people to maximise independence and exercise control over their lives, remain core to a good society. With Government upholding the rights of citizens and working within the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>6</sup> inequalities can be reduced.

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<sup>4</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017) *Being disabled in Britain: a journey less equal*. Accessed: [www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/being-disabled-britain-journey-less-equal](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/being-disabled-britain-journey-less-equal)

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015) *Disability and poverty*. Accessed: [www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/disability-and-poverty](http://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/disability-and-poverty)

<sup>6</sup> United Nations (2016) *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Accessed: [www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html)

## POLICY PROPOSAL

A cross-government strategy to promote disability equality.

# Developing a clear direction for adult social care policy



What are the proposals (and timetable) for securing a sustainable funding settlement for social care?

**The last White Paper on adult social care was published in 2012<sup>7</sup>. Whilst the Care Act is welcome legislation, there is evidence that it is not being fully implemented<sup>8</sup>. This situation is eroding people's statutory rights to care and support, and decisions about long-term and sustainable funding for the sector have been delayed for many years<sup>9</sup>.**

An immediate strengthening of social care policy and approaches (such as consultations) should build on the evidence base of the good and useful reviews and commissions that already exist. Proposals to secure long-term funding and sustainability of social care should be brought forward without delay.

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<sup>7</sup> HM Government (2012) *Caring for our future: reforming care and support*. Accessed: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/136422/White-Paper-Caring-for-our-future-reforming-care-and-support-PDF-1580K.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136422/White-Paper-Caring-for-our-future-reforming-care-and-support-PDF-1580K.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> National Audit Office (2015) *Care Act first-phase reforms*. Accessed: [www.nao.org.uk/report/care-act-first-phase-reforms/](http://www.nao.org.uk/report/care-act-first-phase-reforms/)

<sup>9</sup> Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England (2014) *A new settlement for health and social care*. Accessed: [www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/new-settlement-health-and-social-care](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/new-settlement-health-and-social-care)

## POLICY PROPOSAL

A White Paper within a year of the general election, to establish clear consensus on a policy direction and actioning a sustainable funding settlement.

# Supporting the social care sector



How will government ensure an adequate pool of skilled and caring staff post-Brexit?

**The continued downward pressure on funding<sup>10</sup> to support people who rely on social care services has caused the sector to reach a tipping point<sup>11</sup>. Securing the supply of the current and future care and support workforce is essential to the delivery of safe and effective services. Yet there are 90,000 live vacancies on any given day in adult social care<sup>12</sup> and in some areas workforce shortages are so severe that services cannot be provided with the current levels of funding. At least 7% of the care and support workforce come from the European Union and Brexit could exacerbate staff shortages<sup>13</sup>.**

<sup>10</sup> Institute of Fiscal Studies (2017) *One in ten councils have cut adult social care spending by more than a quarter*. Accessed: [www.ifs.org.uk/publications/9123](http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/9123)

<sup>11</sup> Care Quality Commission (2016) *State of health care and adult social care in England*. Accessed: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/561730/State\\_of\\_Care\\_15-16\\_web.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561730/State_of_Care_15-16_web.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Skills for Care (2016) *The size and structure of the adult social care workforce in England*. Accessed: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/NMDS-SC/Workforce-data-and-publications/Size-and-structure-of-the-adult-social-care-sector.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/NMDS-SC/Workforce-data-and-publications/Size-and-structure-of-the-adult-social-care-sector.aspx)

<sup>13</sup> Skills for Care (2017) *Nationality of the adult social care workforce*. Accessed: [www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/Get.aspx?id=/Research/Briefings/Briefing%2028-%20Nationality%20-%20final.pdf](http://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/Get.aspx?id=/Research/Briefings/Briefing%2028-%20Nationality%20-%20final.pdf)

A sustainable funding settlement must enable providers to invest in their workforce – to further build careers in the sector, to recruit and retain the right staff and to pay their people at good rates of pay that fully recognise the worth of their role. Within the context of Brexit the next Government should safeguard the ability of health and social care services to recruit and retain staff from the EU<sup>14</sup>.

## POLICY PROPOSAL

**Social care workforce commissioning above the national living wage and an ability for social care employers to draw their workforce from the EU.**

<sup>14</sup> Cavendish Coalition (2017) *Cavendish Coalition responds to Article 50 announcement*. Accessed: [www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/need-to-know/brexit-and-the-nhs-eu-workforce/the-cavendish-coalition/resources-and-guidance](http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/need-to-know/brexit-and-the-nhs-eu-workforce/the-cavendish-coalition/resources-and-guidance)

# Joining up commissioning



What will the next Government do to ensure public sector commissioning is driven by social value considerations?

**Social care, the NHS, public health and wider public services must work better together. There are good examples<sup>15</sup> of the voluntary sector working collaboratively across public services to better meet need and support local communities. The Better Care Fund<sup>16</sup> is focused on easing pressures in the NHS. It is also important to recognise that social care services for people who are not making significant demands on the NHS (such as people with physical or learning disabilities) are also experiencing major difficulties.**

We need a social care system that is structured and funded to address the needs of all citizens, rather than driven by the imperative of NHS funding crises. Strengthening existing arrangements, including greater recognition of the benefits of charities' involvement in long-term service delivery<sup>17</sup>, and a Better Care Fund that also works for disabled people, would prevent escalation of need and ensure people can access the right support at the right time.

## POLICY PROPOSAL

**An expanded Better Care Fund that supports disabled people who require social care support, to explicitly prevent the escalation of need.**

<sup>15</sup> VODG (2016) *What can the voluntary sector do to encourage greater engagement and collaboration with the health system?* Accessed: [www.vodg.org.uk/publications/what-can-the-voluntary-sector-do-to-encourage-greater-engagement-and-collaboration-with-the-health-system/](http://www.vodg.org.uk/publications/what-can-the-voluntary-sector-do-to-encourage-greater-engagement-and-collaboration-with-the-health-system/)

<sup>16</sup> NHS England (2017) Better Care Fund. Accessed: [www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/transformation-fund/bcf-plan/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/transformation-fund/bcf-plan/)

<sup>17</sup> House of Lords Select Committee on Charities (2017) *Stronger charities for a stronger society*. Accessed: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldchar/133/133.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldchar/133/133.pdf)



# Key questions to ask of each of the political parties



What action will the next government take to help people who rely on care and support?



What are the proposals (and timetable) for securing a sustainable funding settlement for social care?



How will government ensure an adequate pool of skilled and caring staff post-Brexit?



What will the next Government do to ensure public sector commissioning is driven by social value considerations?

VODG is a membership body open to registered charities and not-for-profit organisations which provide services or support to disabled people.

Our members support people of all ages, including older people, with a wide range of physical, sensory or cognitive impairments, learning disabilities and mental health needs.

Though diverse in terms of their size, history and individual strategies, our members share common values. These are clearly discernible through work that promotes the rights of disabled people, approaches to citizenship, user choice and control, and through the successful delivery of person-centred services.

**Our vision is of a world where disabled people have full choice and control over their lives.**



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