

## Our Election Manifesto for Adult Social Care

Business Owners, Directors and Managers of providers of adult social care in Oxfordshire know the importance of the provision of adult social care to the wider community and economy. This is reflected in this OACP Manifesto for Adult Social Care written for the General Election 2015.

In the last five years, £3.5bn has been cut from Local Authority budgets, despite Government calls for standards of care to increase. Data, compiled by CIPFA and the Department for Communities and Local Government, as part of the 2014/15 Revenue Account Budget Estimates return, means council spending fell back to the level of 2005/06 in cash terms with a consequent knock-on for providers responding to council contracts. The cash reduction in per capita spending between 2009/10 – the last year of the previous Parliament – and 2014/15 was -14.5%. However, this rises to -29.1% when adjusted to take account of inflation over the period.

In 2013-14, 31p in every £ collected by a local authority was spent on adult social care. This is projected to rise to 40p by 2019-20. Whilst adult social care hasn't been cut directly, the pressure on funding is immense with providers facing many years of stand-still funding whilst costs continue to rise.<sup>1</sup>

Adult Social Care is routinely blamed for 'bed-blocking' by an ill-informed media and failing to respond to local need. However, with a vacancy rate of 6.6% and a turnover of 24.9% for direct care staff, providers are struggling to compete to recruit and retain care workers in an affluent area. In turn, this is costing our over-burdened health care system £1,900 per week<sup>2</sup>. An investment in adult social care locally and nationally would save the NHS and tax-payers £millions.

Supporting adult social care provision supports local small businesses, which provide much needed care, as well as employment; work that is focused on Oxfordshire's communities and the people who live in them.

We have produced a summary document of national party promises alongside this Manifesto. Whatever, your voting intention, we urge Oxfordshire citizens to keep the issue uppermost in politicians' minds.

 **Vote with adult social care in mind on 7 May**

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/7134458/NEWS](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/7134458/NEWS)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jun/11/social-care-old-people-hospital-longer>

## **We propose:**

1. Legislation to ring-fence funding for social care provision and protect it from being affected by further austerity cuts;
2. The merging of health and social care into a nationally-run, single department where policy is co-ordinated nationally, but commissioned and delivered locally;
3. A Cabinet post for health and social care to reflect the importance of this sector and its relationship with health – the Department of Health should be renamed the Department for Health and Social Care;
4. Parity with health when new funding becomes available; if social care ran a huge deficit like the NHS, social care would go out of business;
5. A realistic system where people don't have to sell their home to pay for care, but where the emphasis is on care at home, supported by good quality, locally delivered, community connected social care;
6. Dementia to be treated as a healthcare need, and therefore funded by the NHS, rather than as a social need and therefore subject to the whims and pressures of local authority spending priorities;
7. The Care Quality Commission to inspect those who commission care – like local authorities and clinical commissioning groups – rather than just the providers : outstanding provision is restricted by the quality of commissioning and strangled by the amount of funding that buys it;
8. Statutory periods of notice before care providers can be closed down to allow for essential improvement with incentives to providers to improve standards;
9. Improved partnerships with local authorities and health trusts, that acknowledge the essential role in delivering of adult social care;
10. Minimum agreed tariffs for an hour of home care and for care home bed stays to ensure providers are not squeezed out of business – these should reflect the local economic conditions;
11. Providers working towards paying staff at least the National Living Wage, adjusted to reflect the local economic conditions and that this is reflected in the local fee structures;
12. Care providers being able to reclaim VAT to reflect the essential nature of delivering their business.

*With thanks to Independent Care Group, York and North Yorkshire*