

DON'T BE LEFT IN THE DARK

Adult social care

What is social care?

Adult social care supports both older people and working age adults who have disabilities, mental health conditions or are generally frail, as well as their carers.

It is personal and practical support to help people live their lives and maintain their independence, dignity and control. People can receive social care in their own homes, community settings like day centres or in places like residential care homes. It is provided by trained, paid staff.

People who need care are usually assessed by council social services teams using guidelines from the Government. Social services identify what a person's needs are – what they want to achieve with their care, for example staying in work or keeping in touch with family and friends – and whether the council can provide help with this.

This is called 'eligibility'. If someone is eligible for social care the council works with them to design a care plan to make sure they get the right care for their needs.

The type of social care you receive depends on your needs. Someone who has more complex needs might need a wider range of social care services or more frequent social care visits to help them stay independent.

People receiving social care are given personal budgets – an amount of money available to meet their care needs – and can decide how that money is managed and spent on their care.

For example, some people may have a direct payment so that they can choose and pay for the care they want themselves, while other people may prefer for their council or another organisation they trust to look after their budget, and others may prefer a combination of both.

Social care also supports carers who look after other adults without being paid. They are usually friends or family of the person they care for.

Carers have the same rights as the people they care for and are assessed in the same way to understand how their wellbeing can be looked after while they continue their caring role. Support can include things like giving carers short breaks from caring.

Examples of social care services

Examples of social care services are helping with daily tasks like washing, going to the toilet or preparing meals, or making adaptations to your home to make it easier to get around, like widening doorways so that a wheelchair can get through. Other services make sure that people are helped to get out and about or stay fit and healthy. Another important part of adult social care is 'safeguarding' or looking after adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

How is social care different to the NHS?

Social care focuses on providing care for people in their community or home to help them have the best quality of life possible. Unlike the NHS, social care is not free for everyone and you may have to pay for all or some of your care. Your local council will assess your financial situation to work out if you have to pay and if so, how much.

The NHS provides treatment for illnesses, injury or disability, and the care or aftercare of a person with these needs, normally in a hospital or GP surgery. It is usually free as and when people need it.



Prevention

Prevention and early intervention such as stop smoking or sexual health services help people stay healthier longer and reduces demand on social care and the NHS.

Councils are responsible for this kind of public health but its funding was cut by £200 million last year with more cuts this year, so councils are struggling to keep these services running. This impacts on people's health and in turn the demand on the NHS and social care.

What challenges are facing social care?

Social care is under enormous pressure. It needs more money to stop a deepening crisis. This crisis follows the five years between 2011/12 and 2015/16 when councils had to deal with a £5 billion gap in funding for social care. Councils had to find £5 billion through savings or providing less services to residents, just to be able to provide the same level of social care as they did before. Half of the £5 billion gap has been filled by making savings in social care and the rest by making more savings and cuts to other council services. This includes things like libraries and youth clubs.

Because councils legally have to balance their books it becomes harder each year to fill the social care funding gap. As many savings have now been made, it is much harder to find new savings. Councils must increasingly make cuts and reductions to services instead. Meanwhile the population ages and pressure on social care grows – people living longer increases costs by 3 per cent every year. This year (2016) that is an extra cost of £413 million.



National Living Wage

On top of the existing financial challenges, in April 2016 the Government introduced a National Living Wage, meaning that the minimum legal payment for all workers increases to at least £7.20 an hour.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) estimate that this will cost adult social care an extra £520 million this year alone as care providers need to make sure their staff are paid at least the new legal amount.

What is the Government doing?

In the 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced the introduction of a social care council tax precept. This means that from 2016 councils can add up to 2 per cent onto their council tax bills to raise money to be spent just on social care.

The Government has said that this will provide an extra £1.8 billion for social care by 2019/20. But this is based on the Government assuming that all councils responsible for social care will introduce the maximum precept every year until 2019/20. It is not possible to predict whether this will happen or not.

An additional £1.5 billion by 2019/20 was also announced for social care through the Better Care Fund, which is a pooled budget shared locally between the NHS and councils. There is no money this year and only a small amount available for councils to spend next year, **despite social care needing funding now**. Another concern is that £800 million of this money is dependent on savings that the Government plan to make through the New Homes Bonus (NHB). If the Government do not meet their NHB savings target, will social care still receive the full £1.5 billion of funding?



Care Act

The Care Act came into force in 2015 and is a very important piece of legislation that brings together lots of care and support laws.

The main features of the Care Act include promoting people's wellbeing, providing information and advice about care, supporting carers, offering choice and control over care and treating everyone equally when decisions about who gets help are made.

What is the future outlook? What more should the Government do?

Social care is in crisis. Just 36 per cent of directors of adult social care are fully confident of meeting all their legal responsibilities this year, and only 8 per cent are confident they can do this next year.

Despite funding from the council tax social care precept and Better Care Fund, adult social care will still face a funding gap of £1.3 billion by the end of the decade. If this gap is not filled, more care providers will close or only care for people who can afford to pay for their own care. There will be cuts to care services and risks to the safety and quality of care for vulnerable people. An unequal care system could be created where only people who can afford to pay will receive the best care.

For councils to continue to give help to those who need it, they urgently need more money for social care. Properly funded social care is also essential to help the NHS by reducing the demand it faces. If people don't get the social care they need they could end up in hospitals instead.



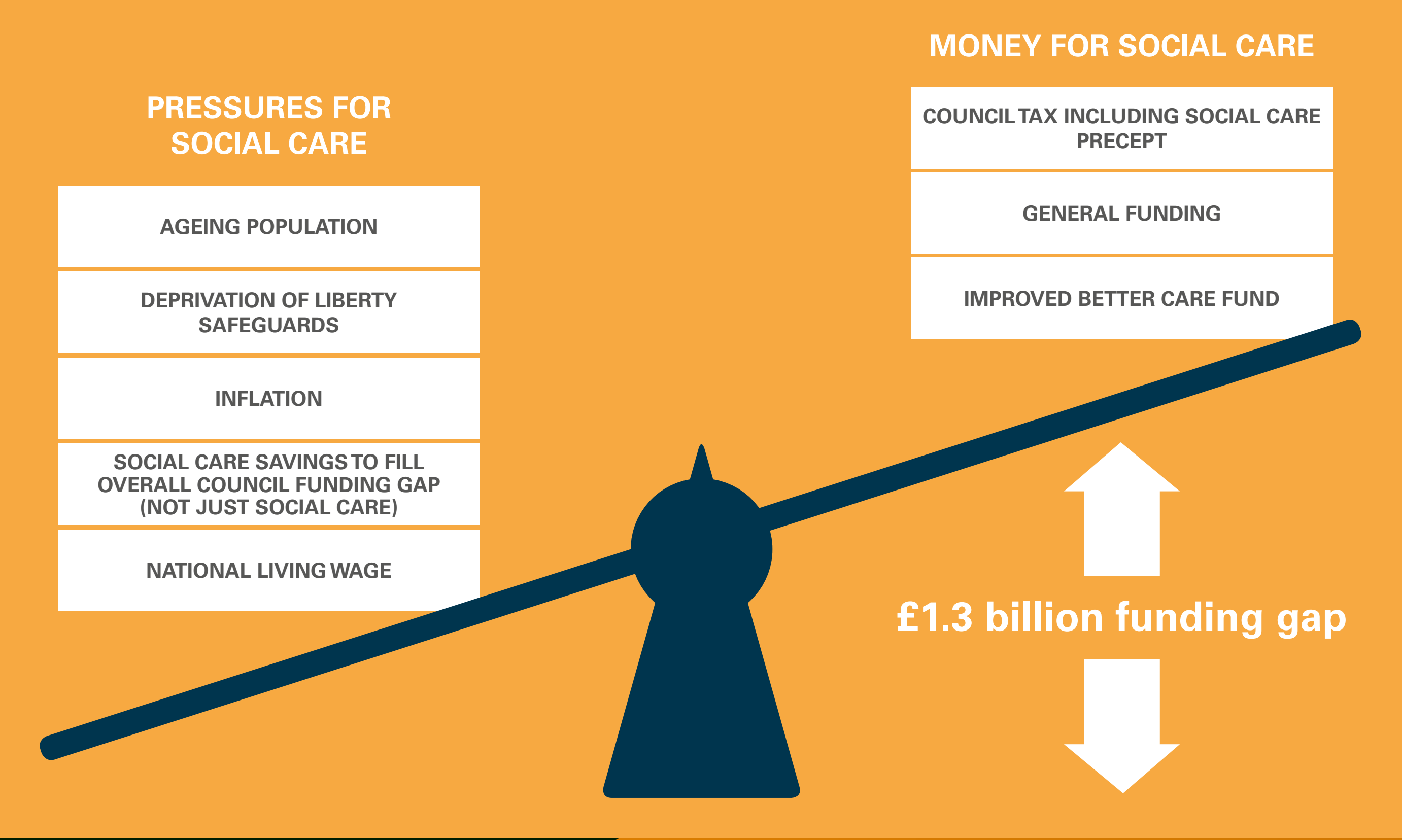
Care providers

Care providers, for example residential care homes, are under financial pressure because of rising costs like the National Living Wage.

Councils cannot afford to pay care providers what they say they need. The difference between what councils can afford to pay and the cost of delivering that care is at least £1.3 billion, and councils need this money right now to stop care providers from closing down or only looking after the people who can afford to pay the full cost of their care. This is on top of the £1.3 billion councils need to fill the funding gap by 2019/20.

TO PUT IT SIMPLY

SOCIAL CARE NEEDS £1.3 BILLION BY THE END OF THE DECADE



AND AN ADDITIONAL £1.3 BILLION IS NEEDED RIGHT NOW TO KEEP CARE PROVIDERS AFLOAT

WITHOUT FUNDING



To find out more about adult social care and local government funding, visit:

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