

ADASS RESPONSE

Today's announcement of the Social Care White Paper and draft Bill has successfully set out a compelling vision for care and support in the 21st century. Its concentration on citizens, carers, prevention, personalisation and integration points to the very best practice that some of our members are already implementing. The way in which the Bill draws on the Law Commission's recommendations for a simpler basis for social care law provides important steps towards a better future for all," according to ADASS President Sarah Pickup.

The emphasis of a future for social care which puts entitlement, individual choice and control at the heart of delivery and legal reform supports the direction of travel we have been championing. The strengthened commitment to ensure transparent reporting of the quality of provision, combined with additional training and support for the workforce, will assist in our joint endeavours to establish excellence as the norm across the sector.

She added: "whilst fully supporting the aspirations set out, we are concerned our arguments on resourcing have not been accepted. We now face an uncertain funding picture until 2015. We are concerned that as Local Authority budgets are squeezed further, the preventative services the Bill seeks to promote may be some of the first casualties of council savings plans. The ADASS budget survey has shown that good progress has been made on making savings against tight Local Government settlements. Whilst the majority of this has been achieved through service redesign and efficiency, 20% has required service reductions. Even within the efficiencies is a hidden pressure on prices paid to providers of services. Whilst providers must play their role in delivering savings, we can not sustain a position where inflationary pressures faced by providers go unfunded. Our concern is the potential impact on the availability of services for individuals before a longer term solution is found."

Mrs Pickup went on to warn "that the proposals brought forward today, however measured and helpful, cannot compensate for the absence of a fundamental resourcing solution which will need to sit alongside new ways of working with the NHS through joint commissioning and service reform.

We understand why this has to be positioned into the Comprehensive Spending Review but we do not understand why once again, Social Care has not achieved the national priority it deserves and remains at the back of the funding queue. We regret opportunities to use NHS underspends have not been taken and that funding has been found for other priorities such as weekly bin collection, without the need to wait for a spending review."

The policy and legal framework in the White Paper and Bill reflect that the Government has listened to the many voices in the sector calling for reform. For example, the proposals to fully recognise the needs of carers in their own right are a momentous step forward. ADASS is keen to assist the Government deliver on its ambitious agenda and hopes now to be able to work with Ministers and other stakeholders to achieve the settlement we need. These latest publications move us substantially forward; we must now work together to put the final pieces in place. There are no easy answers but we owe it to citizens to finish what we've started.