



## **Lords debate:** NHS's performance in relation to its priority area targets; and the impact of adult social care pressures on patients of the NHS, and their safety

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This briefing has been prepared by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) ahead of the House of Lords debate on Thursday 6 February.

### **Summary:**

In the NHS Long Term, the RCP were pleased to see a focus on changing models of working and emphasis on greater integration between health and social care. Increased integration can help to alleviate the pressures caused by delays in transfer to care. However, integration alone will not prevent elderly patients from being admitted to hospital. Adequate additional funding is needed to provide enough hospital beds and meet the demand in social care. Doctors remain concerned about the support being provided to realise these ambitions. **The RCP calls on the government to immediately place social care on a sustainable footing.**

### **Key recommendations:**

**Training more staff to meet patient need** - While the Conservative manifesto laid out a number of NHS workforce commitments, we remain concerned about the current state of the NHS workforce. While we now have an interim people plan which will help address the culture workplace issues facing the NHS, we are yet to see a plan which commits to training more staff to meet patient need. For the government's ambitions for the NHS to be successful and for our health and care system to be sustainable, attention must now focus on growing and training. The RCP therefore continues to call for the government to [double the number of medical school places](#).

**Provide a new financial settlement for social care** - Finding a long-term, sustainable solution to how we pay for and provide care and support to people in England is among the greatest challenges our country faces. Any new settlement should provide secure funding to enable the social care system to operate effectively and deliver the outcomes that people need, taking into consideration the increasingly ageing population.

Years of underfunding for social care has meant that thousands of older people have failed to receive adequate funding for their care, continued delays in transfers to care, and increased uncertainty amongst our dedicated workforce. It is now essential that the government recognise the scale and impact of this problem and give social care parity of esteem with healthcare.

**Valuing the workforce**- It is crucial that any future immigration system supports social care providers to recruit internationally. The health and social care sector is heavily reliant on staff from outside of the UK therefore we must create a welcoming environment that values the contribution of workers from across the world.

The RCP is concerned that Brexit will disproportionately affect the social care workforce and have a negative impact on the ability for physicians and doctors to carry out their jobs. As highlighted by the Migration Advisory

Committee's [report](#), EEA migrants contribute significantly to social care services, which hospitals heavily rely on for adequate transfers to care.

#### **Media quote**

A recent [report by the Office for Statistics Regulation](#), found that the number of people forced to sell their houses to pay for social care is unknown, because local councils do not collate this information. In response, RCP president, Professor Andrew Goddard said:

*'If the prime minister is serious about fixing this problem and integrating health and social care, the government needs to make a financial investment and send a clear message to senior leaders about the importance of high-quality data.'*