

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Better Care Fund

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (rt. hon. Eric Pickles): My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health (Jeremy Hunt) and I are today approving plans to join up health and care services across the country for the first time. This will improve care and provide more dignity for older and vulnerable people, as well as reducing Accident and Emergency admissions and lengths of stay in hospital.

People are happier and healthier when they have family and friends nearby. So investing in care services that are tailored to individual needs make sense. It means people can stay at home for longer, which is better for everyone involved.

They can also be helped back to health in high quality community care centres or leave hospital more quickly when they do have to be admitted. This will not only improve services and reduce waste, it will give elderly people the dignity and independence they deserve in later life.

This has been made possible by the Government's £5.3 billion Better Care Fund, initially set at £3.8 billion but which has increased significantly following additional local investment. This will bring GPs, community nurses, and care workers together so they can provide better care closer to home that keeps people independent and healthy for longer, preventing unnecessary stays in hospital and giving families more confidence over how their loved ones are looked after.

People will be able to get the right care when and where they need it, including at the weekend, thanks to a new national standard of seven-day health and social care. The local plans being approved today aim to prevent around 160,000 Accident and Emergency admissions, 2,000 care home admissions and result in over 100,000 fewer delayed discharges, meaning people get home from hospital more quickly when they do have to be admitted.

NHS England also estimates that, based on local plans, the Fund will be supporting at least 18,000 individuals in roles delivering care out in the community. This will be a range of social workers, occupational therapists, care navigators, doctors and nurses, deployed based on local needs and delivering outside of the hospital.

Developed together by councils and local NHS organisations, these plans are the centrepiece of the Government's commitment to joining up the health and care system. They will help to put the service user first and make this vision for joined up care a reality across the country for the first time.

I would urge hon. Members to read their own local plan and support their Health and Wellbeing Board in developing their plans to give the elderly more dignity in later life.

I am also grateful for support from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Danny Alexander), the Minister for Care and Support (Norman Lamb), the Minister for Local Government (Kris Hopkins), NHS England and the Local Government Association.