

## Arthritis Care response to announcement on social care

Friday 16 December, 2016

Arthritis Care has responded to the government's decision to allow councils to bring forward already announced increases in the 'social care precept', a rise in council tax which must be used to fund social care, and to make available £240 million for social care resulting from changes to the New Homes Bonus.

Nikki Hill, Director of Policy, Communications and Information at Arthritis Care, said:

"Arthritis Care welcomes the government's recognition that something must be done to address the rapidly growing crisis in social care. Today's announcement was a step in the right direction, but a long-term and sustainable solution is urgently needed.

"Social care services in England have faced cuts of £4.6 billion in just five years, taking into account growing demand and rising prices. Raising the social care precept is not the answer to this challenge. Less affluent areas, where there is often the greatest need for publicly funded care, raise the least amount of money. The additional £240 million is welcome, but it will not solve the care crisis.

"The severe underfunding of social care services has knock-on costs for the health service when people cannot be cared for in the community. Nearly one in ten beds is being used by someone medically well enough to be discharged.

"More and more of us are living longer with conditions such as arthritis, and we should all be able to live with dignity and remain independent for as long as possible. The funding announced today will go some way towards plugging the gap, but falls far short of the solution that is needed."

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