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National care service

A national care service would boost wages, put quality above profit-making and ensure everyone receives the support they need.



Roadmap launched for a national care service to transform lives, says UNISON

The first ever roadmap for a national care service in England that would help ease NHS pressures, transform lives and tackle growing workforce shortages is published today (Thursday).

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The document, commissioned by UNISON from the Fabian Society, will be launched in Westminster later today.

The report, [Support Guaranteed](#), says long-term solutions, not quick fixes, are needed to solve the crisis in social care. The new national service would transform support for those who need it and provide more choice and control for individuals and their families.

This national system would reduce pressure on the NHS, improve the lives of thousands of people who lack independence, and plug gaps in the support family members provide to loved ones as unpaid carers, according to the 81-page report.

Ten suggested principles should underpin a new national service, says the report, including care that is high-quality, affordable,

accessible and connected to the NHS and other local support.

These values will be the 'building blocks' of a national guarantee - a promise made by the government and local councils to people needing care about what they will receive from the service.

The report suggests a potential launch date for a national care service could be 5 July 2028 to mark the 80th anniversary of the NHS.

Major reforms and a new way of managing care are needed because extra money alone won't solve the sector's many problems, says Support Guaranteed. The taxpayer is spending around £20bn each year on a system in England that does not work and needs urgent attention.

The document says spending cuts have created a social care 'emergency' where local authorities are forced to ration support, despite huge rises in demand.

Poor pay and conditions are among the factors that have triggered a staffing crisis in the sector, with 165,000 vacancies, according to data highlighted in Support Guaranteed.

This crisis is causing 'huge harm' to people with lifelong and enduring disabilities, frail older people are losing their independence and unpaid carers are under extraordinary pressures.

Under a national care service, support would be provided locally and delivered under one name across England with all employees guaranteed fair rates of pay.

Crucially, the report states that a new workforce settlement should be the first priority in creating a national care service. This would mean national minimums for wages, sick pay, pensions and annual holiday across the country, with workers guaranteed decent, comprehensive training.

The report says it does not back the creation of a single national health and care service, although services may wish to merge locally, and this is something that may well come about over time.

Support Guaranteed highlights the dysfunctional nature of the current social care

'market' and recommends a series of measures for overhauling the system, such as councils delivering local care services themselves, as well as removing the profit motive from care provision.

Commenting on the report, **UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea** said: "Social care has been neglected for too long. The system is broken and the staff who work in it are either on their knees or leaving in droves.

"Promises of reform have come to nothing and people needing care are being let down on a grand scale. Arranging care for a loved one is a minefield for families trying to navigate the system for the first time.

"To make matters worse the sector is thousands of staff short. Raising pay is key to stopping the exodus of staff quitting for higher wages and less stressful, emotionally draining jobs elsewhere.

"People who rely on care deserve much better. A national care service would boost wages, put quality above profit-making and ensure everyone receives the support they need."

Report co-author and general secretary of the Fabian Society Andrew

Harrop said: "This comprehensive plan for a national care service for England is an ambitious roadmap for solving one of the country's most significant and enduring social challenges.

"The Fabian Society's plan works for everyone who needs support or care now or who may do in the future. But vitally, it is also a blueprint that works for the under-valued care workforce and for our huge army of unpaid family carers."

Shadow health and social care secretary Wes Streeting MP

said: "This report is an important contribution to the debate on our social care system.

"Labour is committed to ensuring better terms and conditions, proper training, and fair pay for care workers, with national standards guaranteeing good quality care, as the first steps to building a national care service."