Local Government Finance Settlement

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

It is good news that people are living longer— in the decade to 2015, there has been a 31% increase in the number of people living to 85 and over— but already, more than a million people have unmet care needs. Although I welcome the fact that some of this money will be brought forward, I do not feel as though we are going far enough in this House to address the scale of the increase in demand and allow people to be cared for with dignity in their old age. May I join the Chair of the Communities and Local Government Committee in asking the Government to start cross-party talks urgently to ensure that we have a long-term, fair, sustainable settlement for both health and social care?

Sajid Javid The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

My hon. Friend speaks with experience. I know that she has spent a great deal of time looking into this issue, especially in her work as Chair of the Select Committee on Health, and I take what she has to say very seriously. I think I am correct in saying that my hon. Friend used the words “bring forward spending”. Today’s announcement on adult social care does more than just bring it forward; it is a real, significant increase in spending of Â£900 million. To be clear, that is an additional Â£900 million over the next two years where there are some of the biggest short-term pressures. That would not have happened had these changes not been announced. It is, significantly, new money, not just bringing forward spending. I know that she will welcome that clarification.

My hon. Friend referred to the need to talk widely, including with members of the Opposition. I would include in that local leaders, health professionals and social care professionals, and that is certainly what I intend to do over the coming months, to make sure that we keep this always under review.

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