

A Snap Survey of the state of adult social services has revealed a deteriorating picture.

A [snap survey](#) of the state of social care services has revealed a rapidly deteriorating picture of hundreds of thousands of older and disabled people left waiting for help despite record increases in care being provided to people in their own homes.

Directors of social services across England are expressing unprecedented alarm at the findings as winter approaches. They say the government must act to stabilise the care system.

The survey by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) has found:

- Almost 400,000 people are now waiting for an assessment of their needs or a service.
- More than 1.5 million hours of commissioned home care could not be provided between August and October because of lack of staff, despite record growth in provision.
- One in two councils has had to respond to a care home closure or bankruptcy over the past six months.

Stephen Chandler, ADASS president, said: “*This survey confirms our worst fears.*”

Red lights are flashing right across our dashboard.

“Despite magnificent efforts by the committed, courageous and compassionate people working in social care who are delivering extraordinary amounts of care and support, services are failing to meet everyone’s needs and older and disabled people are suffering.

“The government must now acknowledge the scale of the crisis and step in with emergency funding and measures to ensure we can get through the winter ahead.”

The survey findings come ahead of expected publication of the government’s white paper on reform of adult social care. ADASS is calling as a priority for action to raise the pay and status of care work and put it on a professional footing in the long term.

The findings suggest, however, that immediate steps must be taken to stem the loss of care workers to other sectors to ensure services can be maintained. ADASS is urging the government to fund a £1,000 winter retention bonus for all staff.

Notes

The survey was completed this month by more than half the directors of adult social services in England. Extrapolated, their responses indicate that 391,000 people are waiting for an assessment or overdue reassessment of their care needs, or for a service to be provided after assessment.

More than 40,000 people have been waiting longer than six months for an initial assessment.

With demand for home care running at record levels, more than 41 million hours of care and support were provided for people in their own homes during the

survey period of August to October, an increase of 15% on May to July. But 1.5 million hours that had been commissioned could not be provided because of lack of staff.

This level of unmet need is almost three times that recorded for May to July, and more than five times that for February to April.

Over the past six months, 48% of directors have needed to respond to a care home closure or a home provider going out of business. This compares to a finding of 35% in the summer survey and 25% before the Covid pandemic.

Forty-two per cent of directors have experienced failure of a home care provider, affecting an average 50 people due to receive care and support in their own homes. This is more than twice the number hit by provider failure in the summer survey.

ADASS has previously called for immediate investment of £1.5 billion to prevent the further collapse of care and an additional £1.5n to support carers.

The survey was undertaken between 2 November and 18 November and was completed by 85 of the 152 directors of adult social services in England.