

Chapter 11: Adult Social Care

1 To what extent does the Care Act 2014 resolve the crisis of adult social care?

First of all you have to decide what the crisis was that provoked the Act, and then decide whether that crisis persists. We would suggest that if anything the crisis in social care has been exacerbated since the implementation of the legislation. Yes, it solved some of the complexity of outdated and limited provision. However because the problem of how to fund the provision of social care has not been resolved, and local authorities have suffered extensive cuts in funding, the situation appears to have got worse.

2 Locate responses to the passing of the Care Act 2014. What do pressure groups think of the new legislation?

NGOs are very active in the area of adult social care. You should look up Carers UK, AgeUK, Mind and Mencap, for starters.

3 Find the latest statistics on adult social care provision. Does your local area have particular plans for cuts in adult social care provision? What do you think the impact of cuts will be?

If you look at the report from the National Audit Office, *Adult social care at a glance*, published in July 2018, you will learn a great deal about the extent of adult social care provision <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Adult-social-care-at-a-glance.pdf>. There is further information from the Office of National Statistics:

[tps://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthcare-system/articles/demandforadultsocialcareacrosscountiesandunitaryauthoritiesinengland/2018-12-18](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthcare-system/articles/demandforadultsocialcareacrosscountiesandunitaryauthoritiesinengland/2018-12-18)

4. On Thursday 13th August 2020 the Guardian published a letter from Alan Walker Professor of social policy and social gerontology, University of Sheffield. It read,

***“Michael Marmot’s speculation about the key roles of social deprivation and Tory austerity policies in excess Covid-19 mortality is likely to be well founded (Why did England have Europe’s worst Covid figures? The answer starts with austerity, 10 August). But no account of excess mortality can be complete without reference to the high incidence of deaths in care homes – at least half of all virus-related deaths.*”**

The immediate causes have been well aired: failure to protect vulnerable residents, discharge of untested hospital patients, on top of long-term neglect exacerbated by austerity. But we must also factor in institutional ageism. Care home residents are overwhelmingly frail older people; they were sacrificed under austerity and then, to make room for younger adults, under the pandemic. It is telling that 75% of deaths of residents involving Covid-19 took place in care homes rather than hospitals, ie places not designed to treat severe illness. They were left to die. When the reckoning comes, this human cost of ageism must be recognised.

Do you agree with his reasoning? Are we an ageist society, and if so, what are the consequences? You should think not only about the impact of Covid-19 but also the broader context of adult social care that we have discussed in this chapter.

This is really looking for your opinions but there is a lot of evidence that you can draw on – some of which is contained in the chapter. We have no doubt that the inevitable second wave will produce more reports and hand wringing.