



Policy News from MHA: August 2015

Welcome to MHA's August monthly policy bulletin.

Parliament has been in recess for the summer returning on 7 September, where debates on key Bills such as the Assisted Dying Bill, the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill and the Welfare Reform and Work Bill will resume.

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And we bring you the highlights of emerging research and policy in these areas of interest:

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Government

Progress of legislation

- The [Assisted Dying Bill](#) has received some attention over the summer, following an [open letter](#) (*in the link, please scroll down the letters page*) 'Pressure to End Lives' from over 80 doctors who "believe such proposals devalue the most vulnerable in society". Meanwhile the former Archbishop of Canterbury, [Lord Carey](#) outlined his support for the Bill. The Bill proposes to enable competent adults who are terminally ill (applying to those diagnosed with six months or less to live), to choose to be provided with medically supervised assistance to end their own life. The second reading debate is due to take place on 11 September in the House of Commons.

All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)

- APPGs are informal cross-party groups who meet relatively informally, to discuss a particular issue of concern. APPGs have no formal place in the parliament, but are an effective way of bringing together parliamentarians and interested parties. The register of APPGs was published at the beginning of the month and those of interest to MHA and older people include:
 - [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia](#), which aims to raise awareness of the condition amongst MPs and influence legislation and policy-making to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers. The group is chaired by Debbie Abrahams MP, supported by the Alzheimer's Society.
 - [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People](#), which aims to promote the development of better and greater choice in later life housing and care. It is chaired by Peter Aldous MP, supported by Independent Age.
 - [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hospice and Palliative Care](#), which focuses on developments in hospice and palliative care. It is chaired by Fabian Hamilton MP and is supported by National Council for Palliative Care.
 - [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pensions](#), which aims to develop and

encourage pension arrangements in the UK and is chaired by Richard Graham MP, supported by the Association of Consulting Actuaries.

In brief:

- Downing Street has revealed the list of [45 new peers](#) appointed to the House of Lords in the dissolution honours list 2015. The new members will join the House of Lords at a later date after being vetted by the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

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Ageing

Baby Boomers

- The Ready for Ageing Alliance (Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Anchor, Carers UK, the Centre for Policy on Ageing, International Longevity Centre-UK, Independent Age and Joseph Rowntree Foundation) have published [The Myth of the Baby Boomer](#), in an effort to combat a recent growth in a negative media stereotype and portrayal of this age group. The report presents evidence that baby boomers (defined as between the ages of 55-70) are a diverse group of people in almost all aspects of their lives. The report presents factual information such as:
 - **Health:** whilst some baby boomers can expect to live a long time in good health, men in the most deprived parts of the England can expect to live to age 52 in good health compared with 70.5 in the least deprived areas. In addition, 6.7 million people aged 45-64 have a long standing illness or a disability.
 - **Education:** while there were no fees for those who went to university in the 60s and 70s participation rates were considerably lower than today, meaning that among 55-64 year olds, just under 20% have a degree as their highest level of qualification. This proportion declines still further among 65-69 year olds, among whom just over 13 per cent attained a degree. Furthermore, older people are more likely to have either no qualifications or only those of a low level.
 - **Wealth:** While some people in this generation are able to retire early,

the vast majority (72%) of people aged between 50 and State Pension age are in employment. In addition, nearly 2 million people aged 55-64 do not have any private pension savings.

- **Housing:** Just under a half of baby boomers (48%) own their property outright and those who bought their homes had to pay high interest rates. Nearly a quarter (24%) are renting.

ICT

- The [London School of Economics](#) have published a report on the impact of the internet on older people in coming decades. The report suggests that almost five million Britons aged over 64 do not have any internet skills, with many older people believing digital technology is “too difficult to use” and a luxury rather than a tool for improving life quality. Commissioned by the UK Government Office for Science, the report looks at how changes in society and technology over the next 10 and 25 years will help or hinder older people in maintaining social networks. The report calls on care homes to provide greater support to help older people break down the barriers to accessing information and communication technology (ICT). Meanwhile a report from the [Office for National Statistics](#) indicates that daily computer use by the over 65s has increased from below 10% in 2006, to 45% in 2015.

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Dementia

In brief:

- A report by the [Health and Social Care Information Centre](#) has found that many healthcare environments are not appropriately supportive for people with dementia. The Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment are voluntary self-assessments of non-clinical services in both the NHS and independent/ private healthcare sector in England. In 2015 the assessments were extended to include criteria on how well providers’ premises are equipped to meet the needs of caring for patients with dementia. The national average score for the dementia domain was relatively low at 75%, compared to 98% for cleanliness, 89% for food and hydration, 86% for privacy, dignity and wellbeing.

- The [National Institute for Health Research](#) has recorded a 60% rise in the number of people volunteering to take part in major dementia research. Almost 22,000 people have participated during the last year, in 100 studies. Research projects include testing whether antibiotics slow cognitive decline, investigating the role of the immune system in dementia, identifying genetic risk factors and improving end of life care for people with dementia. More than 9,000 people have also signed up to [Join Dementia Research](#), which allows people to register their interest in participating in dementia research and be matched to suitable studies.

This month, we have welcomed Kate Fisher to the Policy and Research Team as new Dementia Lead for MHA, who will be responsible for developing a strategic dementia service in MHA, and has more than 30 years' experience in health and social care working with older people.

Preparations are also well underway for the [Music Therapy and Dementia Care in the 21st Century conference](#), which is MHA is sponsoring. It takes places 4-6th September, with an opening address by Adrian Bagg.

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Faith

In brief:

- A study of depression among older Europeans has found that joining a religious organisation is more beneficial than charity work, sport or education in improving their mental health. The research by [Erasmus MC and the London School of Economics](#) studied 9,000 Europeans over the age of 50 over a four year period.

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Health

NHS Vanguard

- The NHS Five Year Forward View partners have published an initial support package for the 29 new models of care vanguards, which are developing new ways of providing care to act as blueprints for the NHS across England. The support package focusses on: the design of new models of care; evaluation; breaking the barriers which prevent integration; empowering patients and communities; harnessing technology; workforce redesign; local leadership and delivery; communications and engagement. 2015/16 funding was also finalised for the following vanguards:
 - [Better Health and Care for Sunderland](#) – £6.5 million;
 - [Northumberland Accountable Care Organisation](#) – £8.3 million;
 - [South Somerset Symphony Programme](#) – £4.9 million

A further £41m has been approved in principle for the following vanguards: Better Care Together (Morecambe); Better Local Care (Southern Hampshire); My Life a Full Life (Isle of Wight); Salford Together; and, Wirral Partners. Funding for other vanguards will be approved over the coming months.

In brief:

- [Care England](#) announced that its members will no longer pay GP retainers, which are meant to cover enhanced services but often cover basic services. The NHS Five Year Forward View, emphasises the importance of care home residents having the access to healthcare that they would if they were living in their own homes.

MHA says: As a member of Care England we agree that it is essential that residents in our care homes receive the same access to health as everyone else. We had very few GP retainer contracts and those have been cancelled.

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Housing

Retirement Living

- Research funded by Bupa and Audley Retirement and carried out by the

[International Longevity Centre - UK](#), has concluded that retirement villages have a major positive impact on the quality of life for older people helping to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. The report surveyed retirement village residents, comparing their results with people living in a community. Findings showed that the average person in a retirement village experiences half the amount of loneliness (12%) than those in the community (23%). Over half (55%) often felt in tune with those around them, and nearly four in five (79%) hardly ever or never felt left out. People living in this type of accommodation also reported a strong sense of control over their daily lives, nearly 10% higher than those living in the community. They also felt secure in their homes, with 97% of respondents agreeing that they felt safe where they lived. The research calls on the government to:

- Identify ways of working with the private sector to stimulate the building of new good quality retirement housing.
- Encourage people in early older age to consider making such a move.
- In light of the new pensions freedoms, consider offering information and advice on such housing opportunities to people who make enquiries into how to manage their retirement finances.

MHA says: it's great to see this research outlining the benefits of the retirement villages. Our 10 year strategy seeks to increase our Retirement Living offer , as part of our commitment to meet with the needs and wants of our ageing population. This information will be useful in promoting MHA's new village communities such as Mickle Hill in Pickering.

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Regulation

In brief:

- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published [A Fresh Start to Registration](#), which summarises changes to registration and its approach to regulation within a five-year strategy from 2016. The document informs people and their families what they deserve to expect when using health and social care services registered with CQC and explains how CQC's registration system aims to protect people from poor care by determining who is able to enter the regulated health and social care market, or by

cancelling or placing conditions on a provider's registration when required. It also outlines upcoming initiatives such as the move to online applications via a Provider Portal.

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Social Care

Care Act

- Laing Buisson have published an analysis of [Care Market Sustainability & the Care Act](#), which considered care home markets and financial implications of the Care Act for 12 sample county councils and unitary authorities, representative of such councils across England. The report finds that increasing under-funding and pressure on council fees over the last five years, have heightened the sustainability risks of care home providers particularly in less affluent areas of the country. In response providers tend to be focusing more on the self-funder market, resulting in fewer places for councils and increasing unaffordability of fees to the councils. Overall, Laing Buisson predict reductions in provider profitability, increasing home closures and insufficient investment in the provision of new capacity being built, resulting in increasing shortages in care home capacity, accelerating over the next ten years. Laing Buisson said that despite deferring parts of the Care Act, councils still face significant challenges in the care of older people, *"Councils still have a new responsibility now, under the Care Act Part 1, for ensuring the sustainability of good quality provision of care services in their local markets. This poses a major challenge for them, especially with funding for social care under such pressure, as it is not easy to be knowledgeable about the market for self-funders with which the fortunes of council placements are so inextricably linked."* The also acknowledge that the report does not include the impact of the proposed National Living Wage but that this would have a further significant impact on the sector.

MHA comments that these are important findings and yet again underline the urgent need for government to find a sustainable long-term solution to the funding of social care and use the Comprehensive Spending Review to find a way to

properly fund local authorities to properly fund social care.

National Living Wage

- In the Emergency Budget in July, the Chancellor announced the introduction of a compulsory Living Wage from April 2016, for the over 25s, starting at £7.20 and raising to £9 per hour by 2020. Several letters from care organisations and representative bodies have been written to the Chancellor outlining the implications for the care sector, including this letter from [Care England](#). The [Low Pay Commission](#) is currently running a consultation on what level the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage should be set at in future years and the impact of a National Living Wage.

In brief:

- The Department of Health has published [One Chance to Get it Right: One Year On Report](#), an overview of progress on commitments made in the response to the Independent Review of the Liverpool Care Pathway. It acknowledges the progress of the CQC in establishing a new inspection regime for end of life care and other organisations in updating guidance and meeting commitments. It also acknowledges “that pockets of poor care still exist. Vigilance and continued commitment across the system will be required to ensure incidents of poor care are minimised, and that every dying person gets the high-quality, genuinely compassionate care they should expect.”

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MHA Policy and Research

This month we have also been undertaking a massive piece of Customer Research covering issues such as ageing, housing and social care, to help inform MHA’s 10 year strategy. We would like to say a big thank you to all the members, residents, volunteers and staff in Live at Home schemes and Care Homes, who have taken the time to talk to us and complete questionnaires.

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Look Ahead

- New Labour Leader announced – 12 September
- Parliamentary recess for Party conferences -17 September to 12 October
- Updated indices of deprivation due to be published - September
- Publication of NICE Home Care Guidance – September

If you have any feedback that will help us improve our MHA Policy news, please tell us - liz.jones@mha.org.uk

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MHA is a charity providing care, accommodation and support services for older people throughout Britain. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for older people, inspired by Christian concern.

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