

Item No. 5.	Classification: Open	Date: 3 October 2018	Meeting Name: Southwark Brexit Panel
Report title:		Brexit - Implications for Adult Social Care	
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Brexit - Implications for Adult Social Care – Introduction

The decision to leave the EU is likely to have major implications for health and social care in England. These relate to:

- The Workforce – The impact of Brexit on the sector’s ability to recruit and retain staff
- The potential for economic downturn and its impact both on the funding of adult social care and on the sector’s cost base
- Loss of funding from and partnership opportunities with the EU
- Continued protection of the rights of disabled people

Workforce

Brexit will impact on the freedom of movement of people working in social care from the EU. The current policy of freedom of movement and mutual recognition of professional qualifications within the EU means that many health and social care professionals currently working in the UK have come from other EU countries.

This includes nearly 62,000 (5.6 per cent)¹ of the English NHS’s 1.2 million workforce and an estimated 95,000 (around 7 per cent)² of the 1.3 million workers in England’s adult social care sector ([NHS Digital 2017](#); [Skills for Care 2017](#)).

A report by [Global Futures](#) finds:

- Ending freedom of movement could lead to 115,000 fewer social care staff by 2026, compared to the number expected if freedom of movement is retained.
- There is currently one care worker for every 3.4 people aged over 75: to keep this ratio the same as the population ages, our care sector will need to employ an additional 380,000 staff by 2026 – but the sector is currently adding just 18,000 British workers a year.
- With new immigration restrictions and without a step-change in social care recruitment, we expect the over- 75 to care worker ratio to hit 4.3 in 2026.

A White Paper setting out the government’s proposals for future immigration policy is due to be published later this year or in early 2018, followed by an immigration bill in early 2018.

The social care sector is already struggling to recruit and retain permanent staff, which has an estimated vacancy rate of 5.4 per cent, rising to 7.7 per cent in domiciliary care services. High turnover is also an issue, with an overall turnover rate of 25.4 per cent (equating to around 300,000 workers leaving their role each year) (Skills for Care 2015).

In Southwark we have discussed this issue at the ASC Provider Forum in April 2018 with providers of bed based services and community-based services such as home care. The views of providers in Southwark are that they are anticipating minimal impact on their workforce as a result of Brexit. This is because those members of their workforce who are foreign nationals are largely from countries outside of the EU. We will be revisiting this issue with providers in October to explore any impact on the supply chain.

Concerns relate not only to the paid workforce, but also to volunteers. Estimates suggest that around 3 million people volunteer in health and social care.

The potential for economic downturn and its impact both on the funding of adult social and on the sector’s cost base

An economic downturn as a consequence of Brexit could lead to the collapse of many providers of services and support for older and disabled people.

Rising inflation is a key risk of a no deal Brexit. This would exacerbate existing cost pressures from the National Living Wage and sleep-in payments for people who rely on essential round the clock care.

A weakened economy could also create more demand for publicly funded social care, which providers would be unable to meet.

Loss of funding from and partnership opportunities with the EU

According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), UK charities received around £300 million from EU funding in 2016/2017. Not being part of the EU means that UK charities will no longer have access to this funding source.

Continued protection of the rights of disabled people

The majority of legislation that has been enacted to protect the rights of disabled people in the UK emanates from the EU; more than 300 EU directives relate solely to disabled people and in particular to their accessibility to jobs and training. The European Union (Withdrawal Act) repeals the European Communities Act 1972 on the day the UK leaves the EU. The Act converts EU law as it stands at the moment of exit into UK domestic law. After Brexit some laws could be amended or repealed and abolished via secondary legislation. Brexit would also remove the possibility for UK citizens to resort to the European Court of Justice if they felt their equality rights had been contravened, and UK citizens would not automatically benefit from future legislative developments.

- **Sources**

No.	Title
1	Brexit: the Implications for Health and Social Care, The Kings Fund
2	100,000 carers missing: how ending free movement could spell disaster for elderly and disabled people., Global Futures
3	Brexit: Risks and rights: How social care can survive Brexit, VODG
4	Securing an EU workforce deal that works for public services – CIPFA