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Invest in the NHS

News from the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Health and Social Care working party highlights the lack of long-term commitment to the NHS and Social Care. The Kings Fund, Nuffield Trust and the Health Care Foundation have written to the leaders of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties in an effort to get a commitment from them in their manifestos for the next general election.  
They are asking for a long term plan to address the underlying causes of the current crisis. Policies that support innovation, boost productivity and provide resources and capacity are needed - the NPC entirely agrees but it has to be the right plan.  
The NHS has been enduring under-investment, and now has insufficient resources to do its job; has fewer hospital beds; outdated equipment, dilapidated buildings and failing IT.  
The publication of the long-term workforce plan can only work if the NHS is a better place to work in, action is taken to retain staff and improve morale. There has been shameful neglect by successive government to the serious reform of adult social care. This is critical for people, families and careers. Funding cuts have led to critical staff shortages, high levels of unmet need and providers struggling to deliver.  
There is a need to prioritise better pay and conditions for care staff and gives people far greater protection against social care costs.  
The NHS often picks up the pieces for those falling between the cracks of a system not fit for purpose. The failing health of the nation is clear with life expectancy stalling and years spent in good health reducing according to where people live.  
NPC believes health is an asset to be invested in. Just think - new findings from Carers UK and the University of Sheffield reveal unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute the value of £445 million a day (£162 billion a year) to the economy - that’s a real investment by volunteer key workers - but they look for support and assistance too!