



Media comment from Faith in Later Life
Thursday 25th July 2019
Immediate Use

On Wednesday afternoon on the steps of Number 10 Downing Street, Prime Minister Boris Johnson committed to 'fixing' the social care crisis.

Prime Minister Johnson said:

My job is to protect you or your parents or grandparents from the fear of having to sell your home to pay for the costs of care and so I am announcing now – on the steps of Downing Street – that we will fix the crisis in social care once and for all with a clear plan we have prepared to give every older person the dignity and security they deserve.

Carl Knightly, Director of Faith in Later Life responded to these comments saying:

As part of his inaugural speech outside 10 Downing Street yesterday, the Prime Minister made a number of statements relating to Health and Social Care Prime, and we welcome these forming part of his first statement as Prime Minister, where he briefly set out some of his vision for how he wants to improve public services.

We noted his commitment to reducing waiting time for a GP appointment as well as committing to commence work upgrading 20 hospitals, and welcome this.

With many across the political spectrum accepting that we are in the midst of a Social Care crisis, and the Prime Minister himself using those words, we welcome his strong statement about protecting people, usually older, from the fear of having to sell their home to pay for the costs of care. And beyond this, we were very encouraged to hear the Prime Minister committing to fix the Social Care crisis. With the continued absence of the Social Care Green Paper, we look forward to seeing a clear plan and overall strategy formulated.

This is a key area of government policy which is only going to grow in importance. The UK's population is set to age significantly over the next decade with the number of people over 65 set to increase by 33 per cent – compared to a mere 2 per cent increase in the number of working age adults – while the number of over 85s will nearly double over the same time period. This will see demand for social care grow at an even faster rate than for the NHS. Failure to do so will not only result in meeting less need for older people, but increasing high-costs of care and greater inefficiencies in the NHS.

Older people have contributed billions to the economy throughout their working lives and also in terms of wider contributions to Society, with many continuing to play a key role in supporting their families by providing childcare, and also by volunteering in the wider community. However, that should not make a difference to the care provision available for any older person. The measure of a Society is how it treats its most vulnerable demographic, and those older and more frail need support and championing by those in a position to effect change.

The Prime Minister finished his comments on Social Care and older people by committing to give every older person the dignity and security they deserve; and we look forward to seeing changes implemented to make that happen.

END

Editors note:

Faith in Later life is a cross charity initiative founded and supported by Pilgrims' Friend Society, London City Mission, the Salvation Army, Keychange and Mission Care (the first and latter two being Christian Care providers).

These Christian charities have 750 years experience between them, and all have a heart for reaching, serving and supporting older people. With an awareness of the rapid acceleration in numbers of older people in the UK (11.9m) and older people all too often being portrayed as a burden, or "written off", Faith in Later Life seeks to inspire and equip Christians and churches to reach, serve and empower older people in every community, that they may know fulfilled and fruitful lives in older age, knowing their true kingdom value.