

Kent County Council Motion on NHS and Social Care Crisis

Address the Challenge - Advocate for Change

Proposer: Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

Seconded: Mr Antony Hook

Background information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:

This Council recognises the urgent and multifaceted challenges currently facing the NHS and social care system. Across the nation, and particularly in Kent and Medway, residents are experiencing significant difficulties in accessing health and care services. Staff recruitment and retention issues, long waiting times, missed targets, and poor health outcomes have become persistent concerns, requiring immediate and coordinated action.

There is a shared understanding that cross-party collaboration is essential to achieve lasting improvements and effective reform in health and social care. Both The King's Fund and the newly appointed Secretary of State for Health and Social Care have acknowledged the positive vision for social care reform proposed by the Liberal Democrats.¹

This Council's attention is drawn to these current issues in health and social care:

- Access and Waiting Times: In August 2025, 36% or 283,000 GP appointments in Kent occurred more than a week after booking, 23 % over two weeks. This delay highlights critical access issues for patients seeking timely medical support.
- Staffing and Funding: Despite growing demand, primary care providers have not received the necessary funding, as a result of the Carr Hill funding formula, to employ additional GPs, resulting in qualified doctors facing potential unemployment and exacerbating staffing shortages.
- Dentistry Crisis: The NHS is facing a national crisis in dentistry, with increasing numbers of practitioners leaving the service, further limiting access to essential dental care. Only 38% of Kent residents were seen by a dentist last year.
- Budgetary Pressures: The Adult Social Care, Children Care and Education budgets are under considerable strain as they strive to deliver savings during 2025/26, especially as demand for these services continues to rise.
- Pressure on Acute Services: Difficulties in accessing primary and community services increase pressure on acute care, such as within Accident & Emergency departments, and undermines the overall health of the population.

¹The Kings Fund (2024). Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/press-releases/response-lib-dem-pledge-reform-social-care-personal-care>

Alongside the challenges outlined above, the Council recognises the potential impact on KCC Officers in Adult, Social Care and Health due to the recent departure of the Director of Adult Social Care.

This motion affirms the Council's collective commitment and determination, across all political groups, to address the crises facing the NHS and social care system. Through cross-party collaboration, strategic funding, and a commitment to reform, Kent County Council aims to ensure that all residents of Kent have access to high-quality, timely, and equitable health and social care services.

Motion

In light of these ongoing challenges, County Council resolves to:

- Recommend that KCC works with relevant partners to form an independently chaired cross party Health and Social Care Kent improvement board to urgently address issues in the CQC inspection, the budget, and the departure of the DASS.
- Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care should write to the Secretary of State to:
 - Confirm this Council's support of joint working at both local and national levels, including through the KCC Health and Wellbeing Board, to establish a long-term agreement on funding and provision of social care.
 - Call for the establishment of a national cross-party commission dedicated to forging a long-term agreement on a predictable and consistent funding model for free personal care, ensuring sustainability and accessibility for all.
 - Support the introduction of an Emergency Health and Care Budget ahead of the Autumn Statement, prioritising the resolution of the national crisis and placing it at the forefront of the new government's agenda.