

Caring for our most vulnerable is getting more expensive

Local authority spending on adult social care in England fell 8% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2016–17, but was protected relative to spending on other local authority services.

[The population has been growing, so spending on adult social services per adult fell by 13.5% in England.](#) This doesn't take into account that the population is ageing, which will have put additional pressure on adult social care services.

Looking forward, funding pressures are only going to grow. The population is getting bigger and older, and expectations are rising along with the costs of meeting them. [Social care is facing high growth in demand pressures](#), which are projected to rise by around £18 billion by 2033–34, at an annual rate of 3.9%. This is a combination of growing and ageing populations, rising numbers of people living longer with long-term conditions, and rising costs of providing care services.

[Central estimates suggest that by 2033–34 there will be 4.4 million more people in the UK aged 65 and over.](#) The number aged over 85 is likely to rise by 1.3 million – that's almost as much as the increase in the entire under-65 population.

How social care costs will be paid for in future, especially given the levels of public debt caused by the Covid-19 response, is an open question.