



Cues for Change

November 2017

Social

Nine out of ten councils face care home place shortfall

A new study warns that 87% of councils risk running out of care home places over the next five years. According to Which?, a shortfall of 42,000 beds will be imminent by 2022 unless more homes are built. Fourteen local authorities face a 25% shortfall - half in London boroughs - and just 20 out of the 150 council areas are on track to keep up with demand. The worst-hit area - Bracknell Forest **in Berkshire - faces a shortfall of 53%, while** Devon will have the largest shortage in terms of the number of beds, with a projected 1,921. Izzi Seccombe, from the Local Government Association, said: "These findings reinforce our warning about the urgent need to reform adult social care and deliver a long-term sustainable solution." Responding to the study a Department of Health spokesman comments: "High quality care isn't just about care home beds - 61% of people are cared for in their own home and since 2010 there has been a growth in home care agencies of more than 3,000 - a 53% increase. We've given local authorities in England an extra £2bn boost over the next three years to maintain access for our growing ageing population and to put the social care sector on a sustainable footing for the future."

**Daily Mail, Page: 12 Daily Mirror, Page: 15 The Times, Page: 27
The Daily Telegraph, Page: 10 Independent I, Page: 23**

Cultural care shift required

Jackie Doyle-Price, the Care Minister, has said that families must learn from ethnic minority communities and take more responsibility for looking after elderly relatives. Speaking at a fringe event organised by the Social Market Foundation at the Conservative conference, Ms Doyle-Price said that solving the care crisis would require a culture shift for every individual as Britain is no longer a society in which neighbours look after those who are struggling.

Surge in elderly becoming homeless

Over a seven year period, the number of elderly people becoming homeless in England has increased by 100%, with 2,420 over-60s registered with their local council last year. Overall homelessness has grown by 42% over the same period, from 41,790 to 59,260. The LGA has warned that based on existing trends, the scale of elderly homelessness is set to double by 2025. Councils want to be able to borrow to invest in new council housing to increase supply, boost home ownership and reduce homelessness. Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Shelter, wants ministers to freeze housing benefit and commit to building more affordable homes.

The Independent The Guardian, Page: 35

Scheme delivers boost for the homeless

Teenager Kieran Evans has become the first person to move into an innovative micro-home offered as part of a project run by the Homeless Foundation that is designed to tackle Britain's homelessness. The Spring Housing Association will manage the home, with the tenant to take responsibility for paying for rent, water bills and food. The Homeless Foundation says such homes, known as iKozies, could be used to house students, young professionals and key workers in areas where there is a housing crisis. Mike Johnson of Worcester City Council **said the authority is "proud to support such an interesting and innovative concept."**

Daily Mail

NHS patients offered 'Airbnb-style' rooms

Start-up company CareRooms is working with trusts and councils in Essex to pair members of the public with patients who have had minor procedures but live alone and need help to recover. In return for up to £1,000 a month, hosts are required to "welcome the patient, cook three microwave meals a day, and offer conversation". The pilot involves Southend University Hospital Foundation Trust, Southend and Castlepoint, Rayleigh and Rochford clinical commissioning groups, **Essex County Council** and **Southend BC**.

The Daily Telegraph The Guardian [BBC News](#) The Times Independent Daily Mail

Calls to protect children in care left without school places

BBC News explores suggestions that some schools are failing in their responsibility to give society's most vulnerable children, those taken into care, places when asked. Politicians from Oxfordshire highlight how more than 30 "looked-after children" in the area have been left without schooling and Lucy Butler, **Oxfordshire County Council's** director of children's services, wants the rules to give looked-after children as much protection in law as those with an education healthcare plan reflecting their special needs.

[BBC News](#)

Millions of Londoners live in poverty

The poorest fifth of London households own just 0.1% of the capital's wealth, according to research by the Trust for London, which notes 58% of those are in working families, up from 44% a decade ago. Mubin Haq, director of policy and grants at Trust for London, says: "Over 2m Londoners are struggling to make ends meet. That's more than the entire populations of Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Newcastle combined."

Evening Standard The Guardian

Technological

Council uses video to replace carers

As part of a trial with Essex Cares Ltd, **Essex County Council** is handing out tablet devices to over 40 pensioners so that they can be engaged with via video chats, rather than receive home care visits. The local authority says this will introduce “a more convenient and less intrusive method of interacting with a care worker, friends and family”, adding: “It will allow our vulnerable adults to live independently, providing them with something accessible from the comfort of their own homes.”

Daily Mirror, Page: 13 The Daily Telegraph, Page: 8 Daily Mail, Page: 4

New Staffordshire crowdfunding site launched

To make it much easier to raise or donate money, the new Crowdfund Staffordshire website, backed by **Staffordshire County Council**, will provide specific space for charities, businesses or individuals from the county to showcase their projects. Gill Heath, the council’s cabinet member for communities, said: “We know that hundreds more groups have great ideas, but need more money to get them off the ground. That’s why we’re really pleased to be launching Crowdfund Staffordshire and help people unlock the power of the crowd.”

Burton Mail

Economic

Staring into the funding abyss

The **Guardian's** Peter Hetherington ponders how councils will survive the funding abyss. He argues that following the inconclusive general election English councils have been left in financial limbo as no one in government can say how authorities will be funded after 2020 when they were all supposed to become self-financing. He also says councils were foolish to believe that George Osborne's plan to hand them control over business rates revenue would help fill gaps in social care as poorer areas with small tax bases would struggle to fund demand. Since that proposal fell in the local government finance bill, Mr Hetherington notes that there has been a "deafening silence" in Whitehall over the fair funding review which was meant to address the practicalities over devolving business rates. He warns that the current situation with no clear direction on rates or funding has left senior council finance officers in despair.

The Guardian

Birmingham City Council failing to set and deliver budget properly

Birmingham City Council's official auditor Grant Thornton has given an "adverse" rating on the city's ability to make and deliver savings following a £49m budget shortfall last year. It is a severe rating and comes after the auditor found a series of 'weaknesses' in the city council's spending and savings plans.

Birmingham Post

'Decades of Government intervention' make people poorer

High taxes, over-regulation and government intervention are making people poorer, according to research by the TaxPayers' Alliance. It says food, housing, childcare, alcohol and transport have all been made more expensive by interventionist policies imposed by successive governments over the decades. The report finds stamp duty and planning regulations have meant renting or buying a home is now not affordable for many people, childcare costs are high compared with other major economies, and energy bills are inflated by "green" taxes accounting for 9% of the average household's annual bill. Fuel duty as a proportion of the price of petrol paid by UK motorists is the highest in the OECD.

Sunday Express, Page: 10

Islington energy company launched

The first London energy supplier run by a council for almost 70 years was launched yesterday. **Islington Council** said it has set-up not-for-profit Angelic Energy to give low income families struggling to pay their bills an alternative to the big six energy companies.

Evening Standard Page: 3

Insolvencies on the rise

Official figures for the third quarter of 2017 show the number of personal insolvencies in England and Wales was 10.6% higher than the previous three-month period at 25,479. It was also a 7.7% increase on the same period last year. More business appear to be suffering financial difficulties too, with underlying corporate insolvencies up by 15% on the previous quarter and by a similar proportion on the same period last year.

[The Times](#)

Social care spending grows

NHS Digital figures show local authorities in England spent £17.5bn on social care for 2016/17, up £566m on the previous year. It was also the first time expenditure has risen in real terms since 2009/10, which was due to councils being able to increase council tax precepts by 2%, bringing in an extra £382m. Local authorities received 1.8m requests for support from new clients last year, while nine in 1,000 people aged 18 to 64, and 58 in 1,000 people aged 65 and over, received long-term support provided or arranged by their council. The number receiving long-term care over the year was 868,000. It has also been revealed that weekly residential and nursing care costs rose last year. The average cost of residential care for someone aged 65 and over cost £565, up from £549 in 2015/16, and the cost of nursing care for the same age group increased to £606 a week from £563.

[Daily Express](#)

Publicly-owned energy minnows taking on Big Six

Three English councils - **Islington**, **Doncaster** and **Portsmouth** - are joining a trend for publicly-owned companies offering competition to the Big Six energy providers. Last week Islington Council in London launched a not-for-profit supplier, while Doncaster's energy company will start early next month. Portsmouth is to become the first Conservative-controlled council to launch its own company. Many local authorities are already running energy companies, including **Nottingham**. Steve Battlemuch, a Labour councillor, said: "Nottingham has a lot of fuel poverty, a lot of people on prepayment meters which people in energy debt are often moved on to. That was what drove us: coming into the market and driving down prices for the customer."

[The Guardian](#)

Earnings down and high street sales crash

The ONS has revealed that wages fell in real terms by 0.4% in the year to April 2017, the first drop in three years. Although wages rose by 2.2% in the year, inflation grew by more, eroding any gains. However, it was not the case for everyone, with the lowest paid 10% of workers and those in some regions such as the East Midlands still seeing real increases. Meanwhile, the CBI has reported that high street sales in October suffered a "steep drop" and are falling at their fastest rate since the height of the recession in 2009, prompting a warning of a "softening" of demand as inflation ate into Britons' spending power.

[BBC News](#) [Financial Times](#) [The Guardian](#) [The Times](#)

IFS flags £20bn hole in public finances

Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows the gap between Government spending and tax receipts will reach £36bn by 2021-22, more than twice the initial £17bn forecast by officials. The think-tank says it leaves Chancellor Philip Hammond in a difficult position ahead of the Budget as he is forced to “both maintain the credibility of his fiscal targets and respond effectively to the growing demands for spending.”

The Guardian The Independent Financial Times

Interest rate hike expected

The Bank of England is expected to lift interest rates on Thursday for the first time in more than a decade. Although the move would add to household costs at a time when wage growth is failing to keep pace with inflation, it will also support the strength of the pound and help to cut inflation.

The Guardian, Page: 20

Civic crowdfunding is privatisation, argues Anna Minton

Writing for the **Guardian**, author Anna Minton explores growing support amongst local authorities for the use of crowdfunding to pay for city projects and asks who it might “leave out”. According to guidelines from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and Spacehive, she notes, **Manchester, Liverpool and Plymouth** councils, **Dorset County Council**, and 16 London boroughs have all used it as a means of raising revenue. Civic crowdfunding is not going to transform the way local government operates, Minton argues, but is part of a patchwork of processes that blurs the lines of accountability and “reflects the wider erosion of representative democracy.”

The Guardian

Environmental

Air pollution to blame for one in 11 deaths

Figures from the European Environment Agency show that almost one in every 11 deaths are caused by air pollution, meaning that Britain has one of the worst health records in Europe for nitrogen dioxide. The report links air pollution to 52,240 deaths in 2014, with 14,050 people dying early because of nitrogen dioxide. Commenting, a Defra spokesperson said a £3bn plan is in place to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions. “We will also end the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2040, and next year we will publish a comprehensive Clean Air Strategy which will set out further steps to tackle air pollution,” they added.

Billions needed to plug funding gaps

A report from the Institute for Government and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy has claimed that plugging funding gaps in critical public services will cost £10bn over the next five years without fixing deep-seated problems. The report says that spending on frontline services has become trapped in a “reactive cycle” of allowing problems to mount until there is a crisis and an injection of emergency cash is the only solution, denying money for “transformative” projects. “If the chancellor and government cannot break out of this cycle they must accept that budgets will rise or services will deteriorate,” the report warns.

The Times

Millions missing bills as finances begin to bite

An estimated 4.1m people are in financial difficulty owing to missed domestic or credit bills, according to a survey of 13,000 people by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which suggests 25.6m consumers could be vulnerable to financial harm. One in six people would be unable to cope with a £50 increase in monthly bills, the regulator warned.

The Sun [BBC News](#) Daily Mail



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