A call from the British Geriatrics Society to the incoming Government

Take six decisions for excellent healthcare and support for older people
Why the incoming Government must act

Healthcare and support services are struggling to cope with flat funding to the NHS, reduced social care funding and increased demand for services. The health and care system is not geared to meet the needs of its core user group – older people with multiple long-term conditions.

There is a pressing imperative for healthcare and support services to become fit for purpose. Government needs to act and to lead this change.

The British Geriatrics Society (BGS) is therefore calling on the incoming Government to take six key decisions to promote excellent healthcare and support for older people.

Decision 1:  End the divide between health and social care

The BGS supports the Barker Commission recommendation that those whose needs are currently defined as ‘critical’ should receive free social care. We call on the incoming Government to end the divide between health and social care for those at the highest level of need.
Decision 2: **Build capacity in Intermediate Care**

Currently there is a 50 per cent deficit in the capacity of intermediate care (i.e. community services providing a link between home and acute hospital for older people who need rehabilitation, re-ablement or sub-acute treatment). The BGS calls on the incoming Government to build the capacity of intermediate care and double the annual spend from £2 million to £4 million per 100,000 population.

Decision 3: **Invest adequately in healthcare and social support for older people**

The BGS calls on the incoming Government to provide sufficient funding to the NHS to achieve the goals of the Five Year Forward View, and to local authorities to enable them to meet their social care obligations, including those to older people.

Decision 4: **Provide national strategic direction on older people living with frailty, dementia, complex needs and multiple long-term conditions**

The BGS is calling on the incoming Government to highlight in future Mandates to the NHS, the needs of older people living with frailty, dementia, complex needs and multiple long-term conditions for expert, multidisciplinary, co-ordinated care. Specifically, the Mandate should set out expectations of the NHS with regard to older people’s access to comprehensive geriatric assessment, personalised care plans for treatment and long-term follow-up.
Decision 5: **Support staff across all care sectors to develop competencies in the management of older patients**

One of the keys to the equitable and safe care of older people is the assurance that those caring for them – doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, care attendants and others – have the right knowledge, training, skills and values to deliver the right type of care for this group. The BGS calls on the incoming Government to require the regulatory and advisory bodies to incorporate competencies in the management of older people in their curricula, guidance, professional and quality standards.

Decision 6: **Measure the dimensions of care that matter to older people and their families**

Outcome measures should incentivise commissioners and providers to focus on services and dimensions of care that matter to older people and their carers; and that make a difference to their quality of care and the outcomes of care received. The BGS calls on the incoming Government to ensure that future reviews of the NHS Outcomes Framework address current deficits in the measurement of older people’s experience of care pathways, access to a continuum of care and care outcomes; and to ensure that new outcome measures are developed to close those gaps.