

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW HOPE FOR SOCIAL CARE

The Resolution Foundation is delighted to welcome Phil Hope to his new appointment in the Department of Health with responsibility for social care.

Elevating social care to a Minister of State responsibility reflects what the Foundation witnessed at Party Conferences – that a brighter future for older people is high up the political agenda.

The Foundation held a fringe event at each conference with IPPR and Norwich Union: *the Care Crunch – creating a brighter future for older people*, where the Foundation shared recent polling results¹:

- We asked which one issue would win their vote at the next general election with 31% of those polled choosing the well-being of older people - by far the largest single issue²
- Broken down by age half of the over 45s surveyed identified it as their political priority and;
- 58% of the over 55s

Sue Regan, Chief Executive at the Foundation said:

“I am pleased that the Government has elevated the importance of social care for older people with the appointment of Phil Hope as Minister of State. Ivan Lewis worked hard to get long-term care up the agenda and Phil Hope will now be able to build on this with the expected Green Paper in early 2009.”

She added:

“Our research has shown that as our society ages it is crucial that we fix the long-term care system before the care crunch hits, particularly for the 3 million older low earners – the not rich, not poor - who are often squeezed out in the current system. Our recent polling shows that to win the over 45s vote at the next election, the Parties need to ensure that the reform of long-term care is top of their manifesto commitments.”

The Foundation has been working on the issue of social care for older people since the New Year³. It is set to hold its second round of Expert Groups at the end of October which will respond to the Foundation’s Research and Policy development work. The Foundation’s policy scoping report is set to be published in December.

Previously a poll⁴ for the Foundation found that three quarters of people view the reform of long-term care as equal to or more important than key NHS reforms:

- 73% said they viewed long-term care as equal to or more important than improving hospitals
- 78% said they viewed long-term care as equal to or more important than improving the provision of dental services
- 77% said they viewed long-term care as equal to or more important than extending GP opening hours

The Resolution Foundation also found that low earners are squeezed by the current system, facing particular challenges compared to people on *both* higher and lower incomes - they are too 'rich' to qualify automatically for free state care and too 'poor' to cope with care costs.

Key findings:

- Low earners are more likely to have experience of the care system – they are 25% more likely to be carers.
- Low earners say they find the system complex, inaccessible, and unfair.
- Low earners' primary source of wealth is their home, often having limited savings.
- 72% of low earners have levels of wealth that can exclude them from free care.
- However, low earners are more likely than average to believe that the individual, other than the very poor, should be making a contribution to their care costs.

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All the Foundation's research, reports, briefings, seminar notes are available on our website www.resolutionfoundation.org

Notes to editor:

1. The Poll was carried out for the Resolution Foundation by YouGov, fieldwork was carried out on 15-17th September 2008. Sample size: 1964.

2. This was compared to:

- helping first time buyers 12%
- helping the unemployed 11%
- children's welfare 9%

3. The Foundation's work to date includes:

- Lost: low earners and long-term care
 - A to Z: mapping long-term care markets
 - July Expert Groups write-up
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4. Over 2000 UK adults were polled in December 2007. The poll explored people's level of understanding and perceptions of the quality and affordability of the elderly care system, and it asked them how they would be prepared to contribute to their care costs and also resolve the wider funding shortage.