# England urged to adopt Japanese-style health MOTs to tackle soaring social care costs



England faces an escalating adult social care crisis marked by surging costs and growing demand, prompting calls for innovative preventative strategies to transform the system. A recent report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) advocates for the introduction of Japanese-style health "MOTs"—automatic, comprehensive health and social care assessments—for all adults turning 65. This early intervention model, already established in Japan, is designed to identify care needs proactively and provide tailored support, helping older adults maintain independence while reducing costly reliance on residential care.

The IPPR's proposal comes amid a backdrop of rising financial strain on local authorities, with adult social care costs hitting £23.3 billion in 2023/24. The think tank stresses that shifting towards prevention and early support not only improves quality of life for older people but could also ease pressure on care services and public finances over the long term. Japan's approach, where older adults are automatically assessed for a range of home-based and medical support managed by community care specialists, results in half the care home population compared to the UK despite having an older demographic. The IPPR report also outlines broader reforms, including investment in community centres and exercise programmes to promote health, better training for carers, and a cap on care costs backed by more central government funding.

These recommendations echo the longstanding concerns and proposals of Sir Andrew Dilnot, who chaired the 2010 Commission on Funding of Care and Support. Dilnot’s influential 2011 report recommended capping individuals’ lifetime care costs to protect families from catastrophic expenses and raising the means test threshold to provide fairer access to social care. However, the implementation of these reforms has encountered repeated delays and setbacks. Recently, Labour's government scrapped plans for an £86,000 cap on care costs, a move Dilnot criticised as yet another example of social care reform being sidelined amid political and fiscal challenges.

Dilnot, speaking to various outlets, has emphasised the urgent need to move beyond protracted reviews and set out immediate policy actions. He warned of a "yawning and indefensible gap" in social care welfare and called for a national conversation involving all political parties to deliver a fair, affordable National Care Service. Experts highlight that the current fragmented system leads to inconsistent eligibility and variable quality of care across different council areas, underscoring the case for a unified, nationally coordinated framework.

The Government has acknowledged the scale of the challenge and is conducting a review through the Independent Commission into Adult Social Care, chaired by Baroness Casey, with an initial report expected next year and longer-term reforms phased in over a decade. Officials have signalled commitment to a 10-year health plan focusing on shifting healthcare towards prevention, earlier diagnosis, and supporting healthier lifestyles. However, social care leaders remain concerned about the slow pace of reform, with some critical of the protracted timeline extending to 2036 for full implementation.

In essence, the adult social care crisis in England demands a combination of early intervention, better funding structures, workforce development, and systemic reform. Adopting frameworks like Japan’s health MOTs offers a compelling model for prevention-focused care that could enhance wellbeing for older adults and create a more sustainable system. Yet, bridging the gap between policy ambitions and practical delivery remains an urgent challenge for government and society alike.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html), [[3]](https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/adult-social-care-england-what-next), [[4]](https://www.covermagazine.co.uk/news/2149900/dilnot-commission-key-recommendations), [[5]](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/31/scrapping-cap-on-care-costs-another-example-of-social-care-being-tossed-aside-says-reform-architect/), [[7]](https://www.newstatesman.com/spotlight/healthcare/social-care/2024/10/andrew-dilnot-social-care-is-an-insurance-problem)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html), [[5]](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/31/scrapping-cap-on-care-costs-another-example-of-social-care-being-tossed-aside-says-reform-architect/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/18/grow-up-and-talk-about-social-care-andrew-dilnot-tells-labour-and-tories)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html), [[4]](https://www.covermagazine.co.uk/news/2149900/dilnot-commission-key-recommendations), [[5]](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/31/scrapping-cap-on-care-costs-another-example-of-social-care-being-tossed-aside-says-reform-architect/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/18/grow-up-and-talk-about-social-care-andrew-dilnot-tells-labour-and-tories)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/health-checks-adult-social-care-b2777796.html> - A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) suggests that implementing Japanese-style health MOTs for individuals turning 65 could alleviate England's adult social care crisis. This preventative approach aims to enhance the quality of life for older adults and potentially reduce care home admissions. The IPPR highlights the 'spiralling costs' of adult social care, with local authorities facing a £23.3 billion bill in 2023/24, and advocates for early intervention to improve outcomes for older people.
3. <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/adult-social-care-england-what-next> - The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) examines the future of adult social care in England, discussing the recommendations of the Dilnot Commission, which proposed a cap on lifetime care costs and a more generous means test. The IFS notes that while the Care Act 2014 legislated for these reforms, their implementation has been delayed indefinitely, highlighting the ongoing challenges in reforming the adult social care system.
4. <https://www.covermagazine.co.uk/news/2149900/dilnot-commission-key-recommendations> - The Dilnot Commission's 2011 report, 'Fairer Care Funding', recommended capping individuals' lifetime contributions to social care costs at £35,000 and increasing the means-tested threshold from £23,250 to £100,000. These proposals aimed to protect individuals from catastrophic care costs and provide more equitable access to care services. Despite legislative efforts, the implementation of these reforms has faced significant delays.
5. <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/07/31/scrapping-cap-on-care-costs-another-example-of-social-care-being-tossed-aside-says-reform-architect/> - Sir Andrew Dilnot, the architect of the 2011 social care reforms, expressed disappointment over the government's decision to scrap the planned £86,000 cap on care costs. He described the move as 'another example of social care being tossed aside' and emphasised the need for action to protect families from high care costs. The cap was intended to limit the amount individuals would have to pay towards their social care support.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/18/grow-up-and-talk-about-social-care-andrew-dilnot-tells-labour-and-tories> - Sir Andrew Dilnot urged political parties to engage in a serious discussion about social care reform, criticising the lack of attention to the issue in election manifestos. He highlighted the urgent need for action to address the crisis in care places, staffing, and funding, and called for a national conversation to develop a fair and affordable National Care Service.
7. <https://www.newstatesman.com/spotlight/healthcare/social-care/2024/10/andrew-dilnot-social-care-is-an-insurance-problem> - In an interview with the New Statesman, Sir Andrew Dilnot discussed the challenges facing the social care system, describing it as an 'insurance problem'. He highlighted the need for a more generous means test, a cap on lifetime care costs, and the continuation of universal disability benefits. Dilnot also emphasised the importance of a national eligibility framework to address variability in care provision across different council areas.