

Doorsteps in Wokingham and Earley

In recent days when canvassing with teams in Earley and Wokingham I have been asked about a number of issues related to social care. Much of our local provision is excellent, but there are problems for some in getting access to all the care and support they need locally.

The Conservative Manifesto rightly acknowledges that more money needs to be made available to improve and strengthen social care. I want to see Wokingham and West Berkshire get their fair share of the increases and spend the money well to deal with people who currently want more or better support.

The Manifesto also says a Conservative government would work to find a cross party consensus on reform of social care funding for the elderly, as any changes need to be agreed beyond party so they are likely to remain for several Parliaments. The big issue is what care should be made available free at the point of need under the NHS pledges, and what if any should continue to be paid for by the individual themselves as part of their living costs for food and shelter. All parties in government in the past three decades have kept the same policy toward care home costs. There is a sense of injustice about that policy over payments. If an elderly person goes into a care home their home or other assets have to be sold to pay the bills, whereas an elderly person who has no home to sell and no savings is rightly given a free care home place. All parties now say they wish to change the current policy, so it should be possible to work towards some improved consensus.