

## HL: Independent Commission on Adult Social Care

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See the full transcript [here](#)

### Introduction and Context

The House of Lords considered the work and remit of the newly created Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, chaired by Baroness Casey. The central concern was whether the Commission would give sufficient attention to **working-age adults** with disabilities and long-term needs, whose voices are often overshadowed by the dominant focus on older people. Members pressed the government to ensure that the Commission is inclusive, forward-looking, and connected to both local government and wider employment and housing systems.

### Terms of Reference and Working-Age Adults

Lord Harper (Con) opened by asking how Ministers would guarantee that the Commission considers the needs of **working-age disabled adults**. He stressed that while debates naturally focus on older people, “**almost half of public expenditure on long-term care is on those of working age.**” He called for a system that integrates social care with employment support and benefits, enabling people “to live as independently as possible and work where they are able to.”

Baroness Blake (Lab), replying for the government, confirmed this was already explicit in the Commission’s terms of reference. She emphasised that Lady Casey is tasked with considering **older people’s care and support for working-age disabled adults separately, recognising that services meet different needs**. Blake added: “Enabling people to get back into the workplace and stay there is absolutely critical. The most important thing about the review... is that it will be inclusive.”

### Local Government and Domiciliary Care

Lord Rook (Lab) raised concerns about **domiciliary care** and the financial pressures on councils. He asked how the Commission would engage with local government. Blake responded by stressing Lady Casey’s long history of partnership with councils, from her early work on ASBOs to troubled families: “She has a very strong and clear understanding of the local government sector, and it will be fundamental... that this engagement is profound.” She reassured peers that the Local Government Association would “make its voice very loudly heard.”

### Choice, Housing and Supported Living

Baroness Monckton of Dallington Forest (Con), drawing on her work with Team Domenica, raised concerns about the **closure of intentional communities** by the CQC. Parents, she said,

wanted options beyond supported living. “Does the Minister agree that choice of where to live is just as important for people with learning disabilities as it is for the rest of the population?” Blake agreed, broadening the point to housing more generally: “Housing is a critical factor in the ability to thrive, to live independently and to move forward, but it is also about place and making sure that everyone has the opportunity to live near their supporters around them.”

### **Attitudes, Transition and Young People**

Lord Laming (CB) warned against writing off young disabled people as unemployable: “The focus has been on what they cannot do, rather than concentrating on what they would be enabled to do with the right kind of support.” He urged a shift in attitudes to be “more positive, creative and supportive.” Blake highlighted the critical **transition from school to adulthood**, warning that this is where “the gaps occur.” She underlined government commitment to ensuring “every young person has the opportunity to thrive, whatever their background, whatever their health needs.”

### **Fulfilment, Technology and Quality of Life**

Baroness Burt of Solihull (LD) argued that adult social care should aim not just at survival but at enabling “as good indeed as gloriously ordinary a life as possible.” She highlighted the importance of supporting both day-to-day needs and the “things that give them individual pleasure.” Blake agreed, pointing to “an interesting and exciting phase” of new technologies and digital tools that can enhance communication and independence, stressing that “everyone deserves to have access to those opportunities.”

### **Employment, Entrepreneurship and Community Support**

Lord Kamall (Con) expanded the focus on work by raising **entrepreneurship**. He highlighted organisations such as **Purple Shoots** and **Trust Leeds**, which offer microloans and mentoring to disabled people starting businesses. **One wheelchair user, he noted, had taken themselves and eight others off benefits through entrepreneurship**. He urged the government to secure funding for such schemes. Blake acknowledged the importance of community-based organisations, linking this to the **NHS 10-year plan’s emphasis on shifting resources into communities** and promising to raise the funding issue with colleagues.

### **Caring Responsibilities of Disabled People**

Baroness Pitkeathley (Lab) reminded peers that **many working-age disabled adults are also carers themselves**, supporting relatives who would otherwise receive no formal care. She urged that reforms account for these dual roles. Blake agreed, stressing that “we should never make any assumptions about people and their responsibilities,” and pledged to continue improving support for carers, especially unpaid carers.



## Conclusion

Peers across the House welcomed the establishment of the Commission and praised Lady Casey's leadership. The debate underscored several priorities: **ensuring working-age adults are given equal focus alongside older people, strengthening links with local government and domiciliary care, preserving choice in housing and community living, supporting transitions into adulthood, embracing technology, and valuing entrepreneurship and caring roles.**

The Minister reiterated that the government's aim is a **social care system fit for the future**, inclusive of all voices and needs, with interim findings expected in 2026 and a second phase by 2028.