Taking a stand for the frail and the elderly in our society

Bupa’s vision of aged care

Longer, healthier, happier lives
The world is ageing: ‘When I’m 64’

Back in 1966, when the Beatles recorded a song about getting older, they called it ‘When I’m 64’. Half a century later, most of us would see that as late middle age, rather than old age, and if Paul McCartney wrote the same song now as an active 70-something, he’d no doubt talk about being 84, not 64.

That extra 20 years is a measure of how far we’ve come. Major advances in medical science and new treatments for previously incurable conditions mean our life expectancy is rising, and most people in developed countries can now look forward to living into their eighties. For many, this is an extraordinary gift. But living longer doesn’t always mean living well. People over 80 are more likely to live with at least one chronic condition and sometimes several, and the risk of dementia increases with age — 2-3% of people aged 65-69 have some form of the disease, but that rises to 30-35% after the age of 90.

Bupa’s purpose is longer, healthier, happier lives, and we have made the care of older people one of our key priorities and part of our Bupa 2020 vision. In tackling some of the toughest challenges in health and care we are taking a stand for the frail and the elderly in society — we want to play an active role in ensuring that living longer will also mean living well for most people. In this document we look at how Bupa is innovating to face the challenges of an ageing population, what we’re already doing to improve the care we deliver, what we’re learning from different parts of the world, and how our learning can enhance the quality of life for individuals and reduce the cost for society as a whole.

“No other aged care operator has the scale and the international presence we have. We want to build on that by leading the way on good practice, advocacy, new thinking, and every aspect of aged and dementia care.”

Stuart Fletcher, CEO, Bupa
More people to care for, and more people living with dementia

According to figures from the UN, the number of older people has tripled in the last 50 years, and will triple again over the next 50. In 1950, there were less than 14 million people worldwide over the age of 80; by 2000 that number had risen to 77 million, and by 2050 it will be nearly 400 million.

Although the world’s population will also increase during that period, it won’t be anything like as fast — the rise in the number of older people is likely to be more than three times faster than that of the population as a whole. For example, the number of people aged 80 or over is rising twice as fast as those over 60. As the number of elderly people rises, the proportion living with dementia will also go up, increasing from around 46.8 million worldwide today, to 131.5 million by 2050.

There’s no question that the need for aged care is accelerating — the question is how best to provide it: what type of care it should be, where it should be delivered, and how it can be adequately paid for.

We passionately believe we can make an even bigger contribution. Our vision for aged care is to provide better outcomes for older people and their families, the people who care for them, and wider society.

At the heart of this is our pioneering ‘Person First’ approach, which is especially important for older people and those living with dementia.

The ‘Person First’ approach looks at the individual in the round, including their general health, the other conditions they may have, and who they are — their life story, their personality, and ‘what makes them them’. We’re putting that approach into practice in our own care homes, retirement villages, and aged care services across the world. And we’re also working more widely to raise awareness of the needs of older people; to support those who look after them, both professionals and families; and to use our expertise, our international presence, and our brand to promote healthy and happy ageing for all.

Making a positive contribution to older people, their families, carers and wider society

Speaking up for older people and those living with dementia

Bupa’s purpose is *longer, healthier, happier lives*. Our vision for 2020 is to help millions more people around the world achieve that goal, by harnessing the passion and commitment of our own people.

With no shareholders, we can take a longer and wider view, focussing our energy and resources for the benefit of our customers, our people, and society at large, and using the profits we make to provide more and better health and care, fulfilling our purpose and making a big impact on the world’s health.

We are proud to be advocates for older people, who are a dynamic and diverse group with very different needs. They still have an important contribution to make, and their worth and wisdom should be more highly valued.

**Influencing policy and working in partnership**

Our advocacy for older people includes public policy work and raising public awareness of their needs. We also support charities and NGOs who work in this field, both at a global level and in the four countries where we deliver aged care services and have residential homes.

We are working with Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), the global federation of Alzheimer’s associations around the world, which advises both the UN and the World Health Organization on the condition. ADI and its members have been our international partners since 2013, and we have been supporting its member organisations on a national and local level for many more years. This includes everything from fund-raising for the Alzheimer’s associations at individual care homes, to sponsoring ADI World Alzheimer’s reports, which are an authoritative source of data about the prevalence of the disease, and best practice in dementia care across the world.
A second strand is our support for ADI’s public policy work — they want every government worldwide to have a specific dementia strategy, and this has been achieved in 21 countries so far, including England, Wales and Scotland, Denmark, Finland, France, South Korea, the USA, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium.

A good example of our public policy work with ADI is the Global Dementia Charter. This takes the key elements that should be at the heart of every dementia strategy and puts them into accessible language with a human dimension. The central idea is ‘living well with dementia’, and the Charter sets out the rights everyone affected by the condition should have, from the right to have access to diagnosis, information and care, to the right to dignity as an individual and respect for their wishes. The Charter has been adopted across all our aged care businesses, and also in other countries through ADI. It represents the voices of people living with dementia because, we believe that these people should play as full a part as possible in the decisions made about their treatment and care. In other words, as ADI often say, ‘nothing about us, without us’.

“`We need to think differently about the elderly and frail — it’s something we will all face. These are people who have been loved, and should feel they still are.”’

Domènec Crosas, General Manager, Sanitas Residencial
Local action in countries where Bupa provides aged care services

Speaking up in Australia

In Australia, we played a key role in the development of the government’s ‘Living Longer, Living Better’ reforms, which are being phased in over the next few years. Our aim was to ensure that the aged care sector remains financially viable for the long term, which is just as important for older people, as it is for the operators in the sector. Now the reforms are taking effect, we’ve established an independent panel of accredited financial advisers who can help people understand the new system, and make the best decisions about how they fund care for themselves or their loved ones, whether they’re Bupa members or not. Partly as a result of this, the accountancy profession has now incorporated aged care advice into their professional training, which is an important step forward. Our Managing Director also sits on the Aged Care Sector Committee, the government’s foremost advisory committee for Australian aged care policy development.

We’re also members of Alzheimer’s Australia, supporting them in various ways with fundraising and public education. The Bupa Health Foundation worked with them in 2011 to launch the free ‘BrainyApp’, the world’s first dementia risk reduction app designed to help people monitor and improve their brain and heart health. It was number one in the App Store’s free apps chart within 24 hours of its launch, with over 120,000 downloads in the first week.

A resident in one of our care homes in Australia, enjoying a game of chess.
Speaking up in New Zealand
In New Zealand, our residents and their carers told us they wanted us to be active advocates for those who can no longer speak up for themselves, and we’re proud to do that. A number of our senior managers are advisors to government departments and health bodies. For example, Jan Adams, our Director of Nursing, Quality and Risk, advises the Health Quality and Safety Commission on issues such as the prevention of falls. She also sits on the Aged Care Residential Care National Steering group and is a member of the National Governance Committee for interRAI New Zealand (the nursing system the government uses for the care of vulnerable people). Like other governments around the world, the New Zealand administration wants the voice of the consumer to be heard.

This is a new approach, as it’s not how the public sector has conventionally been run. We have useful know-how to offer on this, and we think we can help reform the system for everyone’s benefit. We can also learn from this sort of participation, so it’s a two-way process. Our partnership with the Waikato District Health Board is a good example — we’re working together to develop best clinical and management practice for healthy ageing.

We have a long-standing partnership with Alzheimer’s New Zealand, supporting them to raise the profile of the condition and educate people about the importance of dementia-friendly environments.

Another key collaboration is with Carers New Zealand. There are 260,000 people caring for a loved one at home in New Zealand, and we’re helping the charity to press the government for more funding and support. We’re also helping employers and businesses acknowledge and accommodate carers in the workplace. This work is starting with a piece of research in 2015, and we hope to use what we’ve done inside Bupa as a practical example of what other organisations can do. Another partner is Arthritis New Zealand, which gives advice and education sessions in our retirement villages and in the community.
Speaking up in the UK
We play an active part in the development of dementia policy in the UK, including supporting the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge. Our Global Director of Dementia Care, Professor Graham Stokes, co-chairs the Dementia Action Alliance, which brings together health bodies, charities, businesses and community groups to take practical action to enable people to live well with dementia. Professor Stokes was also involved in the G8 event in Tokyo in 2014, where the G8 countries came together to shape an effective international agenda for dementia.

There are many challenges in the UK system of aged care, and our experience in other countries suggests that a more integrated approach would be better for elderly people — one based on outcomes and needs rather than simply numbers of beds.

This can only be delivered by a framework that brings together both social care, which is paid for by local government, and the National Health Service, financed by central taxation. There is a similar gap between the primary care provided in the community, and the secondary care provided mostly in NHS hospitals. Trusted operators of residential homes can provide an invaluable bridge between these different systems, giving people a safe place to go for day care, community services, and rehabilitation, which will in turn free up acute hospital beds and save money for the NHS.

We're working closely with Age UK on all aspects of ageing. Age UK believes — as we do — that it’s never too late or too early to start thinking about ageing well, and we see many opportunities to work together, whether that’s through information online, or by tackling the social isolation many older people feel. Our two-year partnership aims to raise £1m for the charity. We’re also supporting the UK’s International Longevity Centre in their policy and advocacy work, and the development of more innovative ideas about the whole question of ageing, from health to pensions.

We're a supporter of the Alzheimer's Society’s campaign to encourage people to become Dementia Friends, and we're actively promoting this to our employees. Another important collaboration is with Dementia UK, who accredits the specialist ‘Admiral’ Nurses who care for people with dementia and support their families.

Of the 150 ‘Admiral’ Nurses in the UK, eight work in Bupa care homes, and combine this with a role in the wider community. We are also supporting the Scottish government’s Dementia Ambassadors programme, which is a key element of their policy to improve the skills of those working with people living with dementia. We will be creating 150 Ambassadors in our Scottish care homes, which mean three for every home — more than any other provider.

Our UK care home colleagues take pride in keeping residents’ spirits high.
Speaking up in Spain
In Spain, our Sanitas business is helping to shape the care system, and raise awareness of the challenges it faces. We recently had a joint meeting with the Spanish Confederation of Associations of Families living with Dementia (CEAFA) at the Commission of Health and Social Affairs at the Spanish Parliament. We explained why we think it’s so important to have a national dementia plan, and gained support from all the parliamentary groups. We’ll keep working to ensure that the rights of the people living with dementia and their families are taken into account.

We’re also working with CEAFA on the new Cuidar Bien (or ‘care well’) website, which we’ve developed to provide help and advice for informal carers across the country. We also work with CEOMA (the Spanish Confederation Organisation for the Elderly), who are accrediting homes that have abolished the use of physical restraints. We’ve been one of the pioneers of this approach in Spain. Our partnership with the Maria Wolff Foundation is helping us develop more effective training programmes for all our employees, no matter what role they have in the company, so that we can care for people living with dementia even better.
Supporting people who care

This is really important to us. Recruiting high-quality professionals to work in aged care is a challenge in most countries around the world.

Looking after people who are highly dependent can be both physically and emotionally demanding, and as such we are passionately committed to providing support and training to our employees. The sector also tends to be seen as a less attractive career option for nurses. This is partly because there has traditionally been little advanced training in this area, and partly because it lacks the ‘prestige’ of hospital-based specialisms like acute care, cancer or paediatrics.

Some of these issues we can influence, and we are doing so. We’re investing significantly in training and development, both for nurses and for carers — our Graduate Nurse Leadership Programme in Australia is a great example, providing a clear route from nurse in charge, to care manager, to general manager. We’re also working to change the public image of working in aged care. This is more of an issue in some countries than others: in Spain, the standing of aged care work is relatively high, but that’s not the case in the UK.

One of the things that we’re doing to change this is to pioneer a new career path, which gives nurses in the UK the chance to develop their clinical and leadership skills and achieve their full potential. We think the people who work in aged care deserve greater acknowledgment, not least from those who lead the healthcare professions.

Carers aren’t just those who work in the sector, of course, they’re also those who look after family members at home. We’re expanding the support we offer to all informal carers — including those who are not Bupa members. We’re turning some of our homes into community ‘hubs’, where carers can get support and services, and connect with others in the same position. We’re also setting up online portals for carers, with both the ‘Cuida Bien’ website in Spain and the ‘Blue Room’ site in Australia. These sites give families access to help and advice, and an online community to support them, because we think it’s important they care for themselves, as well as their loved ones.

Focus: Supporting carers in Spain through ‘Cuida Bien’

Cuida Bien (www.cuida bien.es) means ‘care well’, and it’s the name of our online portal for carers in Spain. Launched by the Sanitas Foundation in 2015, it provides advice and information from healthcare professionals and a community of support for those taking care of a loved one at home. It’s targeted at people who have to look after older people but also have other responsibilities, such as work and children, helping them to ‘care well’ for themselves as well as their family.

It’s not always talked about very much, but we know carers can have some quite significant medical and emotional problems. The ‘Cuida Bien’ website offers information as about issues like stress, and tips about relaxing and managing energy levels. It also provides advice on managing the different stages of dementia provided by experts in the field.

What we do in the community, we also want to do for our own employees. We offer our people the same support we give to other informal carers, and a range of specific services such as advice helplines and support for anyone caring for either children or older dependent relatives. There are also a number of Bupa healthy lifestyle initiatives which can help them cope with the stress of being a carer.

“There are amazing people working in our homes, whose passion, compassion and commitment is inspiring and humbling, but in some countries the strains on the system are such that it relies on extraordinary people going the extra mile, and not just some of the time — all of the time.”

Julie Stephens, People Director, Bupa Care Services UK
Promoting healthy ageing and reducing risk

As Dr Paul Zollinger-Read, our Chief Medical Officer, says: “Ageing is only a problem if you are unhealthy”.

The question then, is how best to age healthily. It is about living well, whatever your age — exercising regularly, eating sensibly, not smoking, drinking in moderation. But as we age, some of these factors grow in importance and others come to the forefront. Research by Alzheimer’s Disease International, supported by Bupa1, suggests that up to 15% of dementia cases could be preventable, by addressing specific risk factors such as sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and high blood pressure.

Likewise smokers are 40% more likely to develop dementia, and keeping mentally as well as physically active seems to offer some protection. Reducing the risk factors for dementia also helps with other conditions as well, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, and it’s people in their 30s and 40s who need to start addressing these risks.

The role of workplaces

With almost half the world’s population in employment, and people staying in work for longer than ever before, we believe that using the workplace to encourage people to be healthier could help transform the health of the world. It’s easier to reach large numbers of people at the same time through workplace initiatives, and the multiplier effect back to families and friends is very high. This is why we are putting so much effort into workplace health programmes.

We’ve created a new network bringing together the Chief Medical Officers of nearly 40 international companies, from a range of sectors including technology, pharmaceuticals, financial services, and consumer goods. It’s a way to connect with more than five million employees as well as their families and the first initiatives are being rolled out in the course of 2015. These will be based on the four ‘pillars’ of physical activity, nutrition, quitting smoking, and healthy minds. Physical activity will be the first to go live, with an exercise-based competition for all the companies in the network.

Workplace support is also especially relevant for the ‘sandwich generation’ who are not only bringing up children but looking after older relatives as well. It’s no surprise that many carers struggle to find the time to look after themselves, and employers need to be able to respond more flexibly and sensitively. For example, Sanitas is running events for the Chief Medical Officers and HR directors of their corporate customers, to help them build awareness about dementia in their workplaces, and support employees who are also informal carers.

There’s also work to be done to help older people in the workplace too. In many countries it’s now illegal to discriminate against employees on the grounds of age, but there’s no similar protection for those living with the early stages of dementia, as there would be for a physical disability. Although there are some jobs that are clearly unsuitable because of the risk, there are many where someone with the first symptoms of dementia can remain productive. Employers can do far more to make the workplace more dementia-inclusive, allowing employees to stay mentally as well as physically active for longer, and continue to make a contribution. Early diagnosis is key here, so that the early symptoms can be identified for what they really are, and the progressive nature of the disease managed and monitored.

Five things could make all the difference

With just a few small changes you may be able to reduce your risk of dementia.

1. Eat healthily
2. Look after your heart
3. Keep your mind active
4. Socialise
5. Exercise regularly
