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In response to the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's plans for a safer 7 day dementia service

Brooke, Joanne (2016) In response to the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's plans for a safer 7 day dementia service. Journal of Dementia Care 24(3).

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In response to the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's plans for a safer 7 day dementia service:

Dr Joanne Brooke

Jeremy Hunt's recent announcement for a safer 7 day dementia service outlines some basic principles to improve dementia care, none of which are new, but are these principles realistic in the current climate of the NHS and does it address the real issues of providing safer care for people with dementia? I suggest not. Patients with dementia often have admissions to acute hospitals that are unavoidable, which highlights the lack of care in the community, possibly due to cuts in the social care budget. Patients with dementia have longer lengths of stay and are more likely to die in hospital than patients without dementia, this is because they are also older, frailer and have complex comorbidities. The focus on reducing hospital stay by a consultant review once a day every day of the week, does not address the issues of care provided by the multidisciplinary team or the difficulty in accessing community intermediate care, again due to cuts in the social care budget. The National Dementia Strategy in 2009 raised all of these issues and the need to develop of an adequately staffed and trained workforce across both health and social care sectors to provide safer dementia services.