

2 May 2005

BUPA ICM SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS THE ELECTION'S FORGOTTEN VOTERS

A BUPA ICM poll reveals that the nation's half-a-million care home residents, are the most likely to vote, but most likely to be ignored by politicians.

According to the national survey more than two-thirds of care home residents intend to cast their ballot (67 percent), compared with just 53 percent of the overall population.

However there has been a failure by MPs to contact them. In fact only three percent of this important pool of voters have seen or heard from their MP since the last election.

Peter Ludford, BUPA's Director of Care Homes said: "For the first time the voting views of the country's care home residents have been documented. It's hugely important that this normally invisible population has a voice. 500,000 people live in long-term care - they have a right to be heard and the country's politicians should listen to them."

This is particularly key as Britain's older population is set to grow dramatically. Sixteen percent of the UK population is currently aged 65 or over, this number is projected to rise to nearly a quarter of the population by 2031.

Lifting the lid on the voting habits of the nation's care home residents, the survey showed that pensions were the most important issue affecting a third of them (33 percent), followed by health (22 percent) and social care (14 percent). The issues that were lowest on the care home residents' agenda were terrorism, immigration and asylum.

The ICM survey, commissioned by BUPA, spoke to more than 500 residents from 83 randomly selected care homes across the country, owned and run by different providers.