

I had wanted to start 2019 with a nice cheerful and optimistic article to set us up for the year ahead, but I have just seen the excellent, but devastating, drama *Care*, which is about an elderly, but very active lady who has a severe stroke, leaving her both physically and mentally impaired. I know this will have struck a chord with a large number of us who will have someone close, whether parent, sibling, or child, who has significant and complex care needs.

There is a very scary and unpleasant reality facing us that is played out on our television screens every week in the various “fly-on-the-wall” programmes about our emergency services.

The sheer volume of distressed, frail and helpless people calling for help, and the overstretched services that provide the equivalent of an emergency sticking plaster before rushing to the next call is both frightening and appalling.

I have, and always will be, a great proponent of self-sufficiency and independence, but with the expectation that if I, or one of my loved ones, needs help it will be there for them. The sad reality is that is no longer the case. For years we have seen the erosion of our multiple support services, while simultaneously experiencing an increasing need for those very same services that are contracting or disappearing altogether. And according to all the projections, it is only going to get worse as our ageing population, with

# WHO CARES?



Sarah May, IBMS Deputy Chief Executive, asks if enough is done for those with complex care needs.

multiple complex care needs, increases.

In parallel with the shrinking availability of community care services is the almost universal norm of working mothers; there is little other option for most households. So where does that leave us as we try to juggle the competing demands of work, children, elderly parents and all their associated needs? It leaves us in a very sorry position for the 5th largest economy in the world.

Watching *Care* brought to my mind a variously quoted phrase, and the version that struck the most powerful chord with me was that of Hubert H. Humphrey, the 38th vice president of the United States. He said “...the moral test of government is how

that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped”.

Anyone who has ever experienced our 21st century care system would probably say we have failed. All I can say is how very sad; how very wrong.

**Sarah May**  
Deputy Chief Executive



Institute of Biomedical Science is the professional body for the biomedical science profession.

**INSTITUTE OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE**  
12 Coldbath Square  
London, EC1R 5HL  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)20 7713 0214  
+44 (0)20 7837 9658  
Email: [mail@ibms.org](mailto:mail@ibms.org)  
Web: [www.ibms.org](http://www.ibms.org)

**PRESIDENT**  
Alison Geddis CSci FIBMS

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Jill Rodney

**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Sarah May CSci FIBMS

**EXECUTIVE HEAD OF EDUCATION**  
Alan Wainwright CSci FIBMS

**EXECUTIVE HEAD OF MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIP**  
Lynda Rigby

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**  
[education@ibms.org](mailto:education@ibms.org)

**EXAMINATIONS**  
[examinations@ibms.org](mailto:examinations@ibms.org)

**MEMBERSHIP**  
[mc@ibms.org](mailto:mc@ibms.org)

**CHARTERED SCIENTIST**  
[chartered@ibms.org](mailto:chartered@ibms.org)

## FOLLOW THE INSTITUTE

Join us on  
[facebook.com/  
biomedicalscience](https://facebook.com/biomedicalscience)

Follow us on Twitter  
[@IBMSscience](https://twitter.com/IBMSscience)

Find us on  
[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ibms)