

Please ask for: Martin Samuels  
Direct Line: 0116 454 5825  
Email: [martin.samuels@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:martin.samuels@leicester.gov.uk)  
Our Ref: SCE/MS  
Date: 16/02/2021



Professor Martin Green  
Care England  
40 Artillery Lane  
London E1 7LS

[JGecsei@careengland.org.uk](mailto:JGecsei@careengland.org.uk)

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 4 February, in which you set out a useful perspective on the current pandemic from the perspective of Care England. There can be no question that this national crisis has challenged all of us, and I am very pleased to note that one of the consequences has been a significant strengthening of the positive relationship between Leicester City Council and providers across the City. I have repeatedly been greatly impressed by the resilience and commitment of providers and their staff. Equally, it has been very encouraging to receive regular feedback from them, making clear how much they appreciate the extensive support that they have received from my team in the City Council. This has been a true example of shared endeavour.

In your letter, you asked for responses to a number of specific questions.

**1. The nature of the additional and direct financial Covid support the Council has provided since the commencement of the pandemic.**

From 19 March through to the beginning of June 2020, the Council provided direct support to independent care homes. Initially, this was through a 10% uplift on commissioned package costs of LCC placements (within locality and out-of-locality). In addition, we provided Covid support payments for other placements (i.e. non-LCC funded placements such as self-funded clients within Leicester).

From May 2020 to Sept 2020, we passported the national Infection Control Funding (Round 1). This comprised the main 80% mandatory allocations on a 'per bed' basis, topped up with a further allocation from the Council's 20% discretionary allocation. As a result, the total support paid to care homes comprised 87% of the £3.7m the Council received under ICF1.

From October 2020 to March 2021, we have again passported the national Infection Control Funding (Round 2). Once again, this was the main 80% mandatory allocations on a 'per bed' basis, topped-up with a further allocation from the Council's 20% discretionary allocation. Again, this will make the total support paid greater than the 80% minimum set out by DHSC under the local authority circular that underpinned this Covid funding grant.

Care homes are also receiving allocations of additional funding under both the Workforce Capacity Fund and the Rapid Testing Fund. As with the ICF payments, we are looking to utilise a significant element of the discretionary elements of this funding to further support care homes over and above the mandatory allocations paid on a 'per bed' basis.

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**2. Of the financial support referred to in (1) above, is it continuing? If not, for what period was it provided? If it is continuing, for how long will it continue?**

Arrangements for any financial Covid support after 31 March 2021 will be reviewed in the light of any further announcements by DHSC in relation to any continuation of infection and prevention control funding.

**3. Of the financial support referred to in (1) above, did it include any support to address the financial impacts of falling occupancy levels?**

LCC has established some block contract arrangements with care homes for Covid-positive and asymptomatic provision from hospital discharges. One consequence of these arrangements has been to provide some assistance with falling occupancy in those homes. However, the Council has not been able to provide economic support payments to care homes, over and above the support set out above, for loss of income from reduced occupancy levels. We are simply not funded for this. We did highlight reducing occupancy, and the viability impacts that this could present, to DHSC as part of our Local Care Home Support Planning document submission.

**4. What was the care home occupancy level in your local area in March and April 2020 and what was this occupancy level in December 2020 and January 2021?**

- Care home average occupancy level across March 2020 was 89.5%
- Care home average occupancy level across April 2020 was circa 88.5%
- Care home average occupancy level across December 2020 was circa 82.5%
- Care home average occupancy level across January 2021 was circa 81.5%

**5. What fee level increases are being proposed by the Council for the year 2021/22?**

The fee increases are subject to a short consultation with the independent sector. Whilst these are not yet finalised, they will be linked to movement in the NLW/NMW for wages and consumer price inflation for non-payroll costs. We will also review other cost pressures, such as the impact on insurance premiums as a result of Covid.

The fees calculation also looks at occupancy in terms of impact on contributions towards fixed costs, so reduced occupancy will be reflected to some degree in this way.

**6. If not already addressed within the answers to questions (1) to (5) above, what other forms of financial support for care providers is the Council considering for the remainder of the financial year 2021/22 to assist the sustainability of their care service provision during this period?**

All funding has been identified above.

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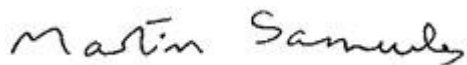


**7. Has the Council consulted on any of the foregoing; if not does it propose doing so and when does it propose doing so?**

See Q5.

I trust that this provides you with evidence of the very considerable additional funding that has been provided by Leicester City Council to support the care home sector during this period, and our commitment to work with providers to ensure that the people of the City continue to have access to high quality care.

Yours Sincerely,



Martin Samuels

**Strategic Director Social Care and Education**