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Professor Martin Green OBE  
Chief Executive  
Care England  
Via Email: [info@careengland.org.uk](mailto:info@careengland.org.uk)

**Adult Services and Wellbeing**  
Princess Buildings  
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Dear Professor Green

I am writing in response to your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, in which you set out a number of concerns about the impact the pandemic has had on the care provider market, both in terms of the human and financial cost.

Firstly, I would like to offer assurance that Calderdale does have strong partnership arrangements in place with local providers and is working with them to provide support and to address the impact of Covid 19.

In your letter you pose a number of questions seeking assurance about what steps the local authority is taking in discharging the duty placed by the Care Act 2014 to ensure the sustainability of the market.

Please find responses to your questions below;

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

The Council has introduced robust systems for collecting daily intelligence from care homes and other community providers which is used to manage risk and inform the deployment of additional resources. Enhanced Care Home Support Teams were established in May 2020 as part of a whole system response to the pandemic. This is overseen by a Tactical Command Group.

The Council has worked in partnership with health and other organisations to implement a number of measures to support providers during the pandemic. This includes £765,898 on the provision of PPE, re-deployment of some local authority staff and additional agency staff capacity has been provided to care homes.



During April – June 2020, the Council also introduced advance payment systems to alleviate pressures on providers.

The Council has made the following direct financial payments to providers;

- April 2020 - a one off Covid-19 Financial Support payment was made directly to Care Homes and Domiciliary Care (Homecare) providers to the sum of £562,690. There were no conditions attached to this funding.
- June and July 2020 - £1,892,731 round 1 Government Infection Control Funding distributed to 51 Care Homes, 26 Homecare providers and 10 Supported Living providers. To be expended by 30 September 2020.
- December 2020 - £1,696,779 round 2 of the Government Infection Control Funding distributed to 48 care homes and 40 Community Care Providers (supported living and homecare).
- February 2021 - £457,299 Rapid Flow Testing distributed to 49 care homes/residential settings and 39 Community Care providers.

**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?**

The Infection Control and Rapid Flow Testing Funding have been provided in line with Government Department for Health and Social Care guidance and expenditure these grants run until 31 March 2021.

The local authority will continue to support care home and other community providers through the Enhanced Care Homes Support Team, and deployment of resources through Tactical Command group. Without additional Government funding, the local authority does not have the resources to continue any of the above mentioned financial payments.

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

The Council has not made any specific payments to providers to cover the costs of falling occupancy levels, there were however, no conditions attached to the one off Covid 19 support payment and some providers have used the Infection Control Fund to pay for vacant beds whilst managing outbreaks and as a measure to prevent the risk of infection.

**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?**

	<b>Number of beds</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>% occupied</b>
Mar-20	1384	214	84.5%
Apr-20	1384	223	83.9%
Dec-20	1354	215	84.1%
Jan-21	1354	234	82.8%

**Iain Baines**  
**Director of Adult Services and Wellbeing**

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

The Council is proposing a 4.8% fee increase for 2021/22 but this includes a requirement to pay the low pay commissions recommendation of £9.21, so a 2.2% increase across all cost headings and 2.6% on low pay.

**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?**

The Council has just received the Workforce Capacity Fund £460,308 and is working in partnership with care homes and other community providers to ensure this grant can be fully utilised to support providers. A number of staffing measures are being introduced through this grant to alleviate financial pressures and to increase staff capacity. As with the other DHSC funding streams this grant has to be expended by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

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

The Council regularly meets with providers to engage in discussions about the future sustainability of the market, business continuity and fee levels.

I hope that the above answers all of your questions and provides some assurance of the steps Calderdale Council is taking in fulfilling its obligations to the care market, to ensure that risks are managed and that the provision of services remains healthy.

Yours sincerely



**Iain Baines**  
**Director for Adult Services and Wellbeing**