



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Lord Markham
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

39 Victoria Street
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By email

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Dear Noble Lords,

Thank you for your contributions to the debate on 16 October 2023 on the Adult Social Care Committee's report A "*gloriously ordinary life*": *spotlight on adult social care*. I am writing to address the questions raised during the debate, which would benefit from a fuller response.

During the debate Baroness Finlay asked about the allocation of the additional funding which is being made available to local authorities in 2023/24 and 2024/25 for adult social care and whether social care funding can be used for Palliative care; for an evaluation of funding for Think Local Act Personal (TLAP); and whether mobility aids can be recycled and sent abroad as part of the aid programme.

As I said during the debate, the government has now made available up to £8.1bn over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to strengthen social care provision.

In 2023/24, the Government made available the following additional grant funding:

- £600m through the Discharge Fund, shared equally between Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and local authorities. This grant funding for local authorities is paid out using the existing iBCF grant shares and the funding is required to be pooled as part of the Better Care Fund.
- £400m of new funding for market sustainability and improvement. This is combined with an existing £162 million of Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability funding introduced in 2022/23 to produce the £562m Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF). In July 2023, we supplemented this with a further £365m through the MSIF Workforce Fund. Both grants are paid out using the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula.
- £1.265 billion in additional funding for the Social Care Grant, which is ringfenced for adults and children's care. The majority of this funding is allocated using our ASC Relative Needs Formula, while £80 million was used to equalise the variation in yield from the adult social care council tax precept.

As well as this grant funding, local authorities could raise additional funding through council tax, and those with social care responsibilities were able to set an adult social care precept of up to 2% per year without a referendum.

In total, this means that the Government has made available up to £3.2 billion for social care in 2023/24. In **ANNEX 1**, I have provided hyperlinks to the published information with the details of how the funding has been allocated to local authorities.

In 2024/25, the Government will make available up to £4.9bn for social care, on top of the position ahead of the 2022 Autumn Statement. This will include additional grant funding for market

sustainability and improvement, and for discharge. The Government will provide details on the allocation of this funding through the provisional Local Government finance settlement later this year.

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are responsible for commissioning palliative and end of life services for healthcare that meet the needs of their population according to local priorities. ICBs also have responsibility for the operational delivery of NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), a package of NHS-funded ongoing care for adults who have been assessed as having a primary health need. For people who may be nearing the end of their life, there is a Fast Track Pathway, which results in an appropriate care and support package of health and social care being put in place as soon as possible – usually within 48 hours.

With regards to evaluation of TLAP, TLAP receives grant funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (the Department), which formally reviews progress of agreed activities at quarterly meetings. This process is centred on TLAP's self-assessment of outcomes and provides focus on how their work benefits people who draw on care and support, and local authorities. For example, TLAP's next phase of work on direct payments will be the roll out of a plan of support for those local authorities who need help in strengthening their direct payments' model, so as to encourage increased uptake in their locality. The quarterly reviews also provide an opportunity to link activity with current ministerial priorities.

Alongside standard governance, we undertake 'deep dives' into TLAP's work across the sector. This year the Department has also conducted a mid-year (6-month) survey of stakeholder views about TLAP's current programme of work. Findings from the survey, which closed earlier this month, complements evidence from TLAP's own reporting about how the work they do across the sector is meaningful and impactful. For example, more than 70% of respondents say they find TLAP's resources and support to be useful and effective. A full report of the survey's outcome is currently being finalised.

On mobility aids, a large proportion of mobility aids are recovered and reconditioned, allowing them to be reused by patients and people who draw on care. Arrangements for the return and reuse of walking aids are managed locally, and a number of NHS trusts already have, or are planning to, establish a local return and reuse scheme. Walking aids, including crutches, can also be recycled at some household recycling points. NHS England is supporting local NHS organisations to increase walking-aid return rates by providing guidance to trusts on setting up or enhancing reuse schemes and planning communication activities.

In terms of sending aid abroad, the Department has already contributed several tranches of aid containing medicine, medical equipment, and consumables to Ukraine via the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO's) direct engagement with the Ukrainian Ministry of Health, based upon their specific requests for support. Additionally, as part of the cross-government effort coordinated by the FCDO, the Department is working to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Baroness Fraser of Craigmaddie asked for details of how the £250 million is going to be spent on workforce reform and whether it could help more people access Personal Assistants. The funding is for a programme of reform which includes launching a new career structure for care workers so that all staff can build their careers, and so that more experienced care workers are recognised for their skills. It will also create a new qualification to reduce the current practice of care workers having to retrain every time they move employer. We are also providing funding towards training places as learning and development can reduce staff turnover rate. In terms of accessing personal assistants, local authorities already have a responsibility to provide support and advice to people on employing

personal assistants using a direct payment. In addition, the next phase of our Adult Social Care national recruitment campaign 'Made with Care' launched on the 9th October. The campaign is a proven, established, and sustainable recruitment marketing model, supported by the sector, and is specifically targeted to reach and appeal to those most likely to consider a role in adult social care, including Personal Assistants.

Baroness Andrews asked about the survey of unpaid carers. We recognise that there are key gaps in the evidence base surrounding the circumstances, experiences and needs of unpaid carers. And while various sources capture information on unpaid carers, they often lack consistency and coverage. We are therefore developing a new survey of unpaid carers which would capture the wide range of experiences, circumstances and needs of unpaid carers across England. As a first step, we have commissioned the ONS to undertake a scoping study to consider how we could design and implement this survey. The scoping study is exploring how a new survey could collect information which is representative of all unpaid carers and aspects of unpaid care provision, filling a crucial evidence gap and provide a more accurate estimate of the number of unpaid carers and their lived experience.

Lord Davies of Brixton asked about pensions for unpaid carers. I understand from the Department of Work of Pensions, the new State Pension which was introduced in 2016 improves outcomes for many women, carers, and self-employed people, who often did less well in the past. Under the new State Pension, different types of National Insurance contributions are treated equally, whether they are made of contributions or credits. Carers in receipt of either Carer's Allowance or Universal Credit will accrue the same level of State Pension National Insurance contributions as people who are employed. Additionally, a Carer's Credit is also available for those who spend at least 20 hours per week caring.

At the debate I mentioned the current rate of international recruitment is about 150,000 a year and I would like to take this letter as an opportunity to correct that. While Home Office data shows that over 121,000 Health and Care entry visas were granted to main applicants from the end of June 2022 to the end of June 2023, only approximately 77,700 of those were granted to either 'care workers and home carers' and 'senior care workers'. I apologise for the error and a copy of this letter will be deposited in the libraries of both Houses.

I hope that this letter has provided further clarity on the points raised at the debate.

With my very best wishes,



LORD MARKHAM CBE