



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Lord Markham  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State*

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
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21 December 2023

Dear Noble Lords,

Thank you for your contributions to the Oral Parliamentary Question on 14 November 2023 on the Children's Hospice Grant. I am writing to address those questions raised which I thought would benefit from a fuller response than I was able to give in the limited time available on the day.

During the debate, Baroness Finley asked how children and young people's palliative care services are monitored to ensure they meet the needs of children and stressed the importance of hospice services being integrated with other local paediatric services.

As I said during the debate, integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for determining the level of NHS-funded palliative and end of life care, including hospice care, locally. ICBs are responsible for ensuring that the services they commission meet the needs of their local population.

Statutory guidance and service specifications for ICBs on palliative and end of life care were issued by NHS England (NHSE), to which ICBs must have due regard when planning and commissioning end of life services including for children and young people. Additionally, each ICB's individual oversight arrangements with NHSE is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding, which describes how they work together to discharge their respective roles and responsibilities to improve the quality of care and reduce inequalities.

Lord Forsyth asked whether the Department would consider providing a match-funding system for hospices. Since 2020/21, as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, match funding has been made available to ICB (and formerly CCG) commissioners who increase their overall investment in children's palliative and end of life care services. This year, 2023/24, marks the final year of this commitment during which up to £7 million was made available in match-funding.

During the debate, I stated that NHSE has to review all 42 ICB arrangements and ensure 24/7 care is set-up in each of these. NHSE actually uses the NICE best practice guidelines on 24/7 care to monitor ICB performance on delivering high-quality palliative and end of life care. Additionally, I stated that it was my understanding that £7m was paid directly to hospices as part of match funding arrangements. In fact, that £7m is paid directly to the ICBs.

I hope that this letter has provided further clarity on the points raised at the debate and a copy of this letter will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

With my very best wishes,

**LORD MARKHAM CBE**