

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Copied to:

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

27 October 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Adult social care funding and reform across Yorkshire and the Humber**

We write as the Chairs of the Yorkshire Leaders Board on behalf of councils across Yorkshire and the Humber.

We support the ambition to reform and improve adult social care.

Demand for services is increasing year on year and we agree that there needs to be a sustainable process and funding model in place to deliver the right care and support for people.

We agree, in principle, to the aims of the government to:

- provide greater financial security for people who require care in their lifetime
- limit the personal financial contribution a person has to make towards their care
- ensure a fair rate for care is paid to care providers, to enable high-quality care
- provide more support from councils to people that currently arrange and fund their own care, ensuring they can access the same rates as the council.

As leaders of our places, we want the reforms to be a success. The adult social care system has been fragile for many years, but the additional challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, a highly competitive labour market and the cost of living crisis have further exacerbated the instability of the system. This has compounded the historic underinvestment in adult social care, something that is identified by the CQC in their 2022 State of Care report.

For these reasons, we believe that charging reforms must be accompanied by effective funding to truly fix adult social care.

To understand how the reforms will impact our region, we have commissioned research by Newton on behalf of the 22 Yorkshire and Humber councils. We have attached the report for your consideration. The evidence highlights the risks to our region, and councils across the country if the current reforms are implemented as planned:

### **Transformation capacity**

There are some serious capacity risks in proceeding with the current reform timetable. Our workforces are maximised and under extreme pressure while trying to protect our most vulnerable residents. Winter pressures, COVID-19 and living and working with increasing cost-of-living pressures leaves limited resources to prepare and implement the reforms. As Skills for Care have identified, the social care workforce is shrinking at the precise time that we need it to be expanding.

This pressure is exacerbated by the work required for the CQC assurance regime that is due to begin in April 2023.

Social care reform cannot be considered in isolation from change in the NHS. We welcome the new ICB arrangements and want to be enthusiastic partners in these new arrangements but the demands of social care reform risk local authorities needing to focus their scarce capacity internally at a time when the wider system is wanting to use that same capacity to take forward more integrated working.

### **Social Worker recruitment**

The funding reforms are anticipated to result in an additional 10,100 Care Act assessments requiring a further 400 Adult Social Workers for our region. Vacancies are already averaging at 10%, and in some places substantially more, despite an increasing focus on international recruitment. Thus, the mass recruitment required will be impossible to achieve before October 2023. Instead, we will need to develop a new workforce and transform systems and processes. Councils have already committed substantial time and funding for this work but still require time beyond October 2023 to enable the successful implementation of the reforms.

### **Resource gap for Fair Cost of Care**

Whilst the funding package set out by the government for the charging reforms looks likely to meet most of the cost to local government, at least in the initial years, we are very concerned about how implementing the Fair Cost of Care will be funded. We welcome the principle of a Fair Cost of Care and a number of Yorkshire councils are already implementing that approach. However, the national proposals require adequate funding and a clear understanding about what “moving to” means. This additional cost cannot be met by councils and implementing Section 18(3) without adequate funding is likely to precipitate provider collapse.

We therefore believe that there are three clear actions that government should consider to mitigate these risks and enable the reform agenda to be successful:

- 1) Delay the implementation of the funding reforms to enable authorities and markets to better prepare and mitigate the associated risks to their implementation (whilst recognising some implementation costs will need to be incurred and therefore funded in 22/23).
- 2) To ensure sufficient preparation and increased likelihood of successful implementation, delay the introduction of the new CQC Assurance regime and adopt a more phased approach.
- 3) Prioritise fully funding the fair cost of care so the reform can meet its aims to “ensure a fair rate for care is paid to care providers” while also moving beyond addressing solely the issue of cross subsidisation between council funded individuals and people funding their own care.

Having waited so long for care and support reform, we have not arrived at this position lightly. Still, these actions will allow time for learning and development, resulting in a more sustainable and fairer implementation.

We look forward to the ongoing support from the government in ensuring that our Adult Social Care services are sustainable and protect and improve people’s lives now and in the future.

We are keen to work closely with you on this and would be very happy to meet with you and your team to discuss these matters further.

Your sincerely



**Cllr Carl Les and Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton CBE**  
**Co-Chairs of the Yorkshire Leaders Board**