

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport  
Jeane Freeman MSP



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

T: 0300 244 4000  
E: [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

COSLA Health & Social Care Spokesperson  
Councillor Stuart Currie

T: 01314749200  
E: [info@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:info@cosla.gov.uk)



COSLA

Lewis Macdonald MSP  
Convener  
Health and Sport Committee

Cc: Annie Gunner Logan, CCPS  
Donald MacAskill, Scottish Care

24 March 2021

Dear Lewis,

## **Social Care Sustainability**

We are writing to provide an update on the arrangements in place for financial support to the social care sector due to COVID, in light of the discussion held at the Health and Sport Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, and follow up correspondence that has been shared with COSLA and Scottish Government. Concerns were raised by Annie Gunner Logan, Chief Executive Officer of CCPS, in relation to the resources that have been made available to support the sector and concerns that these funds were not reaching third sector providers.

## **Oversight of resources to support social care**

Scottish Government have made available a significant amount of resource to support the additional costs faced in the social care sector during the pandemic. This funding is allocated through the Health Board and passed to Integration Authorities to support a wide range of pressures and additional resource requirements for health and social care due to the pandemic. A significant element of the funding provided is to support the additional cost pressures faced by social care providers in the independent and third sector. However, this funding has also been to support Health and Social Care Partnerships with all of the additional pressures they have faced such as reducing delayed discharge, establishment of community hubs, PPE and additional staffing costs within the Partnerships.

All of these additional costs are recorded through the Local Mobilisation Plans and form an audit record of how funds have been spent. Scottish Government have oversight of these plans. Alongside this there has been a peer review process established for Health and Social Care Partnerships and NHS Boards.

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There is a robust process in place to ensure that public funds are spent appropriately, this consists of a requirement to ensure clear audit trails are in place to record how funding has been spent. Local Authority and Health and Social Care Partnerships will also have their own internal and governance processes in place and Section 95 officers must adhere to their duties in relation to accounting for public funds. This includes ensuring that payments for additional costs are made in line with the guidance<sup>1</sup>.

## Funding accessed by social care providers

The Local Mobilisation Plans forecast that the expenditure passed to social care providers in the third and independent sector to support with reasonable additional costs through the sustainability payments process, will be **approximately £126million** by financial year end 2020/21.

An additional exercise, undertaken with Chief Finance Officers within the Health and Social Care Partnerships, has established that additional financial support has been provided to **1293 social care providers** in the third and independent sector to date. There are a further **58 social care providers** who have been in contact for support and these are being progressed.

This support for additional costs follows the guidance published by the Scottish Government and agreed with COSLA, which has been regularly updated throughout the pandemic to ensure it remains fit for purpose and eligible reasonable additional costs are met, as committed to at the outset of the pandemic.

Prior to December social care providers who provide community-based support were also being paid for planned care. This arrangement supported some of the additional cost pressures, as set out in the guidance<sup>2</sup>. This support is not recorded through the Local Mobilisation Plans.

The arrangements changed from December to ensure that the financial support available for the sector was targeted to areas where there is an ongoing and sustained impact of COVID-19 on service delivery. This allows for payment to be made where there are unavoidable costs of non-delivery of service. Scottish Government and COSLA recognise the importance of ensuring that services are sustainable and able to re-start, as highlighted during the committee.

## Challenges experienced by providers in accessing resources

Scottish Government and COSLA acknowledge that there have been challenges with the process for administering the funds made available and have worked with CCPS and Scottish Care on the most recent version of the guidance on financial support for the sector. We would like to put on record again our thanks to everyone who works on the frontline of social care for all of the efforts they have made during this extremely difficult year. We would also like to thank those working in Health and Social Care Partnerships and Local Authorities for the significant efforts they have made in supporting social care providers and administering these payments.

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<sup>1</sup> [Financial Support for Social Care Providers during COVID-19](#)

<sup>2</sup> [31-07-20-Provider-Sustainability-Principles.pdf \(cosla.gov.uk\)](#)

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The information provided by Chief Finance Officers has established that **£84m** has already been paid out to providers. Additionally, there were approximately **1129 requests** for support at the end of February that are currently being progressed, with a value of **£13.7m**. The reason for any delay in processing these can be for a number of reasons including local capacity to process payment, insufficient evidence of the costs, requests for further information or non-return of the self-declaration form by providers. The capacity challenges for providers at this time often means that claims for additional costs are submitted several months after the expense has been incurred. Oversight and scrutiny of these funds is ongoing and we continue to work closely with HSCPs and Local Authorities.

We are sure the committee recognises the requirement for those administering the claims to ensure that public funds are accounted for, however a light touch approach has been recommended within the guidance.

COSLA and Scottish Government will continue to work alongside CCPS and Scottish Care to try to resolve the issues and are grateful for the support they have given to this process. Mechanisms have been put in place to raise issues through a strategic working group that meets every 3 weeks with representation from the sector alongside Trade Union colleagues. There is also a process to raise specific issues with officials in Scottish Government and COSLA.

We hope this provides some additional information to the committee and would be happy to discuss any of the points made within this letter in further detail.

Kind regards,

**Jeane Freeman**  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

**Cllr Stuart Currie**  
COSLA Health and Social Care Spokesperson

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