

Xxxx

11th February 2014

by Email

Dear xxxx

People with learning disabilities have the right to live full and fulfilling lives receiving what care and support they are assessed as needing to achieve this. Care England members are housing, care and support providers who have the responsibility of delivering that care and support. High quality personalised care depends on close working between providers and commissioners centred around the needs and wishes of the person and their family.

The financial pressures on LAs have over the last few years in particular inflicted considerable damage on the provider/commissioner relationship. We recognise the difficult circumstances both are having to work under but feel that the situation has now become so serious that the quality of care is threatened.

The central issue is one of funding and the fees payable for care and support. The sector has accepted and delivered considerable economies over recent years but the limit of these has been reached for the most significant cost categories, for most providers. LD providers are subject to non-discretionary inflationary pressures as all care providers are and these are:

- National Minimum wage
- VAT increases from 15% to 17.5% and then 20% for inputs which care providers cannot reclaim
- Pension auto enrolment
- Utilities, food and transport
- Insurances
- CQC regulatory demands and fees payable for inspecting these

We would expect that councils will take these into account and award at least an inflationary increase from April 2014. These cost increases are well known to councils, the first three being imposed by central government, and should not need to be the focus for detailed debate at local level. We would then hope that issues around staff recruitment, training and skill should be part of the local negotiation on costs and fees to prevent critical failures in quality of care and available capacity, which we believe is now critically stretched. It is crucial that the specific needs of individuals themselves are integral to cost and fee negotiations so that the care plan gives the life people with learning disabilities want and deserve. An aim we hope we share with commissioners but this cannot be achieved through procurement style approaches increasingly being adopted by

commissioners in negotiations, with short term 'cost' the primary consideration rather than 'value' to the individual and long term stability of quality care and support services.

Furthermore, The Care Bill soon to gain royal assent and become an Act of Parliament, legislates to ensure that local authorities promote wellbeing and encourage sustainable capacity from a diversity of providers. We feel that neither the creation of a sustainable capacity from a diversity of providers nor the wellbeing of the individual in question, can credibly claim to have been considered by a local authority when they fail to pay providers the true cost of care.

With the National Minimum Wage being increased from £6.31 to £6.50 per hour, which represents the largest increase in the NMW since it was introduced, we also need your assurance that this increase will be funded by the council as providers are not in a sufficiently robust financial state to fund this rise.

I would welcome comments and would be interested to know what fee increase is planned for learning disability providers from April 2014.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M L Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Professor Martin Green OBE

Chief Executive

Care England members are committed to ensuring

- People with learning disabilities receive the highest quality care in residential and SL settings
- People are treated as individuals and have the opportunities to live a full and fulfilling life
- Care and support practices continue to improve develop to meet the care needs of today and in the future
- Sustained long term and strategic availability of care and support services to meet the need of future generations
- Care and support needs for individuals are properly costed and reflect the high quality aspiration above
- They work closely with LAs and CCGs to determine, cost and implement a personalised care plan for each individual in their care