



Northamptonshire County Council

Professor Martin Green
Care England

Please ask for: Phil Jones
Tel: 01604 367553
Our ref: CK/PJ
Your ref:
Date: 19th February 2014

Dear Professor Green

Thank you for your letter dated 11th February 2014 in which you raise concerns in relation to funding and the fees paid to providers of care and support services.

In Northamptonshire we are acutely aware of the pressures on care and support providers as, during October and November 2013, we undertook an extensive consultation exercise in which we asked for key questions of the care and support provider market:

- What is your response to the emerging Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) business/financial context and plan?
- What works well with the current working relationship with NCC?
- What pressures do you, as providers; have that you want to share with NCC?
- What would be a better way of NCC and providers doing business in order to better support the people of Northamptonshire?

The issues that you raise with regard to the National Minimum Wage, VAT increases, Compulsory Pension Enrolment, increased Utility costs and CQC charges resonate with that which we heard from our local providers.

The Portfolio-holder for Adult Social Care and Transitions, Councillor Suresh Patel, and officers from Northamptonshire County Council have met with members of the Executive Board of the local care home trade representative body, NorArch, to discuss further the issue of funding.

In addition to the consultation exercises there are regular Provider Forums for Older People's care providers, Younger Adult's care providers and Domiciliary care providers

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which allow time for open and transparent discussion in relation to policy, initiatives and political decisions.

With regard to the level of fees paid to care and support providers of services for adults with learning disabilities in Northamptonshire it should be noted that a national Care Funding Calculator tool is utilised to ascertain a fair and appropriate cost for the care and support that is provided to meet the defined outcomes and needs of the individual service-user.

Northamptonshire County Council is also set to launch a new Resource Allocation System (RAS). The RAS tool will add further rigour to the process of allocating funds to meet an individual service-users care and support needs and the defined outcomes. The RAS will also help to promote a greater reliance on personal budgets.

Like the majority of Local Authorities Northamptonshire County Council is actively pursuing services that promote independence and ensure that people with learning disabilities are active and contributing in their local community. Initiatives such as "Community Connecting" help to incentivise the promotion of independence, with providers working to reduce the levels of personal care and support delivered via enriched community networks for individuals. The development of innovative solutions that utilise Payment by Results will help the County Council to deliver positive outcomes against a back-drop of increasing demand and reducing financial resources.

In order to respond to the pressure of demographic growth and a challenging financial position Northamptonshire County Council is dependent on the care and support providers we work in partnership with to deliver innovative and effective solutions. The current climate requires Commissioners and Providers to re-look at all our processes and services in an attempt to ensure we can continue to respond to care and support needs and deliver positive outcomes.

The RAS will help to ensure Northamptonshire County Council provides individual service-users with the right level of funding to meet their needs; the promotion of choice and control will result in individual's determining how services and the care sector market-place develop.

As a consequence of Northamptonshire County Council's direction of travel a set percentage increase for fees will not be applied in 2014/15, instead the review of individuals and implementation of the RAS will determine the future funding regime.

I hope that the above provides you with clarity as to the current position in Northamptonshire.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Kus
Director Adult Social Care and Transitions