

To:  
Hon. Victoria Atkins MP  
Hon. Gareth Davies MP  
Rt Hon Sir John Hayes MP  
Hon. Dr Caroline Johnson MP  
Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP  
Hon. Karl McCartney MP  
Hon. Matt Warman MP  
Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Our Ref: MW/SL

Dear Elected Representatives

**Re: Experiences of Care Providers during COVID-19**

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Lincolnshire Care Association (LinCA), which represents independent, and voluntary sector providers of adult social care in Lincolnshire, including Nursing and Residential Homes, Home Care and Day Services, to summarise the experiences of care providers during COVID-19.

Our care providers and their staff have responded admirably, working tirelessly and selflessly to keep the vulnerable people in their care safe during these challenging times. Staff resilience has been nothing short of amazing. Care staff have taken on tasks which had previously been undertaken by visiting health professionals to reduce footfall (supported by training and digital oversight as needed). They have also provided as close a substitute as possible for the family and friends who are not able to visit service users – not always easy when wearing full PPE. We have been saddened by the deaths which have taken place within care homes due to COVID-19 but heartened by the comparatively low number of deaths that we have experienced across the county.

Joint working arrangements and the relationship between the sector, and our colleagues at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the NHS Trusts, have been in place for some time. The way in which we were able to strengthen these relationships and respond in a collaborative way to rapidly changing circumstances has been remarkable and is a credit to the people and organisations involved and the community that is Lincolnshire.

LinCA is part of the Care Association Alliance which brings together care associations from across England and as co-chair I have been able to carry the voice of the SME provider to regional and national discussions with DHSC, LGA, ADASS, NHSE, PHE and other national bodies. This has given me the opportunity to influence guidance to reflect the needs of local providers, and to bring the thinking behind some of the pronouncements to providers and other colleagues across the health and care system.

The pragmatic approach of Lincolnshire County Council to funding additional costs experienced by providers rather than taking the simplistic option to apply a percentage uplift to fees has been vital to the survival of the provider sector. I would also like to commend the way

in which the Infection Prevention and Control Grant is being distributed. LinCA is delighted to have worked with colleagues from the commercial team at LCC to encourage providers to take up, and make the best use of, these funds. We were thrilled to welcome the Minister for Social Care, Helen Whately on a virtual visit, and to share with her how these funds are being used.

I would also like to thank you, as our elected representatives, for your continued championing of the sector, and for the support which you gave at the start of the pandemic when some items such as PPE were a cause of constant anxiety.

We cannot overestimate the challenges experienced by care providers both financially and in coping with sometimes scarce resources. The impact COVID-19 has had on care providers as businesses goes beyond the support that DHSC and MHCLG are providing. As a sector we need to prepare for a potential second wave and take forward the new ways of working embraced by providers during this pandemic which offer opportunities for efficiencies and improved experiences for both providers and those in their care. To do this we need to be able to make investment decisions for the medium term, which we believe will add to the local economy as well as supporting the NHS.

May we seek your support with raising in Parliament the potential risks to providers caused by the impact on them as local businesses of COVID-19, and the potential loss that this could cause to the economy in Lincolnshire? We want to ensure that we have a care sector which is robust enough to cope with a potential second wave of COVID-19, and the future needs for care within the local population.

We would also like to welcome you to join us at our regular meetings to hear first-hand how the social care providers are responding to these challenges.

Yours sincerely



Melanie Weatherley MBE  
Chair of Lincolnshire Care Association

Cc: Glen Garrod, Executive Director of Adult Care and Community Wellbeing  
Lincolnshire County Council  
John Turner, Chief Executive, NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group