

**Report of the Cabinet Member
Adult Social Care & Health Services**

I have been asked to Report on the following for Full Council on 2 December 2021:

1. By Councillor Hannaford as follows:

Last week the government had its plans for a revised social care cap endorsed by parliament. The new cap will cover fees for personal care, like help with washing and dressing. However, it will not cover living costs such as care home fees, food or utility bills.

Research and analysis from the Health Modelling Foundation, indicates the following financial outcomes from the proposals;

- Starting assets £100,000 – Left with £20,000.
- Starting assets £270,000 – Left with £184,000.
- Starting assets £500,000 – Left with £414,000.

What work has been done to assess the impact of these changes for our local residents and our care system & market sufficiency in Devon?

2. By Councillor Hannaford as follows:

Concerns have been recently raised that care home residents are dying alone and their everyday needs are being “neglected” because staffing levels are at such a “dangerously low” level, research suggests. Furthermore people in residential care are being denied a dignified end to their lives as there are not enough staff to sit with them during the final hours, according to a survey by Unison.

The union surveyed 1,637 employees in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between October 13 and November 4 who work in care homes, or help people at home or in supported living. Respondents told of how people are not getting regular washes, some are not getting dressed until the afternoon and others are being put to bed early so staff can attend to other residents. They described care as “depressingly rushed” and said its quality is declining, with “unsafe” staffing levels on both day and night shifts.

- The union found that 31% of care workers said that staffing levels are dangerously low, getting worse and negatively affecting care quality, which is leaving carers feeling “exhausted, angry and upset”.
- Two thirds (67%) are considering leaving the sector, which Unison says is a “disastrous but inevitable” consequence of years of low wages and morale and underfunding.

- Almost all respondents (97%) said their employer is experiencing staffing shortages, with burnout, overwork and low pay among the main reasons cited.
- Some 47% agreed with the statement that shortages are having a negative impact on care, and 31% agreed staffing levels are also dangerously low and getting worse.
- A fifth (20%) said their workplace is managing despite the shortages, while 1% said their workplace is fine and is experiencing no serious staffing shortages.

Can the cabinet please update council on all these concerning issues in Devon.

Response

1. Social Care Cap

- The government has yet to publish its impact assessment of the proposals in relation to the care cap. When this becomes available, like all local authorities we will be in a better position to assess local impact.
- We will ensure that any local impact is communicated to central government when we respond to the national consultation on the proposals.
- In 2015 the Care Act introduced a duty for local authorities to offer Deferred Payment Agreements, prior to it had been a power.
- This is a mechanism that ensures people do not need to sell their home in their lifetime in order to pay for their care. Devon was one of a number of local authorities that were already using the power to offer Deferred Payment Agreement prior to the Care Act. We currently have 102 DPAs in Devon.

2. Social Care Shortage

- The quality of the care providers in Devon, as rated by the CQC, is better than regional and national benchmarks, but workforce sufficiency remain the single biggest challenge in adult social care. It is also impacting significantly across many other sectors, including those competing for the same workforce as adult social care.
- Devon has recently received £2.4M as part of the national workforce recruitment and retention fund to invest in supporting our adult social care workforce over the winter period. This funded will be added to by the Integrated Care System Devon.
- We continue to develop our Proud to Care campaigns that remain our primary method of supporting our external providers to recruit and retain a sufficient workforce. We have produced a toolkit to support Members have conversations in their communities to encourage people into the caring workforce.
- The LoveCare programme is looking at a Team Devon 'Care Offer' where we are working with our public sector and local government colleagues in understanding what

we can do now and in the future in offering a range of benefits for those entering into the care workforce.

- Part of this work includes an Appreciative Inquiry taking place on the 3 Dec where health and social care leaders from across the UK, care workers, care providers, local political leaders will hear first-hand experiences of care workers on the frontline, and their employers, who deliver care into people's homes and in residential and other community settings.
- The VCSE also plays an important role. Devon Voluntary Action (DeVA) partnership used funding from the Infection Control Grant to provide training for 20 local voluntary organisations to enable them to deploy volunteers more confidently into people's homes and to enable care providers to focus on providing hands-on care and support.

James McInnes

Cabinet Member

Adult Social Care and Health Services