

# Information

for County Councillors

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From:	Tim Baverstock, Deputy Director Adults & Health Commissioning
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To:	County Councillors

## Adult Social Care provider workforce incentives and enhancements

Adult Social Care have been working with social care providers and NHS colleagues to look at ways to address the current difficulties in the availability of care provision in Somerset. This is impacting on our residents at home and in hospital. Somerset is determined to break the mould and put in place a short and medium term plan that values our carers and care providers, as well as increasing the workforce and capacity, particularly in domiciliary care provision.

Nationally there are significant workforce issues in many different sectors. This has driven higher competition and salaries. Historically working in care, whilst incredibly rewarding, has been a low paid or near minimum wage job and we would like to change that. The gap between the National Minimum Wage and average pay levels in care has narrowed considerably over the last few years, making jobs less attractive and increasing recruitment difficulties for our social care providers. This has been further compounded by the current Covid impacted labour market at a time when care and support is more crucial than ever, as well as a time when the workforce is exhausted and has done their utmost to look after our most vulnerable residents.

**Adult Social Care is therefore proposing implementing some immediate changes to support our carers and providers and boost the sector to meet the rising demand:**

We will fund SCC providers to pay all staff working in CQC regulated care a retention bonus by February 2022, provided they have been employed and working in the care sector for the last 6 months. Anyone who has joined between September and the implementation date of the new payment will be entitled to the payment on completion of their six months. This £250 bonus payment will be based on an FTE and pro-rata for non FTE.

A preparation start payment of £250 for all new starters in the domiciliary care sector reflecting set up costs, such as changes to insurance or transport arrangements, provided they had not worked in care in Somerset for the preceding 3 months. This will be paid 3 months after their start date if still employed and would not be pro-rate. These new starters would then be entitled to the further payment in line with the six month retention payment policy.

**We will increase payments to domiciliary care providers by c.9% as soon as possible, provided that they agree to pay all their staff a minimum of £10.50 per hour.**

Domiciliary care is particularly struggling at present, with the workforce needing a car, travelling costs and time and having to cover large areas due to the current shortages. We are working through the details with the help of the Registered Care Providers Association and provider partners. Providers will need to assure us that the increases are reflected in this minimum payment per hour for careworkers and we will be asking union representatives to work with staff as part of this assurance process.

This is a huge signal of our continued intent to support our fantastic carers and providers and the work that they do for the people of Somerset. It will ensure that more people get the support that they are entitled to in a timely manner and support our whole health and care system. We intend to continue working with the sector on further initiatives including career progress, joint posts with the NHS, salaried positions and different models of care.

This represents a potential additional investment of up to £4.8m from January 2022-April 2023. The funding for these changes has been jointly agreed and funded by the NHS and the County Council. For 2022/23 and beyond, Somerset Council has also allocated funding for this and other cost pressures in the wider social care sector, including its pledge to cover above minimum wage requirements in the whole sector.

All the above measures will be reviewed in April 2022 but will also be included in the annual Fees and Charges paper prior to the next financial year.

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