



## **The Fair Price of Care**

### **A blog from the Look Ahead Group**

As Liz Truss takes up her role as our new Prime Minister, there is no doubt that she has an extremely long to do list. We believe that continuing to fulfil and challenge social care reform should be high on that list, and we were pleased to hear her commitment to [redirecting more funds](#) from the NHS to social care.

[Look Ahead](#) is a specialist provider of supported housing and we work with working age adults to deliver over 120 services across mental health, homelessness, young people and learning disabilities and autism.

In this capacity, and as a member of Learning Disability England we have welcomed the acknowledgement that more needs to be done, not least the focus on ensuring that local authorities pay a fair price for care.

Yet along with other members we have been disappointed that the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund launched in March has been focused on older people and domiciliary care.

The purpose of the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund is to enable local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair cost for care, where they are not already doing so.

The fund aims to make the care market more sustainable, tackle poor workforce practice, incentivise innovation, and ultimately drive up the quality of care and support for people who need it.

Like other providers we're committed to delivering a collaborative and innovative offer to our customers across all our specialisms. To help meet the NHS's Building the Right Support agenda, many of our services are focused on supporting individuals with high level learning disabilities, complex needs and behaviours that challenge.

We are proud that our supported living services help people who may have been in ATU's or secure facilities for upwards of 10 years to live meaningful and fulfilling lives near friends and family.

These services rely upon highly skilled and dedicated staff teams who we feel, should be valued as such both organisationally and financially. It is of great concern that the scope of the recent fair cost of care reforms do not seem to reach these vital services or the services we deliver in other areas.

The high levels of vacancies in social care are well documented and we have all heard reports of contracts being handed back or subsidised by providers' charitable or commercial activities. As the cost-of-living crisis continues we know that the supported housing workforce are anxious about how to meet their most basic needs.

If we want to prevent further damage to our already struggling workforce and keep providers in the market it is essential that we work together to ensure that our staff wages are reflective of their talent, skill, and dedication to our customers.

It is simply not right that someone can earn as much in retail or hospitality without the responsibility that comes with jobs in care and support.

We need a commitment from DHSC that these vital services are given the same opportunities and consideration as the wider market through the fair cost of care reforms. Without this commitment some of the most vulnerable people in our society will suffer.

To support this Look Ahead will continue to work with our partners in other organisations to ensure that all learning disability and autism services are able to retain financial stability by awarding fair pay at a fair rate.