

Ms Alison James, Paying for Care  
Partnership and Cooperation Division  
Social Services and Integration Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

25 January 2017

Dear Ms James,

**Charging for social care in Wales**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on charging for social care in Wales, which I have the pleasure to do on behalf of the United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA).

The enclosed paper responds to the issues the consultation has raised. Please do contact me if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,



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## Response submitted by UKHCA for the Welsh Government

### About UKHCA

- UKHCA is the professional association of home care providers from the independent, voluntary, not-for-profit and statutory sectors. UKHCA helps organisations that provide social care (also known as domiciliary care or homecare), which may include nursing services, to people in their own homes, promoting high standards of care. The Association represents the homecare sector with national and regional policy-makers and regulators. The Association represents over two thousand members across the United Kingdom.

### Financial assessment for care and support – maximum weekly charge

The maximum charge ensures consistency across Wales in the maximum weekly amount a person is asked to pay for their non-residential care. This addresses the wide variations in charges that local authorities previously made for similar care of a similar level. Around a third of those receiving non-residential care pay the maximum. The remainder receive their care free or at a charge up to the maximum due to their level of weekly income. The maximum charge will increase to £70 per week from next April for inflation and to ensure local authorities have sufficient funding to maintain the care they provide, and the quality of it.

### **Do you agree that this increase strikes the right balance between helping to raise additional income for local authorities (to help meet increasing cost pressures in providing care and ensuring the quality of the care provided) and being fair and affordable for people in receipt of non-residential care?**

1. In general, UKHCA agrees that the uplift in the maximum cost of care strikes a good balance between the local authority income and affordable care for service users. There are, however, a few points to consider.
2. The most pressing for us is the role of the provider in this “balance”. Although the analogy of a balance is useful, it is not entirely accurate as it misses out a third party – the provider. In the current system, the local authority and the service user are essential components in the delivery of care, as statistics indicate, most domiciliary care is outsourced by local authorities to the independent sector.<sup>1</sup> Providers, then, are integral to the social care system that currently exists in Wales and any consideration of a “right balance” should also include those that are involved in daily high-quality care and support to service users across Wales.
3. One of the key concerns for providers is whether the funds will be used to pay a more sustainable rate to providers or to support infrastructure? We are aware of the struggles local authorities face - Mark Drakeford, finance and local government secretary, recently warned local authorities to prepare for “harder

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (March 2016), “Factors that affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and the extent to which these factors impact upon the quality of domiciliary care”, p. 6.

choices and more difficult times ahead.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, funding figures for 2017/18 revealed a decrease for all local authorities in real terms.

4. The social care sector in Wales is also an underfunded sector. Our recent study, the Homecare Deficit Report 2016 revealed that on average (weighted) local authorities in Wales paid £14.99 per hour of care. UKHCA’s recommended minimum price at that time was £16.70, a figure based on accurate knowledge of costs, informed by a range of providers.<sup>3</sup> Carmarthenshire was the only authority in Wales that paid our minimum price for homecare, with Rhondda Cynon Taff paying the lowest at £9.85 per hour of care.
5. Therefore, considering this severe underfunding of social care in the sector, and particularly in domiciliary care, would the Welsh Government be able to confirm that extra monies raised by this cap uplift and subsequent ones will be placed in adult social care?

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<sup>2</sup> BBC (October 2016), “Council budgets see first cash increase for years from Welsh Government”. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-37690800>

<sup>3</sup> UKHCA (2016), Homecare Deficit Report 2016, p. 12. See: <http://www.ukhca.co.uk/rates>