



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

From Gillian Keegan MP  
Minister of State for Care and Mental Health

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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
By email to: [george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk)

16 June 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 May to Sajid Javid on behalf of a number of your constituents about support for unpaid carers.

Carers play a vital role in our communities, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. Therefore, our vision for adult social care puts people and families at its heart.

We recognise that unpaid carers value services and support, such as respite and breaks, provided for them and the people they care for. Our white paper, *People at the Heart of Care*, sets out a new strategic approach to empower unpaid carers to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

We are investing up to £25million in the sector to change the support for unpaid carers. This funding will be used to identify and test a range of new and existing interventions that support unpaid carers, which could include respite and breaks, peer group and wellbeing support, and new ways to combine these to maximise their impact.

In addition to this investment, funding for respite and short breaks for carers is included in the NHS contribution to the Better Care Fund (BCF). The BCF Framework for 2022/23 will be published shortly and will ask all local BCF partnerships to set out how funding is being used to support unpaid carers

Local authorities are required to undertake a carer's assessment for any carer who appears to have a need for support. This is an opportunity to consider the effect caring has on the carer and will look at all their needs, including whether they are willing and able to continue caring. If a carer is assessed as having needs that are eligible for support, then the local authority has a legal duty to meet those needs, if the carer wishes, and to draw up a support plan with the carer setting out how that will be done.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government provided funding to a number of charities to support carers. This included over £150,000 to increase the Carers UK helpline's opening hours and £500,000 to the Carers Trust to make grants to support unpaid carers experiencing loneliness.

Regarding infection control and safety, we have offered free personal protective equipment (PPE) for COVID-19 needs through all local authorities and Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) for unpaid carers who do not live with the person they care for since February 2021, this will continue until March 2023. As of 31 March, around 524 million items of free PPE for COVID-19 needs have been distributed via LRFs and local authorities for onward

distribution. This offer is available until the end of March 2023 or until guidance is substantially amended, whichever is earlier.

We continue to encourage unpaid carers to come forward for their first, second and booster COVID-19 vaccinations, if they have not done so already, to protect themselves, the people they care for and their communities if required. Unpaid carers can use this letter to grant access to priority queueing at any vaccination site - [Priority access to COVID-19 booster vaccinations for social care workers letter Dec 2021 \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](#).

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**GILLIAN KEEGAN**