



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Helen Whately MP
Minister of State for Care*

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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
By email to: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

29 December 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 December to the Prime Minister on behalf of a number of your constituents, about support for unpaid carers. Your email has been forwarded to this department.

For the vast majority of people, care begins at home with their families and friends. Caring for others draws on great strengths of kindness and compassion, and I know caring can place huge demands on those who do it. That is why I feel strongly that carers should be recognised and supported in what they do.

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to deliver a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services, including support for unpaid carers. Local authorities are required to undertake a carer's assessment for any unpaid carer who appears to have a need for support, and to meet their eligible needs on request.

Funding for respite and short breaks for carers is included in the NHS contribution to the Better Care Fund (BCF). In 2022/23, £291.7million of BCF funding was earmarked to provide short breaks and respite services for carers, as well as advice and support for carers under the Care Act. In addition to Carer's Allowance, carers on low incomes can claim income-related benefits, such as Universal Credit and Pension Credit. These benefits can be paid to carers at a higher rate than those without caring responsibilities through the carer element and the additional amount for carers respectively.

We are bringing forward measures to provide a greater understanding of practice and provision at a local level, including independent assessment of local authorities' delivery of their Care Act responsibilities by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). How local authorities engage with carers and individuals is a key concern that we expect to form part of these assessments.

The Health and Care Act 2022 includes provisions for the CQC to assess the performance of local authorities' delivery of their adult social care duties, as set out under the Care Act. The CQC has been working with local government, the care sector and people with care and support needs to develop a framework for these assessments, including how to consider local authorities' responsibilities to carers.

Yours,

HELEN WHATELY