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Cllr Paul Kelly
COSLA Spokesperson for Health and Social Care

27 February 2024

Dear Paul,

I am writing to follow up on our recent conversations about the important role of local carer support services and the feedback I have been receiving from local carer centres and carer representatives. I welcome the joint commitment we discussed to ensure the range of support to unpaid carers results in better outcomes – both for carers and the people they support.

I fully recognise the challenging financial context and the difficult choices Local Authorities and Integration Authorities are managing as they discharge their statutory responsibilities regarding the delivery of vital public services. In that context, I know you and local colleagues are aware of the immense contribution unpaid carers make to the health and social care system as well as to the individual wellbeing of the people they care for. We estimate carers save Scotland £12.8 billion per year in social care costs, plus £320 million in health care costs – a total saving of £13.1 billion per year¹. I also know how important the carer services that Councils and Integration Authorities provide or commission in line with their Carers Act duties are – helping carers to look after their own health and wellbeing and to sustain caring relationships, avoiding the need for much costlier social care support.

Recently I have been hearing directly from carer representatives and people running local carer services there is an extreme and growing pressure on services. Overall, they are reporting concerns about a sharp growth in the numbers of carers needing support and their funding not keeping up with demand and the increasing costs of delivering support². Worryingly I am also hearing views that some of the funds allocated to enable Carers Act implementation are not being used for carer support.

¹ National Care Service (Scotland) Bill Financial Memorandum (para 72): [Financial Memorandum accessible \(parliament.scot\)](#)

² Coalition of Carers in Scotland Carers Centres Funding Survey August 2023: www.carersnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Carers-Centre-Funding-Report-Aug23FINAL.pdf

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Bearing this in mind, I want to highlight the Carers Act funding previously baselined in the local government settlement. The Act aimed to deliver a significant expansion in local carer support through establishing a number of statutory duties for authorities. As you know, it was accompanied by baselined funding increases so that by 2022-23, funding for services for both adult and young carers was £88.4 million more than it was in 2017-18³. Subsequent social care uplifts apply to all social care support, including support for carers under the Carers Act.

I therefore ask for your support in ensuring that Local Authorities and Integration Authorities are sighted on these funds; and in encouraging them to ensure these Carers Act resources are allocated in full to providing support for unpaid carers, including young carers.

I am particularly concerned that I continue to hear feedback from carers and carer representatives that local funding choices are not transparent. I share their desire to see greater visibility about how local carer services are funded – particularly as we work towards shared accountability and transparency under the NCS - so that local carer representatives can see how carer support is being prioritised. To that end, I welcome COSLA's offer to work with Health and Social Care Partnerships and my officials to help improve local transparency on this issue. COSLA leadership on this will be really valuable.

It may be helpful to remind Integration Authorities that their published Annual Performance Reports should include information on the total amount and proportion of funds spent in each reporting year on *'social care services provided in pursuance of integration functions to support unpaid carers in relation to needs arising from their caring role'*⁴ and I hope that the working group can support the identification and dissemination of good practice in this regard.

Finally, I would like to emphasise my gratitude for the important work Local Authorities do in supporting unpaid carers and ask for their continued support in prioritising that support in these financially pressured times. We all recognise the vital contributions of carers and I wish to see them supported in a way which supports their wellbeing and the maintenance of vital caring relationships.

I would be grateful if you would share this feedback with local decision-makers and look forward to working together on better understanding how the Carers Act funding is targeted and delivering on the intended outcomes of the Act.



MAREE TODD MSP

³ [Carers Act funding: February 2022 letter to councils and integration authorities - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/carer-act-funding-2022-23/letter-to-councils-and-integration-authorities-2022-23/pages/12.aspx)

⁴ Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Content of Performance Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2014
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