

**Gillian Keegan MP**

House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Minister,

Providers of support to adults with a learning disability are at breaking point.

Last year the Government began their long-awaited journey to reform social care, but there is a challenging road ahead and without adequate funding, a thriving future for the adult learning disability care sector, and more importantly the opportunity to ensure the most positive impact for the people we are here to serve, remains a distant hope.

Hft's latest Sector Pulse Check research revealed that in 2021, rising cost pressures including wage and utility bills forced providers of services for adults with a learning disability to hand back contracts and offer care to fewer people.

The social care sector is not immune from the cost of living crisis, and financial pressures are set to intensify even further this month as the energy price cap is lifted and the rate of inflation continues to grow. While providers want desperately to pay their staff more for the invaluable work they do, and recognise that this could alleviate workforce challenges, 80% have warned that the fees they are paid by local authorities will not cover the cost of staff wages. They will inevitably find resourceful ways to top up the fees themselves, despite the fact that 71% of providers are in deficit or have decreasing surpluses.

The increase in the National Living Wage is a start, but with the rapidly increasing costs of living, this uplift will not go far enough to attract and retain vital care and support teams. This is in spite of efforts made by providers including recruitment drives and the introduction of staff benefits. With inflation at a record high, it is questionable whether the new National Living Wage represents a pay increase in any case, meaning it will have little impact on the workforce crisis faced by the learning disability care sector. Alongside financial pressures, staff shortages caused by an average vacancy rate of 16% forced three quarters of providers to turn down new admissions to their service and one third to close services altogether.

This perfect storm is simply not sustainable.

While the government has pledged additional funding for social care through the Health and Care Levy, it does not address immediate financial and workforce challenges. With further cost saving measures such as service closures a likely outcome, this ultimately impacts those who rely on the vital support the sector provides.

We are uniting today to ask you to petition the Chancellor to urgently redirect additional funds from the Health and Social Care Levy into social care from year one. This must ensure local authorities are able to cover the cost of care they commission from adult learning disability care providers,

including rises in energy bills, as well as a wage which reflects the real-term cost of living and attracts more individuals to work in the sector.

It is vital that the social care sector is placed on a financial footing to ensure it can respond to adults with a learning disability who need support. Not only will this ensure better outcomes for individuals who rely on social care, but is integral to the government's broader reform and integration agenda. Only when social care is thriving will pressure on, and unnecessary admissions into NHS hospital settings be relieved.

Signed,

**Kirsty Matthews, CEO, Hft**

**Dr Rhidian Hughes, Chief Executive, Voluntary Organisations Disability Group**

**Richard Kramer, CEO, Sense**

**Tim Cooper, Chief Executive, United Response**

**Edel Harris, Chief Executive, Mencap**

**Rachael Dogson, Chief Executive, Dimensions**

**Sue Porto, Chief Executive, Brandon Trust**

**Lisa Hopkins, Chief Executive, SeeAbility**

**Sarah Maguire, CEO, Choices Support**

**Mark Lee, Chief Executive, Together Trust**

**David Ellis, Chief Executive, National Star**

**Claire Haywood, CEO, Freeways**

**Eva Eriksson, Chief Executive, Grace Eyre**

**Hilary Crowhurst, Chief Executive, Milestones Trust**

**Paula Braynion, Managing Director, Future Directions CIC**

**Estelle Christmas, Interim CEO, Kingwood**

**Sue Livett, CEO, Aldingbourne Trust**

**Graham O'Connor, Director, Halow Project**

**Leo Sowerby, Chief Executive, Affinity Trust**

**Ruth Gorman, CEO, Imagine Act and Succeed**

**Maria Mills, Chief Executive, Active Prospects**

**Mark Milton, Chief Executive, Ambient Group**

**Steve Nichols, Chief Executive, Rossendale Trust**

**Stef Kay, CEO, Bethpage**

**Ellen Vick, CEO, New Prospects Association**

**Jo Land, Group Chief Executive, Avenues Trust Group**

**Mark Adams, CEO, Community Integrated Care**