

Rural Services APPG

**Joint All-Party Parliamentary Group
Rural Services and County
15th September 2021 at 3:30pm
On-line via Zoom**

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Discussion of the State of Care in County and Rural Areas- a joint report to be published by Rural Services Network (RSN) and the County Council Network (CCN).

MEMBERS

Sir Peter Bottomley MP (Worthing West)

Rob Butler MP (Aylesbury)

Lord Taylor of Holbeach

Lisa Griffiths (Office of Flick Drummond MP)

Arthur Virgo (Office of Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP)

OBSERVERS

Archie Hill

In attendance from Rural Services Secretariat and County Secretariat

Bethan Aldridge (RSN)

Graham Biggs MBE (RSN) (Chair)

James Holden (CCN)

David Inman (RSN)

Jonathan Rallings (CCN)

1. Apologies for Absence

Peter Aldous MP (Waveney)

Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP (Ludlow)

Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP (North Shropshire)

Greg Smith MP (Buckinghamshire)

Tom Tugendhat MP (Tonbridge & Malling)

Bishop Alan (St Albans)

Lord Ewen Cameron of Dillington

2. State of Care in County and Rural Areas - Joint Report by RSN and CCN

(see link to [Full report](#) and [Executive Summary](#))

Graham Biggs welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself as the Chief Executive of the Rural Services Network. He would be acting as Chair for this joint meeting of the Rural Services and County APPGs as both Chairs, Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP and Peter Aldous MP had both been unable to attend today's meeting and had sent their apologies in advance.

Graham was aware that the Divisions Bell would be called at 4pm for a debate on Universal Credit, so there would be a very brief introduction to the report followed by any questions.

Jonathan Rallings from CCN introduced the report with the following points:

- **State of Care in County and Rural Areas** – joint report by RSN and CCN published on 16.09.21. Report designed to provide an insight into the differences between the different types of areas. The report also includes updated conclusions following the government announcement the previous week.
- **Report looked at resources and higher costs for county rural authorities** which included workforce recruitment and retention with currently 112,000 vacancies in social care market. Impact on recruitment include compulsory vaccinations, other range of vacancies in job market, demographics in rural areas with much older population. Greater proportion of large residential homes in rural settings with a higher number of self-funding adults.
- **New government proposals in [Build Back Better](#)** – some good points come out and some serious issues too. Councils spend £14bn currently, government to raise money by introducing a 1.25% increase in NI contributions. Money to initially go into NHS for first three years to clear backlog. To qualify for fully funded care you will have to be relatively poor with less than £23K in assets. There will be a cap on contributions of £86K and have assets worth up to £100K. More people will qualify for a contribution from the Council and a limit on the amount paid toward own care. Self-funders will be able to ask councils to arrange their care because they have significantly lower rates in many care homes and can block book places. White paper due out later this year.
- **Risks** - the care market will be de-stabilised by reducing fees which they can't afford to maintain and close homes at greater rate than currently or increase overall prices and councils will be unable to afford them. Concerns that the NHS will soak up the money given to it over the next 3 years, and it won't come into social care.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant** to be increased to aid prevention and welcomed.
- **Need to engage with Government** so that they understand the implications of maintaining a stable care market when the care costs are capped and the cost of assessing every current self-funder. New money won't reach social care until 2023 at earliest. Largest proportion of spending on care is on the 18-64 age group – average unit costs much higher. Transition from care home settings to home based to increase post Covid – cost of delivering care in rural areas is roughly three times higher. Rely more heavily on client contributions. The need for high level of care for

all no matter where they live whilst core funding grants have been reduced by 42%. Extra costs picked up through council tax increases.

- **Recommendations** – Increase funding in the Spending Review, assess the impact of unmet need and how do we meet that demand. How do you ensure equality across the country, what does the duty to self-funders mean, enshrine in law that a proportion of the new levy funding is directed to social care, invest in the workforce by increasing wages, training and career progression and the move towards more domiciliary care.
- Welcome the government starting the debate around what social care systems should look like but there a **still a lot of issues that impact disproportionately on rural areas.**

Graham thanked Jonathan for his presentation. He explained that the press release and report would be issued tomorrow.

Lord Taylor noted that in the context of the Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2021: [Health in coastal communities](#) , there were very poor standard of healthcare in coastal districts. The decline of Primary Health care in rural Lincolnshire had contributed to a number of premature deaths. Lord Taylor questioned whether the extra funding would be enough as it was difficult to run care homes properly and profitably and also huge issues with staffing.

Jonathan Rallings commented that the Disabled Facilities Grant if used effectively and the transition into ICS was crucial in getting this right. He also noted that where those relationships worked well; they were good. This was a reminder not to think about the NHS and Social Care separately but join up to help all communities. Important to feed in Local Authorities' points of view so that reforms of Social Care can be as effective as possible.

Graham Biggs re-iterated that if anyone had any further questions to contact RSN or CCN as they were committed to working together on this. They would pass on comments into government at all levels and hope to influence the Social White Paper.

Meeting finished at 3:56pm.