

Report of the Member Champion for Quality of Care**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As everyone knows, the past 18 months have been some of the most challenging months since the Second World War due to the pandemic. This has had a huge impact on those giving and receiving care. For this reason, in the interests of maintain public safety standards, my work visiting care settings as Member Champion for Quality of Care has been curtailed.
- 1.2 During this time, I volunteered to contact vulnerable residents who were isolating under home care for chats and assistance as part of our BD CAN initiative. This included arranging for families or those that were shielding to be provided communication devices to help them keep in touch with their loved ones, virtually.
- 1.3 I have maintained contact with our Care and Leadership team offering them moral support through these difficult times. I also kept in regular contact with both the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement and Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration to ensure funerals were arranged in a dignified way and in accordance with government guidance.
- 1.4 I also assisted in the provision of activities and events promoting mental well-being for care venues through online virtual events, and joined the care forum, which is supported by clinicians and admin staff as well as volunteers who have worked together throughout the pandemic. And it is to those people who have worked so hard during these difficult times to whom I turn my attention now.

2. National Insurance rise and the care pay scandal

- 2.1 Care workers, and their medical colleagues in the NHS are undoubtedly the heroes of the pandemic. Their personal sacrifice and dedication to the dignity of their residents and patients have hopefully inspired an entire generation of people to go into public service. The work they do requires them to deal daily with people who are a combination of unwell, confused and vulnerable people. They perform the most intimate tasks for strangers and the social contact they provide is a lifeline for our grandparents and disabled people.
- 2.2 Yet recent Government decisions around rises to National Insurance mean the average care worker will be around £140 worse off. With an average pay in London of £9.50 an hour, this means they will lose almost half a week's pay. It is true that adult social care funding is in a dire state nationally. There is a need for more funding for local authorities like ours. But doing so by increasing the financial burden on care workers, who are desperately underpaid, is wrong.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 This has been an incredibly difficult time for many people, particularly those working and living in care homes. The families of both groups have also been adversely affected. The future of quality care relies on the professionalism and

dedication of our care staff, as well as the continued hard work of live-in carers and informal care networks. I look forward to seeing the progress we are able to make in Barking and Dagenham in the future.