

Independent Care Matters

the newsletter for independent care providers in York
and North Yorkshire

Mixed News on Fee Negotiations

Issue 3
Spring 2005

- Above inflation award from North Yorkshire
- York City Council asked to reconsider
- Social Care Plus introduced in North Yorkshire with compensation package



As **Independent Care Matters** goes to press, **ICG** has just concluded an intensive period of negotiations on fee levels. These negotiations have been extremely difficult and time consuming and have taken place against the backdrop of two local authorities which are financially stretched.

The outcome of these talks has been mixed. Whilst **ICG** has managed to secure **an additional £1.25 million** from North Yorkshire to address some of the concerns in the County and provide an improved package worth around 4.5% on the existing level, the City of York has only offered a 2.3% increase. The City of York proposal has been rejected by **ICG** as unacceptable and the Council has been asked to reconsider. A further meeting between the **ICG** and City of York Council is imminent.

ICG is also disappointed that no further progress has been made in the 'Fair Price for Care' work this year. However, progress was made in North Yorkshire on trying to address the inequities on the bandings for nursing care, which has meant providers received the same sum irrespective of the needs of the client. From 4 April, providers in the County will receive payments relating to low, medium or high dependency needs. This new system whilst far from perfect goes some way to redress the balance but as with all things new, brings its own challenges. **ICG** was able to negotiate a compensation package to help providers. It is very clear that the rate for Social Care is far too low and this will need to be addressed in the next few months for the next negotiating round. **The ICG Board will be holding a meeting in May to determine if it will recommend that providers do not accept any new client to the low band for nursing care as this fee level is insufficient.** *A further issue will be for those providing social care in care homes that give personal care - and as the differentials become increasingly apparent, questions will be asked - especially for dementia care.*

On the positive side, **ICG** was able to ensure that those providing care in care homes for personal care and those providing home care, received a fair share of the North Yorkshire monies on offer—they will receive a 4.5% increase. Funding was also secured to assist with ICG's costs.

It is clear that while this year has been difficult, next year will be even tougher. **ICG** is determined that progress will be made on the 'Fair Price for Care' issue next time and many other issues including addressing a fair price for home care. ICG can only do this however with **your membership support** and it looks forward to this as we go into the future. **Unity is essential.** Watch this space!

Mike Padgham, Chair of ICG

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Minister Stephen Ladyman meets with ICG

ICG Chair Mike Padgham and Development Director Keren Wilson met with Health Minister **Stephen Ladyman** recently and outlined the current difficulties facing the local health and social care economy and in particular small to medium sized businesses.

The Minister spoke of the need for better commissioning in order to support clients their relatives and providers. He stated that if providers have an issue over fees being insufficient to raise standards they should take this up with CSCI which is responsible for overseeing commissioning. He reiterated that commissioning should be fair to clients, fair to providers, fair to taxpayers and fair to commissioners. A number of solutions for the care sector were put to the Minister by ICG including a time limited VAT concession for care homes wanting to meet new standards; grants for diversification and economic development assistance; and seminars for care providers on business change. He took these ideas away and agreed to look at them.

ICG is grateful to Scarborough MP Lawrie Quinn for arranging the meeting.



Minister Stephen Ladyman, with Scarborough MP Lawrie Quinn, Keren Wilson Development Director for ICG and Mike Padgham, ICG Chair

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Let's celebrate care ...

Are you tired of reading bad press about the care sector?

Is there another side of the story which receives little attention?

ICG wants to redress the balance by showing the caring side. If you have received private praise for your service then let us know and we'll print a selection of the positive comments that are made to you.

Like most care providers ICG Director **Gill Gallagher** who has two care homes in Scarborough has a file of good wishes and thanks from the relatives of clients. Here are just two from her file:

'Now that Dad has moved I just wanted to write and say a big thank you for all the care and support you gave him.

To see the change from when he

first came to stay with you, to how he is now is great and is very much down to the care he received with you. I know he wasn't easy and indeed was extremely difficult on many occasions and it would have been entirely understandable if you'd asked him to leave so I was extremely grateful for the way you 'stuck with him.'

I know you also saw the other side of him, which is the lovely man I have as my Dad, so you'll understand how much it meant to me to know he was living somewhere like Norwood House.



Wishing you all the best ...'

And another:

'Thank you for the kind and compassionate way you looked after our dear Mum during her stay with you. We feel her loss deeply but are comforted by the thought that she died at peace, in familiar surroundings and with people who knew and cared about her.

It's a pity that you did not see her as she used to be—lively, full of fun and always happy to put herself out for others. She was a very special and wonderful woman. Once again our heartfelt thanks. We will remember you all with fondness and gratitude.

Yours ...'

These are the unsung stories. Let us have yours and make this a regular feature.

ICG member gains national Enterprise Award for home care business



Home care provider, **Erica Gray** from Whitby was runner up in the prestigious national **Enterprise Awards** run by the Prince's Trust and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Erica, Managing Director of SimplyCare Ltd was presented with a wooden bowl and a cheque for £2,500. She says, 'A number of people came up to us afterwards to congratulate us and were genuinely interested in how we were implementing new standards in home care. I had produced a short video to show how we strive to meet the needs of the client, how we implement high standards and conform to regulations and guidelines set by CSCI, and also how we continually train and develop our care workers to meet the ever grow-



Erica Gray receives her prize from Prince Charles

ing needs of people in the community.

Without the care workers at SimplyCare we could not have won this award.'

Erica was pipped to the winning post by a lady who had opened a convenience store on a local estate that had been hit by heavy crime.

Erica adds, 'This is still a huge achievement and recognition for home care.'



Could Apprenticeships help in your business

Have you considered taking a young person into your business under the Apprenticeships scheme?

Apprentices work towards achieving NVQ Level 2 & possibly 3. They learn through a combination of on and off-the-job education and training. On the job they work alongside your staff and the rest they learn from a local learning provider.

Apprenticeships can apply across different occupational areas within health and social care. They equip young people aged 16-24 with the skills & knowledge to do the job better. For an Apprentice it isn't just a job; it's the first step towards a long term career.

Funding of Apprenticeships may be available from the Learning and Skills Council. For more information call **08000 150 400** for a free employer's pack or visit the website on www.apprenticeships.org.uk

ICG local meetings - everyone welcome

ICG local meetings give care providers an opportunity to get together and raise their concerns. After attending a meeting in Harrogate in February local MP Phil Willis took forward the issues raised with NYCC, The Treasury and with Health Minister Stephen Ladyman.



MP Phil Willis addresses ICG meeting at Harrogate

Local meetings are being arranged in May and June at **Leeming, Skipton, Scarborough, Harrogate** and **York**. Invitations are sent to all providers in the area but for more information contact: **Keren Wilson** on 01423 816 582 or e-mail keren.wilson@indcaregroup.plus.com.

Making the case for an increase in fees

ICG is extremely disappointed that in spite of working with NYCC and with CYC on the JRF model to establish what is a Fair Price for Care over the last six months we have been unable to persuade them to commit to paying that price. We have listened to their lengthy arguments about a lack of resources but we all know that this does not help us to raise staff wages and meet all the necessary expenses of providing care.

Yet again care providers have felt so strongly that they have written letters to their elected representatives. **Here are some excerpts from ICG members' letters on fair fees:**

Excerpt from letter One

'I would like to draw your attention in particular to a resident who is cared for under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act. Although this resident has funds of her own the council is responsible for payment of her care. This lady occupies a single en-suite room the cost of which is now £380 per week but City of York Council pays only £334.95 per week leaving a shortfall of £45.05 per week.

I understand it is the Council's responsibility in this case to pay for the care required to suit the needs of the person. The only way that this resident can be provided for successfully is to care for her in a single en-suite room. The reason for this being the diagnosis of Schizophrenia along with the symptoms displayed by this illness. Although the care needed is mainly as for a frail elderly person, symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations and paranoia are still present at times. This makes it impossible to care for this lady in shared accommodation as the presence of another person in her room would cause her and her companion distress.

We have a very long waiting list for residents choosing to live in our Home, many through the Council, unfortunately, we will be unable to consider anyone for a vacancy where the full fee is unable to be paid.'

Excerpt from letter Two

'The JRF figures suggest that we are currently underfunded by £89.87 per person per week. Clearly this is a recipe for disaster.

With almost every post I am advised of increases that will add considerably to my overheads. Some are not too excessive, some are as much as 100% but all of them are way in excess of the 2.3% proposed by City of York Council. The DoH's regulatory fees are subject to an across the board increase of 20%, this following a similar increase at the start of the previous year. Business rates are up, rubbish collection is up, gas is up, electric



is up, water is up, CRB checks are up etc etc.

We consider ourselves enlightened employers and we strive to keep our wages at the higher end of the private sector pay scale. Nevertheless we are not able to pay anywhere near the same level of wages as is paid to staff in local authority homes. For homes such as ours (EMI), where a higher ratio

of staff and additional training is required, maintaining satisfactory staffing levels is a nightmare. There are times when we wonder whether any of it is worth it. We know we are doing a good job. Our staff know they are doing a good job, so why is it that we all feel constantly undervalued?'

Excerpt from letter Three

'It is virtually impossible to reconcile the Government's demands for this industry to develop and improve whilst at the same time your Department is handcuffing us by failing to provide adequate resources to carry out what are mandatory requirements.

Our largest single expense is staff costs—the level of these is dictated by the National Minimum Wage and increases in October 2004 and again in October 2005 means that our wage bill is escalating by approximately 15% p.a. The minimum wage is only the tip of the iceberg as all wages/salaries have to be proportionately increased to keep the differential otherwise we would lose our senior trained staff. A secondary, but no less important factor of the minimum wage increases is the obvious knock on effect on the amount of Employers National Insurance.'

Excerpt from letter Four

'I write to say how disappointed we are that we have to negotiate Home Care fees and reiterate our feelings. Prices should not be set mechanistically, but should have regard to providers' costs, efficiencies and planned outcomes for service users. Fee setting must take account of the legitimate current and future costs faced by providers and factors that may affect these costs.'

ICG promises that it will not let the work it has done on the JRF model for a Fair Price for Care be forgotten. It will continue to press NYCC and CYC to commit to plans to deliver fair fees for care homes and to undertake the UKHCA model to determine the fair fees for home care.

Your letters ...



Dear ICG

Unfair restrictions on Care Homes in Harrogate leave home owners caught between two policies

Here is a contradiction. North Yorkshire County Council is the major purchaser of care in the County. It has the stated aim of shifting its purchasing of care in residential and nursing homes to alternative services aimed at helping people to stay in their own homes. In other words it predicts a future of where fewer care homes will be needed and more home care.

As owners of a care home we must therefore look to our future options. Here in Harrogate, however, the District Council has in place a planning restriction which effectively prevents care home owners selling their premises for any other purpose than to be used as a care home.

How can that be right? We ask that NYCC discuss this inconsistency with Harrogate District Council and show them why they should lift this restriction. It is completely unfair to care home owners in Harrogate to be caught up in this way between conflicting policies.

Yours sincerely

David & Susan Brown

The Pines Nursing Home

Dear ICG

Small is beautiful

There is a lot of talk among politicians and the public sector about 'choice' while at the same time decisions are taken which will restrict choice in the care sector in the future.

I have yet to find any recognition of the good work done by small homes which provide a home from home for many people who need a little bit of looking after – or any desire on the part of the local authorities to help them remain in business.

We run a care home for seven residents and there is something special about being small. A friendliness, a cosiness, a feeling of belonging and a personalisation which is quite unique. It is something worth cherishing and protecting. It is something which is very much needed by many older people

who through no fault of their own can no longer manager on their own but wish for the companionship of others. Sadly, it seems to me that current policies and associated bureaucracy are forcing out most small businesses. Initially it was the corner shop and the village shop, next it was the village school, the village police house and the post office and now it is the village care home. Smallness is a concept worth fighting for and which I believe should be recognised by all perhaps even to the extent of special financial measures channelled into the smaller home to protect and nurture their survival. My residents wouldn't wish to move anywhere else. Why shouldn't their choice be recognised and respected?

Jim Lawson

Cloughton Beeches

Your letters ...



Dear ICG

Running a home care business and providing a good service

I am extremely concerned about the way home care is being commissioned in Scarborough. We provide care workers to go into the homes of people who may be elderly or disabled. We provide a service such as helping them to get dressed, making sure they have meals and helping with things which they can no longer do for themselves.

We aim to provide a consistent service so that the client gets to know the care worker and feels comfortable with them.

Increasingly we are being asked by the Council to take on a client on a temporary basis. For example, to provide the service until the Council's own in-house service is able to take it over or worse to provide the service until another care business which has won a block contract with the Council is ready and able to take it

over.

This does not help small businesses like ours to be sustainable and neither is it in the best interests of the client - who does not want a succession of strangers coming into their home to provide personal services.

If the Council wishes to commission our services then it should do so in a way which is fair to us and to the client.

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ICG represents independent care providers in York & North Yorkshire including care home providers for all client groups, domiciliary care agencies, supported living and extra care housing providers, in the private and voluntary parts of the independent sector.

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ICG Meetings with CSCI

ICG has met senior managers of CSCI Yorkshire and Humberside on two occasions recently.

Geoff Griffiths, Business Relationship Manager, explained that CSCI will adopt a fair approach to regulation and spoke of how inspections are changing. It is intended future inspections will focus on how people who use care services experience them, and the approach will mean fewer inspections for those who have consistently met standards.

Geoff said that CSCI has mechanisms to clarify and to resolve differences with individual providers about any regulatory issue.

Change is underway and CSCI has been consulting on its proposals to modernise regulation through *Inspecting for Better Lives* and on its Corporate Plan to

develop all aspects of its work and the Department of Health reviewing the National Minimum Standards for Older People's Services currently.



ICG will continue to raise with CSCI any regulatory issues that individual members consider have yet to be satisfactorily resolved. At this meeting ICG said it knew of some occasions when CSCI inspectors took a different approach to reporting the serious-

ness of not meeting the requirements of regulation, and that some providers reported they had experienced different emphasis in inspections when their inspector changed. Geoff took note of these concerns and indicated that managers were keen to deal fairly with issues such as these on an individual basis as they arise. ICG agreed to provide evidence to support any future concerns of this nature.

ICG and CSCI now meet quarterly - if anyone has any agenda items they would like to suggest please contact ICG Development Director, Keren Wilson on 01423 816 582.