

Baroness Scott of Bybrook, OBE

2017

Cabinet Office

County Hall

Bythesea Road

Trowbridge

Wiltshire

BA14 8JN

Dear John

### **Caring for the Elderly**

Thank you for your letter regarding the pressures on NHS services and social care for Wiltshire residents.

Wiltshire Council has made protecting the vulnerable a priority, despite the backdrop of declining overall resources for local government and tight settlements for the NHS. In contrast to many other councils, we have actually increased our spend on adult care from £120m in 2013/14 to an agreed £138m in 2016/17. Our budget proposals for 2017/18 include full use of the adult social care levy (of 3% on council tax) and projected increases in the adult care budget to £155m by 2020/21.

These increases recognise that there has been a significant increase in the complexity and cost of care with more people living longer; resulting in more specialised care. The Council has also worked with providers to react, plan and fund the national living wage (NLW) increases to ensure that the provider market is able to provide high quality services (in 2016/17 the impact of the NLW was £0.5 million more than forecast and is set to rise again in 2017/18).

The Council continues to work closely with its NHS partners through our Health and Wellbeing Board to improve the whole system of care; in the last 12 months there has been a 1% improvement in the percentage of people discharged from Hospital to rehabilitation, who are still at home after 91 days (84.9% in 2016/17 to date still living at home compared with 83.9% in 2015/16). This means they remain independent for longer, avoiding more costly residential care. As a result of work with our partners through the Better Care Plan (a £27m pooled budget with the NHS), Wiltshire successfully reduced the number of permanent admissions to nursing and residential homes and over the last 12 month period with 200 fewer admissions.

The Better Care Plan has also successfully reduced bed blocking (delayed transfers of care due to social care) in 2015-16 to zero in many months across all three acute hospitals; although this has recently increased back to the levels seen in 2014-15, in part due to issues with CQC restrictions on one of our providers, which limited our workforce for admission avoidance and discharge support. The relevant statistics for Wiltshire residents can be found in the regular updates to our Health and Wellbeing Boards and we are committed to bringing these numbers down further. It's important to emphasise that our acute hospitals serve residents from a number of local areas and delayed transfers of care in those hospitals may represent pressure in other local authority areas. We are

continuing to explore additional options for integration and will be setting out our commissioning intentions for the Better Care Plan in 2017/18 shortly.

I hope this reassures you of the importance Wiltshire Council places on investing in adult social care and in ensuring our services are well joined up with those of the NHS.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott of Bybrook".

Baroness Scott of Bybrook, OBE  
Leader, Wiltshire Council  
Chairman, Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board