



Councillor Keith Aspden
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The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social
Care

8th April 2020

Dear Mr Hancock,

As Leader of City of York Council, I am writing to underline the urgent need for the Government to deliver additional PPE equipment to the adult social care sector and provide assurances about ongoing supplies for the weeks ahead.

Social care is at the frontline of responding to the outbreak of Coronavirus and I know that in York, our workforce is doing an incredible job in extremely difficult circumstances. They are, of course, also doing a dangerous job, putting themselves at great risk to protect vulnerable residents and support our communities. Ensuring their safety should be paramount, alongside the safety of those that they are supporting.

Despite recent positive communication from the Government, we continue to receive reports that essential supplies are not getting through to our social care frontline. I understand that the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum is expecting a delivery of PPE supplies this week, but it will be a one-off delivery for use in an emergency. Although this delivery is welcome, it will do very little to help with our on-going supply to respond to this crisis.

On top of this and exacerbating the issue, is that the thousands of people who work in non-regulated services, such as personal assistants, are being advised to contact their local council for PPE equipment. Stocks that we currently do not have.

Where we have looked to procure PPE to deal with shortages, we are concerned by some suppliers raising their costs significantly and profiteering on the back of the current situation. As you are already well aware, social care budgets are already under significant pressure and the actions of some suppliers is heaping additional pressure on our budgets. The Government should work to issue specific guidance to suppliers on this matter, or provide a commitment to local authorities that costs will be covered.

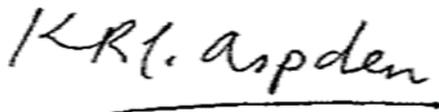
Finally, in some instances, the PPE that has been supplied has not been of acceptable quality, in some cases dirty or damaged, or provided without guidance as to its proper use. This cannot continue and I would ask that this is looked into with urgency.

I know that in these unprecedented times, Government, local authorities and partners are working around the clock to provide an effective response to Covid-19. However, it would be remiss if I did not raise these issues with you. In line with the LGA's recent lobbying efforts for additional PPE, I would endorse the following asks to Government:

- That the Government make an urgent statement on the immediate provision of PPE to social care and the thousands of workers who work in regulated and non-regulated services;
- That a further statement on the Government's plans to ensure the ongoing provision of quality PPE for the weeks ahead;
- That the Government make adequate, long-term supplies of PPE available through Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) to ensure: councils can quickly address any local social care supply chain issues; and LRFs have capacity to deal with supply problems for other key frontline workers, such as the police, mental health colleagues and homeless outreach workers.

These requests are incredibly important to enable our social care staff to continue to keep people safe and well, in turn relieving pressure on our NHS. We know the coming weeks are set to be even more challenging. Our level of preparedness must be the best it can if we are to support our communities during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.R. Aspden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Cllr Keith Aspden
Leader of the Council
City of York Council

CC: The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Cllr James Jamieson, Chairman, Local Government Association. Julie Ogley, President, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services