

Coronavirus – government will foot the social care bill

Councils have been asked to increase support for care at home, nursing homes and care homes to reduce delayed discharges and free up hospital beds.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman has confirmed to COSLA that, subject to expenditure being aligned to local plans, The Scottish Government will meet additional costs to increase support and staff capacity in social care.

The move aims to help the care system adapt to increased pressure placed on it by COVID -19, with many people requiring continued support for daily living, even if they have not contracted the virus.

Ms Freeman said: “We have placed the NHS on an emergency footing and we also need to increase the capacity in our social care sector.

“Extensive work is already underway by health and social care partnerships to free up hospital beds and care for older people, and others in need of support, in care homes and in our communities.

“We have now informed councils that any additional expenditure to maximise the care available to our communities, aligned to work that is already underway, will be covered by the Scottish Government.”

COSLA’s Health and Social Care spokesperson Councillor Stuart Currie said: “COVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge to anyone working in caring professions in Scotland.

“The Scottish Government and local government have shared leadership to ensure the entire system is working together to optimise the impact on the wellbeing of our communities. Work is underway locally to do this and today’s announcement gives welcome assurance to the sector about the steps which will be taken to maximise the care available to our communities.

“COSLA guidance will be issued shortly to support commissioners to work collaboratively to protect the resilience of the social care sector and ensure they remain operationally and financially viable.”