



Department for
Communities and
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Rt Hon Fiona Mactaggart MP
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Dear Fiona,

Thank you for your email of 16 November to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, on behalf of your constituent, about proposals to devolve Attendance Allowance funding. I am replying as this falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

The current system of care support for older people is fragmented: people can get benefit payments from the Department of Work and Pensions, health care from the NHS and care services from local authorities. The Government wants to explore if there is a better way to provide support for older people with care needs through local provision – and as part of this, on 5 July the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP issued a consultation on plans to devolve 100% of business rates to local councils by 2020, which mentioned Attendance Allowance.

By the end of the Parliament, local government will retain 100% of taxes raised locally. This will give councils control of an additional £12.5 billion of business rates to spend on local services. This move towards self-sufficiency and away from dependence on central Government is something councils have long campaigned for – it will shape the role and purpose of local government for decades. As part of this reform we are considering the devolution of additional responsibilities to local government to ensure there is no additional burden on the taxpayer.

As you know the consultation closed on 26 September. We are currently considering the responses (including those raising similar concerns as your constituent) and will set out our position in due course. If the proposal to devolve Attendance Allowance funding were to proceed, we have been clear that only new applicants would be affected, so those already claiming Attendance Allowance would not be in scope. Any new responsibilities for local government would also be matched by the transfer of the equivalent spending power.

Please rest assured that we would of course consult further in good time if any changes were proposed to Attendance Allowance, including on the right model for devolution and the appropriate level of flexibility that local councils would have. We don't want to create difference for difference sake but the needs of older people and the best means of meeting them can vary.