Kent County Council Care Home Fair Cost of Care Output Report

Contents

Background and purpose of document

Kent County Council completed the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise in line with the 'Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care fund 2022 to 2023': guidance which was published on 24 March 2022. However, in light of expressed significant concerns mainly because of data quality, incompleteness, relevance, geography and reliability, the County Council has concluded that it cannot place any substantial weight or meaningfully rely on the median figure derived from the exercise for the reasons described below. Consequently, the County Council holds the view that, consistent with the government guidance, the outcome of the cost of care data gathering exercise **cannot** be determinative and/or intended to be a replacement for the fee-setting element of the local authority commissioning processes or individual contract negotiation and that it would offend best value and other fiduciary duties owed to Kent residents.

Kent County Council has not received a valid statistical sample from the data returns meaning that it is not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions on the cost of care in Kent. Therefore, it would be wholly inappropriate for the result of the cost of care data gathering exercise to be singularly decisive for the fee setting element of local authority commissioning processes or individual contract negotiation.

Furthermore, Kent County Council has concerns around the extent to which the care homes that have provided useable responses can be considered representative of the local provider market in Kent. Of particular significance, and as detailed in the analysis provided by Evalucom the independent organisation that carried out the work, which stated that "there is evidence of a statistically significant skew towards the West of the county – an area associated with higher operating costs (and profits)". To the extent that "the results of this Fair Cost of Care exercise for Kent have undoubtedly been skewed by returns from providers offering premium services that are unreasonable to expect the public purse to provide (and where the LA rarely fund placements)".

Additionally, Kent County Council is concerned by the very high level of variation across providers that we are seeing both in the overall cost of care estimates and estimates for the key components of the cost of care, and the implications this has for the stability and reliability of a point estimate for the fair cost of care.

Moreover, Kent County Council has concerns that the cost information given by providers is not consistent with the current state of capacity in the market.

Thus, overall, Kent County Council has significant concerns as to the quality, completeness, relevance and reliability of data received from providers, and to the validity and representativeness of the sample of data returns. As a result, Kent County Council is unable to accept the outputs of the exercise as the determinative cost of care in Kent. In conclusion, the County Council does not intend to rely solely on the information in this submission as part of its future fee setting strategy and is treating this as a data gathering exercise with the market at this stage. The County Council's fee setting strategy will continue to be informed by a range of economic, fiscal and market factors taking into account legislative requirements.

This document will provide the detail for Kent County Council's Fair Cost of Care exercise and the outputs and conclusion of the results.

Geography of Kent

With a resident population of 1,589,100 Kent has the largest population of all the English counties. Over the past 10 years Kent's population has grown by 9.4% between 2010 and 2020, above the average both for the South East (7.5%) and for England (7.4%). Kent's population is forecast to increase by a further 19% between 2019 and 2039.

Kent has an aging population. Forecasts show that the number of 65+ year olds is forecast to increase by 44.9% between 2019 and 2039, yet the proportion of population aged under 65 is only forecast to increase by 12.2%.

Kent is the largest local authority in England, with a significant coastal boundary and bordering London. There is significant variance in the wealth and deprivation across the County, and as such the care home market varies significantly. There are currently 261 older people's care homes (active) in the county: Kent also contracts with a further 8 care homes outside of the KCC area.

- higher numbers of Nursing Care homes in West Kent compared to the east of the county.
- a greater number of smaller independent care homes in East Kent.
- a significant number of smaller care homes concentrated in the Kent districts that have a coastal border.

Data Collection and Provider Engagement

The Fair Cost of care data gathering exercise was live for seven weeks between May and July 2022. During this time the council employed several different methods to engage the market. This included virtual drop-in sessions for providers to ask questions or request clarification (this had a low uptake from providers), weekly targeted e-mails setting out the requirements and the importance of engaging; articles in newsletters on the topic; meetings with representatives from Trade associations, presentations at provider forums, a dedicated mailbox set up for queries and external resource allocated to make direct telephone calls to providers to support them in completing the tool.

The council engaged with all 261 65+ care homes within Kent. For care homes, the data request was issued using the CareCubed cost of care iESE tool made available via the Local Government Association (LGA). The tool requested providers to provide data for the 2021/22 financial year (April 2021 to March 2022) and additional uplift and care staff data for April 2022.

Kent County Council used an independent third-party provider to review the provider cost data for validation and analysis. It was communicated to providers that the cut-off date for submissions was the 18/07/22 with final submissions sent to the external provider by 01/08/22.

If obvious outliers were identified at the point of submission, Kent County Council queried this with the provider to give them the opportunity to amend and resubmit to ensure as many valid returns were used within the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise as possible. The council also set up a dedicated mailbox to deal with any queries regarding the exercise and to help with filling in forms to boost validated data returns.

Kent County Council also conducted a survey to gain providers views on the issues currently faced by the care sector, and their feedback on the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise. The initial email invitation was issued to 490 65+ care homes and domiciliary providers on 17 August and followed by automated reminders to those who had not completed the survey after 7 and 14 days. The survey was closed on 6 September with 145 responses: a response rate of 30%.

Small to medium care providers (who were underrepresented at provider engagement events) were invited via email to participate in one-to-one interviews to provide their views about the factors that have, or could, impact the standard and sustainability of care in the future.

Feedback on the issues currently faced by the care sector will be included within the Market Sustainability Plan (Annex C). The survey indicated that the main reason that

care home providers did not complete the Fair Cost of Care tool was due to not having the time to complete it. The most important outcome for care home providers who did complete the Fair Cost of Care tool was: 'an understanding of what quality and sustainable care provision costs to run'. The one-to-one interviews with care home providers also strongly supported the key findings of the survey.

Data Analysis and Fair Cost of Care Outputs

Methodology

An independent third-party organisation Evalucom was commissioned to analyse the data received from providers and ascertain the lower quartile, median and upper quartile for the cost of care from the data received. This section details the methodology used by Evalucom.

The data was first reviewed and validated to determine what data returns were valid for use in the calculation of the outputs and any adjustments to the data required. This included:

1. Identifying and excluding data returns that were out of scope for the Fair Cost of Care exercise
2. Identifying and excluding any data returns that were incomplete
3. Identifying and excluding any data returns with quality issues
4. Identifying and excluding any data returns that contain outlier values

Once the data had been validated, Evalucom analysed the data using the provider-level outputs generated by the iESE tool to calculate the following outputs:

1. **Total cost of care 2021/22- care homes:** The lower quartile, median and upper quartile total cost of care Kent for 2021/22 for each of the specified care categories was calculated. The outputs were replicated from the iESE tool using the provider raw data to verify the accuracy of the iESE tool outputs, using the methodology used by iESE. The total cost of care outputted included a provider return on capital (ROC) and return on operations (ROO).

   The IESE tool allowed providers to enter a ROO as a % of operating costs. The tool then calculated a total ROO for the home and apportioned this evenly across the different care types. Evalucom also followed this methodology. Evalucom noted in their report that they would consider it more appropriate to apportion the ROO based on the % of operating costs per care type, so that higher cost placements receive the same percentage ROO as lower cost placements. Using the iESE methodology means where providers deliver multiple placement types, the lower cost placement types are higher margin than higher placement types.

In addition, Evalucom calculated 95% confidence intervals for the lower quartile, median and upper quartile to assess the uncertainty of the values determined for the total cost of care.

2. **Cost of care detailed breakdown-care homes:** The medians for Kent for each of the cost lines in the cost of care data table were calculated as set out by the DHSC within the submission template.

3. **Cost of care by market segment-care homes:** The medians were calculated for the cost of care for each placement type in Kent by market segment. Three types of segmentation were considered:
   a. Home location: East Kent or West Kent
   b. The Council's framework consists of care providers that have been pre-qualified to ensure they are of sufficient quality before entering into a contract. This is also referenced as Kent County Council framework provider or non-framework provider.
   c. Provider Type: Independent, local or national

   Kent County Council provided the data on the market breakdown to Evalucom. The market segmentation was used to determine whether the responses received for the exercise were representative of the care sector in Kent and to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference between costs by market segment.

Some outputs were adjusted such as:

1. **Occupancy:** Care homes with 2021/22 occupancy below 90% of CQC-registered capacity were adjusted to 90% occupancy as a proportion of CQC-beds. Care homes with 2021/22 occupancy above 90% were not adjusted. 90% was chosen as a defined minimum level of occupancy for an "efficient" provider.

2. **Adjusting costs to April 2022:** In the iESE tool, providers had the option of specifying a percentage uplift for all costs for April 2022. Evalucom used these percentages to determine all costs for April 2022.

Response Rates

Kent County Council only received 98 data returns through the iESE tool. Out of the 98 returned, 10 submissions were out of scope for the exercise, 22 were incomplete data returns, 5 had quality issues and 5 had outliers within the data. This left a total of 56 out of a possible 261 in-scope care home submissions for the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise equalling to a 21% response rate. The five homes excluded with quality issues were from a single group of homes and were excluded in relation to their ROO and ROC data. One of these data returns would have been flagged as an outlier had it moved into that stage of the data-checks.

Of the validated returns, 29 were 65+ care home places without nursing, 35 were 65+ care home places without nursing enhanced needs, 21 were 65+ care home places with nursing and 15 were 65+ care home places with nursing enhanced needs. Please note the total is not the sum of the total figures because some homes deliver multiple placement types. **Due to a low return rate for the Fair Cost of Care the data required to determine the total number of Kent homes that deliver each placement type is not available. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the proportion of in-scope returns for each placement type.**

Of the 56 validated returns, 23 submissions (41%) were from care homes located in East Kent and 33 (59%) were from care homes located in West Kent. To investigate whether the sample was representative, Fvalucom performed a chi-square statistical test. **The result of this statistical test provided evidence that the data returns were not a true random sample in terms of East Kent/West Kent split, with a higher response rate than expected from care homes in West Kent.**

Of the 56 care homes, 50 (89%) were part of Kent County Council's framework providers and 6 (11%) were not part of Kent County Council's framework. To investigate whether the sample was representative, Evalucom performed a chi-square statistical test. **The result of this statistical test provided evidence that the data returns were not a true random sample of the population in terms of Kent County Council's framework providers, with a higher response than expected from care home providers on Kent County Council's framework.**

Of the 56 validated returns, there were 16 submissions (29%) from independent providers, 23 submissions (41%) from local providers and 17 submissions (30%) from national providers. To investigate whether the sample is representative, the external provider performed a chi-square statistical test. **The result of the statistical test suggested that there was no evidence that the data returns were not a true random sample of the population in terms of provider type.**

Validated Data Outputs

1. The below sets out the outputs of the cost data analysis as conducted by Evalucom. All outputs displayed are for validated returns only. The below table shows the lower quartile, median, upper quartile and 95% confidence intervals for the total cost of care for April 2022 for 65+ care homes places for the four different placement types, based on adjusting nurse and care costs using provider specified % uplifts and adjusting occupancy levels to a minimum of 90%. Please note the below figures include the FNC rate (funded nursing care) however, Kent County Council is different to many other local authorities whereby providers bill the NHS directly.

Placement type	Lower quartile (Q1) cost of care (95% confidence interval) £/resident per week	Median (Q2) cost of care (95% confidence interval) £/resident per week	Upper quartile (Q3) cost of care (95% confidence interval) £/resident per week	Number of validated data returns
65+ care homes without nursing	758 (686 - 833)	846 (820 - 928)	1071 (903 - 1189)	29
65+ care homes without nursing (enhanced needs)	763 (687 - 833)	867 (820 - 993)	1071 (973 - 1193)	35
65+ care homes with nursing	1065 (950 - 1314)	1327 (1128 - 1435)	1495 (1344 - 1579)	21
65+ care homes with nursing (enhanced needs)	1256 (1031 - 1427)	1427 (1186 - 1574)	1539 (1427 - 1649)	15

Please note the confidence intervals are relatively wide. This is due to the variation in the data and the small number of validated data returns. A higher number of validated data returns would be required to reduce the size of the confidence intervals.

The below table shows the median cost per resident per week for each cost category for 2022/23 for validated and complete data returns with adjusted 90% occupancy rates.

For costs that were the sum of more detailed cost categories (e.g., care home staffing is the sum of pay costs of the different staff types), costs were summed prior to the calculation of the median (i.e., the median of the sums is used, rather than the sum of the medians). **Please note therefore that columns do not add up because in general the sum of medians is not equal to the median of sums.**

Cost category	65+ care home places without nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places without nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week
Care home staffing:	**£552.87**	**£528.14**	**£773.58**	**£831.48**
Nursing Staff	0.00	0.00	229.32	255.34
Care Staff	310.43	342.24	320.01	366.30
Therapy Staff (Occupational & Physio)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Activity Coordinators	13.10	13.38	14.99	15.20
Service Management (Registered Manager/Deputy)	43.10	35.87	33.08	29.62
Reception & Admin staff at the home	15.57	11.60	17.69	16.81
Chefs / Cooks	40.29	37.88	50.31	50.51
Domestic staff (cleaning, laundry & kitchen)	41.92	39.51	41.04	42.20
Maintenance & Gardening	10.73	10.88	11.53	11.26
Other care home staffing (please specify)	62.53	53.93	50.27	50.27
Care home premises:	**£40.62**	**£36.80**	**£54.41**	**£48.07**
Fixtures & fittings	3.83	9.82	7.42	6.50

Cost category	65+ care home places without nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places without nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week
Repairs and maintenance	19.96	19.24	21.73	19.24
Furniture, furnishings and equipment	6.95	5.84	4.61	4.61
Other care home premises costs	13.60	10.60	37.69	25.72
Care home supplies and services:	**£111.89**	**£118.22**	**£118.22**	**£122.45**
Food supplies	34.33	32.78	31.55	35.09
Domestic and cleaning supplies	7.70	7.37	9.21	9.21
Medical supplies (excluding PPE)	2.76	2.49	3.92	3.92
PPE	2.89	2.09	1.03	0.99
Office supplies (home specific)	3.07	2.72	2.94	3.10
Insurance (all risks)	7.95	7.95	6.67	6.93
Registration fees	3.31	3.46	3.52	3.60
Telephone & internet	2.18	1.48	2.25	2.45
Council tax / rates	1.14	0.92	0.64	0.55
Electricity, Gas & Water	29.12	40.09	22.92	22.12

Trade and clinical waste	4.22	4.31	4.95	4.89
Transport & Activities	2.62	2.69	1.84	1.84
Other care home supplies and services costs	5.72	11.12	4.53	7.33
Head office:	**£49.09**	**£58.23**	**£77.73**	**£90.37**
Central / Regional Management	19.05	23.95	40.58	40.96
Support Services (finance / HR / legal / marketing etc.)	17.62	30.41	31.64	31.64
Recruitment, Training & Vetting (incl. DBS checks)	6.20	6.50	7.92	6.50

Cost category	65+ care home places without nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places without nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing April 2022 median cost £/resident per week	65+ care home places with nursing, enhanced needs April 2022 median cost £/resident per week
Other head office costs	9.15	9.15	19.97	19.97
Return on Operations	84.29	72.00	81.08	89.66
Return on Capital	113.42	108.42	193.76	230.85
TOTAL	**£845.61**	**£866.67**	**£1,326.80**	**£1,427.12**
Number of validated data returns	*29*	*35*	*21*	*15*

The below table shows additional supporting information to be submitted within the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise. The number of locations eligible to fill in the survey by category are as follows; 6 for 65+ care home places without nursing; 151 for 65+ care home places without nursing, enhanced needs; 19 for 65+ care home places with nursing; and 85 for 65+ care home places with nursing enhanced. Please note the total will not equal the total number of Care Home providers in scope for the Fair Cost of Care for Kent County Council as most providers provide multiple care types. It should also be noted that for those providers that Kent County Council do not contract with (non-framework providers) these figures should be considered as a snapshot.

Metric	65+ care home places without nursing	65+ care home places without nursing, enhanced needs	65+ care home places with nursing	65+ care home places with nursing, enhanced needs
Number of residents covered by the responses (Total) – April 2022	507	864	629	328
Number of carer hours per resident per week (median) – April 2022	24.5	25.5	24.8	25.2
Number of nursing hours per resident per week (median) – April 2022	0.0	0.0	7.2	8.0
Average carer basic pay per hour (mean) – April 2022	10.47	10.65	10.66	10.78
Average nurse basic pay per hour (mean) – April 2022	0	0	19.47	19.70
Average occupancy as a percentage of active beds (mean) – April 2022	85%	81%	82%	84%

Freehold valuation per bed (median)	46,868	63,158	129,949	142,757

Evalucom also conducted an analysis to determine any cost differences based on the following market factors:

1. The median cost of care for each cost category for 2021/22 for validated data returns split by care homes located in East Kent and West Kent. **There was not a statistically significant difference between the average cost of care in East Kent and West Kent.**

2. The median cost of care for each cost category for 2021/22 for validated data returns split by Kent County Council framework and non-framework providers.**Due to the small number of data returns from non-framework providers, there is not sufficient data to determine if there is any difference for the median cost of care between framework and non-framework providers.**

3. The median cost of care for each cost category for 2021/22 for validated data returns split by independent, national and local providers. For care home placements without nursing (with and without enhanced needs), there is a statistically significant difference between the median cost of care for national providers compared to other provider types. **However, the sample size of national providers is small, and there could be other confounding variables.**

   For care home places with nursing (with or without enhanced needs), due to the small sample sizes of independent and local providers, **there is not sufficient data to determine if there are any differences for the median cost of care between different provider types.**

4. Due to the low response rate for the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise Kent County Council have not adjusted the figures submitted by providers including the ROO/ROC other than to show at the 90% occupancy rate. This is due to the validated data outputs not having adequate consistency however, it is felt with regards to the ROC/ROO these figures are significantly higher than Kent County Council would expect providers to be including.

Critical Review of Cost Information

1. **Kent County Council has not received a valid statistical sample from the data returns meaning it is not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions on the cost of care in Kent.** There are 261 care homes in Kent providing residential and nursing care to older persons aged 65+. All were approached to take part in the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise, but

despite considerable efforts on the part of the council to secure cooperation with the exercise, only 56 useable responses were received[1].This represents a response rate of 21%, which is well below the acceptable level to calculate an accurate estimate of the median cost of care. This also means that, in absolute terms, we are working with a very small sample size (with the total sample of 56 care homes being further subdivided into 29 homes offering 65+ care home places without nursing, 35 homes offering 65+ care home places without nursing but with enhanced needs, 21 homes offering 65+ care home places with nursing and 15 offering 65+ care home places with nursing and enhanced needs). This has implications for the confidence levels associated with the Fair Cost of Care estimates that are derived from each of these small samples. For example, the 95% confidence interval associated with the estimate for 65+ care home places with nursing is £1,082 - £1,534.

2. Kent County Council has concerns around the extent to which the care homes that have provided useable responses can be considered representative of the local provider market in Kent. Of particular significance, and as detailed in the analysis provided by Evalucom, there is evidence of a statistically significant skew towards West Kent – an area associated with higher operating costs (and profits). The results of this Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise for Kent have undoubtedly been skewed by returns from providers offering premium services that are unreasonable to expect the public purse to provide (and where the LA rarely fund placements). Within the 56 useable returns, 20 are from homes who have less than 10 LA-funded clients. Nine of these deliver nursing care and of those 7 had care costs within the upper quartile (so in excess of £1,535 per week). The scale of this issue in Kent (where pockets of relative affluence mean that there are large numbers of providers offering these types of premium services) means that this has had a significant impact on the median value extracted from our sample. It is estimated that the inclusion of these homes within this data gathering exercise has inflated the fair cost of care for 65+ care homes with nursing by £206 per week.

3. **Kent County Council have concerns about incomplete information in data returns.** Kent County Council did receive some information from providers which required clarification or verification. In these instances, Kent County Council queried this with the provider in order to give them the opportunity to amend and resubmit to ensure as many valid returns were used within the Fair Cost of Care data gathering exercise as possible. Any unresolved issues led to returns being classified as 'unusable' and so excluded from our final dataset. This has compounded issues with low (useable) response rates, low sample size and biases in the sample, the most concerning of which being the bias towards West Kent.

---

[1] Our analysis partner, Evalucom, recommended that of the 88 responses received from care homes within the sample frame for the study, only 56 contained data that was complete and did not need to be discarded due to data quality errors and/or having outliers either in the total cost of care per resident per week or in the key components of total cost (i.e. staffing, premises, supplies and services, head office costs, return on operations or return on capital).

4. **Kent County Council is concerned by the very high level of variation across providers that we are seeing both in the overall cost of care estimates and estimates for the key components of the cost of care, and the implications this has for the stability and reliability of a point estimate for the fair cost of care.** The fair cost of care estimates that are being returned have what we would consider to be unacceptably large confidence intervals associated with them. For example, if we were to consider only the variability between providers in their responses and to ignore concerns around bias in the sample profile, we are 95% confident the fair cost of care for 65+ care home places with nursing lies between £1,082 and £1,534.

    The return on operations and return on capital figures are of particular concern, with the Return on Operations (ROO) and Return on Capital (ROC) as a % of the total cost of care even amongst the 56 validated returns varying between 3% and 36% (and an interquartile range of 11% to 28%).

    We are further concerned by the fact that the fair cost of care estimates derived via this data gathering exercise have no resilience to slightly different approaches to the data quality process, despite the 'median' approach. For example, 8 records were excluded during the data quality process due to missing, negative or implausibly large return on operations and return on capital figures[2]. If those records were to have average return rates applied (of 20%, based on the returns from the 56 useable records) the median fair cost of care for 65+ care homes with nursing would reduce by a further £202 per week.

5. **Kent County Council has concerns with the CareCubed cost of care tool made available via the Local Government Association (LGA) that was utilised to collect the data for the exercise,** including:
    a) The tool required an update which affected some of the outputs that providers had submitted and required each provider to review and resubmit their information. This meant providers had an additional task to complete when providers

---

[2] Five care homes from a single group were excluded from the validated data set due to quality concerns in relation to their ROO and ROC data. All homes in this group returned the same 2021/22 cost for their ROO and their ROC. For one of their homes this meant their total ROC/ROO accounted for 56% of their total cost of care, significantly higher than any other provider with validated data. It was suspected that this was a data-input error. The data was not able to be clarified with the provider due to the timescales of this project, so it was agreed with KCC that these data points should be excluded from the analysis.

had already raised, they had little time to complete the exercise.

b) Extracting reports from the iESE Tool was out of sync with the data showing within the tool. Although this was resolved, this caused a delay in early analysis of the data.

c) Guidance around what should be included for the ROO/ROC calculations were not clear from iESE and was later amended for both provider and Local Authorities.

d) The iESE tool gave providers an option to 'opt-out' of uplifting their costings from April 21-22 to April 22-23. This was also omitted from the tool for Homecare providers. Therefore, when analysing the data this gave inconsistencies between the data.

e) The option to uplift figures from April 21-22 to April 22-23 within the tool, uplifted figures for non-staffing costs **only**. Therefore, staffing was based on a different calculation method within the tool which could reflect as under or over inflated costs. This was not highlighted to providers or Local Authorities until after submissions had been received.

6. **Kent County Council has concerns that the cost information given by providers is not consistent with the current state of capacity in the market.** Across all four service types, the cost information submitted by providers suggests that the existing rates paid by the local authority are well below what is considered as necessary, and yet occupancy rates in Kent are low, demonstrating significant over-supply in the market. For example, the current average placement cost for KCC-funded older people in nursing care is lower than the median Fair Cost of Care estimate based on the cost information given by providers in connection with this data gathering exercise.

Whilst the rates paid by Kent County Council have been around 23% lower than the South East average[3], which would suggest some uplift in rates is being suggested by the results to fund the market, the scale of the uplift suggested by these returns is not plausible given the relative health of the care home market in Kent.

How figures will be uplifted in future for inflation

As part of the Council's annual budget setting process and medium term financial planning, the council reviews and adjusts prices considering a range of factors including key fiscal indicators and trends, both at a national level and local level. This is achieved using national and local data such as national living wage, inflation,

---

[3] Source: NHS Digital, ASC-FR Collection 2020-21, Unit Costs

market conditions, local supplier relationships, etc as well as affordability within the council's overall budget.

Conclusion

1. Kent County Council has **significant concerns** as to the quality, completeness, relevance and reliability of data received from providers, and to the validity and representativeness of the sample of data returns. **Kent County Council therefore cannot accept the outputs of the data gathering exercise as the cost of care in Kent.**

2. Notwithstanding the significant concerns and limitations of the data gathering exercise, of the options available, Kent County Council's preferred methodology for the Fair Cost of Care is to use April 2022 figures for 65+ care homes places and adjust nursing and care costs using provider specified % uplifts and occupancy levels to a minimum of 90%. The council believes this is the most accurate of the methods available for calculating the Fair Cost of Care across Kent. As documented earlier in the report, this presents the following outputs for the Fair Cost of Care:

Placement type	Lower quartile (Q1) cost of care *(95% confidence interval)* £/resident per week	Median (Q2) cost of care *(95% confidence interval)* £/resident per week	Upper quartile (Q3) cost of care *(95% confidence interval)* £/resident per week	*Number of validated data returns*
65+ care homes without nursing	758 (686 - 833)	846 (820 - 928)	1071 (903 - 1189)	*29*
65+ care homes without nursing (enhanced needs)	763 (687 - 833)	867 (820 - 993)	1071 (973 - 1193)	*35*
65+ care homes with nursing	1065 (950 - 1314)	1327 (1128 - 1435)	1495 (1344 - 1579)	*21*
65+ care homes with nursing (enhanced needs)	1256 (1031 - 1427)	1427 (1186 - 1574)	1539 (1427 - 1649)	*15*