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November 2021

Dear everyone,

### Update from United Response

I do hope that you and your family have been keeping safe and well through these difficult times. I am writing to update you on how United Response is managing the current challenges; please excuse the impersonal format.

You will have seen, I am sure, the media reports of the pressures on social care, in particular the great challenges all social care providers are facing in recruiting and retaining staff. There have also been the well-publicised shortages of fuel and disruption to supplies in shops.

As we head into winter I wanted to reassure you about the steps we are taking to keep your relative and our staff members safe, and also to ask for your help where you are able to give it.

The practical steps we have taken in recent months include:

- Trustees have agreed to use our charitable reserves to fund a mid-year pay increase for staff, this has given Support Workers a 10% increase in pay. Well-deserved for the fantastic job that they do. We are already seeing that this is helping with both retention of existing staff and recruitment.
- We have invested in new posts in local areas to support recruitment and induction of new staff and we are trying out new ways of attracting staff to work for us.
- We continue to supply personal protective equipment for all staff to use while at work.
- We have improved internet connectivity and are supplying 'smart' phones and tablets to staff.
- All staff in residential care settings have been double vaccinated and we continue to encourage staff in other settings to have both vaccinations.
- We are committed to maintaining contact and visits with family and friends as this is crucial to everyone's wellbeing, there may be exceptional circumstances, if infection rates increase rapidly, where we have managed this for short periods of time and we ask for your patience and support with this.
- We have plans in place to manage possible bad weather and disruption of supplies.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and take the steps needed to maintain good service delivery. These are truly unprecedented times and so we are having to look at lots of different ways of working. I am grateful for all the support you are giving us. I would like to ask if there is anything further that you, your family and friends could do to support our work doing? I have listed some suggestions overleaf.



- Can you encourage people you know who may be interested in social care to apply for a job at United Response? They can Google 'United Response jobs' to find out about our available roles.
- Could you, or someone you know, volunteer to assist us with practical tasks to ease pressure on staff teams? This might include helping with gardening, shopping or transport.
- Might you, or a family member, be able to offer time to support your relative either in their home or in your family home? I appreciate that many of you do this already.
- Can you approach your local Councilor and/or MP to encourage them to ensure that social care providers are properly funded by the Government?

Do please get in touch if you feel that you might be able to offer support. In the first instance please speak with your local service manager.

As always if you wish to raise matters with me directly, do please get in touch via email: [tim.cooper@unitedresponse.org.uk](mailto:tim.cooper@unitedresponse.org.uk) or via phone 07500 990420.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Tim Cooper**

**Chief Executive**