

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Covid-19 Response - Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

To: Cabinet Member for Adults and Health

Date: 9th March 2021

Author:	Corporate Director, Adult Social Services, Health & Housing
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) made a commitment in the adult social care Covid-19 winter plan to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working with the care sector to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity across services. On 29th January 2021, guidance was published for the Workforce Capacity Fund, which provides £120m nationally. The fund is to enable local authorities to deliver measures to supplement and strengthen adult social care staff capacity to ensure that safe and continuous care is achieved.
- 1.2 The funding for Swindon Borough Council is £384,628 as a ring fenced grant. The local authority has the discretion as to how they use the fund within the remit of supporting additional staff capacity for all providers of adult social care in their area.
- 1.3 The report links to the Council's priority four "Help people to help themselves whilst always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults".

2. Recommended Action to be Authorised by a Cabinet Member Under Delegated Powers

Recommended that:

- 2.1 The Corporate Director, Adult Social Services, Health & Housing, using her delegated authority under Paragraph 305 of the Council's Scheme of Delegations (Part 8 of the Constitution) be authorised to:
- 2.2 Make payments in accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Capacity grant to residential and nursing homes registered in Swindon to support them with additional staff capacity resulting from outbreaks where there is known pressures on staffing and capacity.

Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Covid-19 Response - Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

To: Cabinet Member for Adults and Health

Date: 9th March 2021

- 2.3 Work in partnership with the Lead Provider, Domiciliary Care to develop and launch a web-based solution to improve recruitment success across all adult care settings within Swindon and develop a bank of emergency staff for use by all providers.

3. Detail

Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

- 3.1 The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) made a commitment in the adult social care Covid-19 winter plan to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working with the care sector to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity across services. On 29th January 2021, guidance was published for the Workforce Capacity Fund, which provides £120m nationally to enable local authorities to deliver measures to supplement and strengthen adult social care staff capacity to ensure that safe and continuous care is achieved.
- 3.2 This new funding has been paid as a grant in accordance with Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, ring fenced exclusively for actions that support care providers to increase staffing capacity. This grant must be spent by 31st March 2021 and any funding that remains unspent by its conclusion will need to be returned to the Department of Health and Social Care. Swindon Borough Council's share of this funding is £384,628.
- 3.3 This fund is exclusively for actions which enable local authorities to deliver measures to supplement and strengthen adult social care staff capacity to ensure that safe and continuous care is achieved to deliver the following outcomes:
- 3.3.1 Maintain care provision and continuity of care for recipients where pressing workforce shortages may put this at risk;
 - 3.3.2 Support providers to restrict staff movement in all but exceptional circumstances, which is critical for managing the risk of outbreaks and infection in care homes;
 - 3.3.3 Support safe and timely hospital discharges to a range of care environments, including domiciliary care, to prevent or address delays as a result of workforce shortages; and
 - 3.3.4 Enable care providers to care for new service users where the need arises.
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Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Covid-19 Response - Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

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- 3.4 Local authorities can use this funding to deliver staffing capacity measures that support all providers of adult social care in their area including:
- Residential and Domiciliary care
- 3.5 Care providers with which the local authority does not have a contract.
- 3.6 Organisations providing care and support who may not be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 3.7 Day care, short stay care providers and supporting the capacity of personal assistant workforce are also included.
- 3.8 Local authorities can also choose to passport some or all of the fund directly to a care provider to deliver measures that increase staffing capacity within their organisation. However they should ensure that funding is only given directly to a provider that is registered with the CQC.
- 3.9 It is proposed that £190,000 will be allocated to work in partnership with the Lead Provider, Domiciliary Care to develop and launch a web based solution to improve recruitment success across all adult care setting within Swindon and develop a bank of emergency staff for use by all providers. This will achieve all of the outcomes required as set out in 3.4. The access and use of the website would be for all providers, whether regulated or non- regulated across the Adult Social Care sector.
- 3.10 The remaining £194,628 will be paid to all of the CQC registered care providers delivering residential and nursing care in homes who have experienced pressures on staffing resulting from covid-19 outbreaks in Swindon. The funding will be allocated on a per bed basis for the residential and nursing homes.
- 3.11 Terms and conditions for receipt of the funding will be sent to care providers by the Council and will require agreement before payment from the grant is made.
- 3.12 From 1 January, the government is no longer bound by the EU state aid rules. Public authorities are expected to familiarise themselves with government guidance on complying with the UK's international obligations on subsidy control.
- 3.13 In accordance with government guidance, the Council considers that the distribution of this grant funding is compliant with the UK's international subsidy obligations.
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Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Covid-19 Response - Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

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4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The grant can be allocated at the Council's discretion as long as this is done in furtherance of the measures set out in 2.4 of this report. Therefore, the Council could choose to return all or part of the funding to DHSC.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The total grant is £384,628 which is expected to be received in 2 payments. The first payment of £269,240 has been received in February 2021 and the second payment of £115,388 is expected in March 2021. Any funds not allocated by 31st March 2021 will be returned to the Department for Health and Social Care.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 The Workforce Capacity Grant will support adult social care providers to maintain staff levels to ensure continuity of care to clients.
- 5.3 Terms and conditions for receipt of the funding will be sent to care providers by the Council and will require agreement before payment from the grant is made.

Climate Change Impact

- 5.4 The proposals would not bring a change in service delivery and Officers believe that there is no expected effect on the Council's carbon footprint.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.5 The Workforce Capacity Grant supports the protection of staff and reduces the risk of exposure to the Covid-19 infection.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been undertaken, as the requirements of the grant do not result in any change to staffing, budget or service eligibility criteria.

Risk Management

- 5.7 There has been ongoing consultation with providers and partners to ensure that clarity has been gained on the specific use of the grant in line with the terms and conditions.
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Cabinet Member Briefing Note

Covid-19 Response - Workforce Capacity Fund, Adult Social Care

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The terms and conditions have been circulated to providers to seek agreement in principle in advance of payments being made.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 There are no background papers.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 There are no appendices.

9. Declarations of Interest

Cabinet Member(s)

- 9.1 Cabinet Members are reminded to consider whether they have any known interests in any of the matters referred to in this Briefing Note. If such an interest exists this should be declared to the Monitoring Officer (or Committee and Member Services Manager), and they should take no part in the consideration of the Briefing Note and should refer the Briefing Note to the Leader of the Council instead for consideration.

10. Sign-off

- 10.1 The Cabinet Member is requested to respond with 5 days of the date of this report by (14th March 2021).
- 10.2 The Cabinet Member is requested to indicate one of the following responses to the Recommendations set out in Section 2 of this report:

[To be signed electronically and redacted for publication.]

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