

URGENT DECISION

Agenda Item No:

Allocation of Infection Control, Rapid Testing, Vaccination and Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funding in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

To: Adults and Health Committee

Meeting Date: 9 December 2021

From: Service Director: Adults and Safeguarding

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Outcome: The grant conditions stipulate this funding must be allocated within 20 working days of receipt. An urgent decision is therefore required to ensure grant agreement process can be implemented and funding distributed within the timescales set.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to approve the recommended allocation of the discretionary elements of the Infection Control, Rapid Testing, Vaccination and Recruitment and Retention Grants which have been issued by central government on a one-off basis to cover spend between the 1st October 2021 and 31st March 2022 where this falls in line with grant conditions set.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Constitution allows an urgent item to be added to an agenda which has been published if it meets the urgency criteria set out in Part 4 – Rules of Procedure, Part 4.4(a) – The Procedure for Taking Urgent Decisions. The Chair of the Adults and Health Committee has received an explanation as to why this decision is urgent. Firstly, the Council needs to be able to respond quickly where failure to do so would not be in the public interest. Secondly, the procedure for taking urgent decisions is being used because failure to take the decision quickly would, or would be likely to, harm the interests of the Council and the public. In this case the grounds are a service not being provided and the public being put at serious risk of harm. The Chair has authorised the inclusion of this urgent report so that members of the committee can take the decision.
- 1.2 Acknowledging the ongoing cost of adhering to infection control guidance, driving the uptake of both flu and COVID-19 vaccinations and recruitment and retention challenges across the sector, the Government recently announced another round of funding. These funds have been issued on a one-off basis until March 2022 and the table below outlines the level of funding received by the Council:

Infection Control Funding	Rapid Testing Funding	Vaccination Funding	Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund
£2,367,154	£1,255,416	£243,696	£1,573,580

- 1.3 The purpose of the funding is to support adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not contract to:
1. Reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within and between care settings through effective infection prevention control practices and increase COVID-19 and flu vaccine uptake amongst staff.
 2. Conduct testing of staff and visitors in care settings to identify and isolate positive cases to enable close contact visiting where possible.
 3. Support the sector with recruitment and retention challenges

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1.4 Central Government has specified the fund be allocated in accordance guidance issued:

Fund	Mandatory	Discretionary
Infection Control Fund	70% to CQC Registered Care Homes and Community Providers on a per bed or user basis	30% local authority discretion to support the care sector to put in place other COVID-19 infection control measures. The local authority should consider using this funding to put IPC measures in place to support the resumption of services, including those providers who may be facing more significant costs.
Rapid Testing Fund	70% of the allocation to care homes on a per bed basis.	30% local authority discretion to support the care sector to operationally deliver testing.
Vaccination Fund	70% of the funding should be passed to care homes on a per bed basis and CQC regulated community care providers on a per user basis	30% local authority discretion to support measures in other care settings, including non CQC registered settings.
Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund		100% local authority discretion to support CQC Registered providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care; support timely and safe discharge from hospital and prevent admission to hospital; enable timely new care provision in the community and support and boost retention of staff within social care.

1.5 In addition to this, the grant conditions also provide local authorities with the option to use 1% of the Infection Control Fund for administrative costs associated with distributing and reporting on this grant.

1.6 Use of the funding by providers needs to comply with clear guidance outlined by central government. Compliance with the conditions set will be assured through the use of a grant agreement. All Councils have been given a directive to passport the funding through to services within 20 working days. The grants cover the period of 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022.

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2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Following consultation with local providers, care associations, other Councils from across the region and public health, a decision has been made to allocate the discretionary elements of the funds in the following ways:

Fund	Discretionary Amount	Recommendation
Infection Control Fund	£710,146	<p>CQC Registered Community providers of domiciliary care, extra care and supported living as well as providers commissioned by the Council to deliver Day Services which are open and operational and Housing Related Support. The grant will be allocated to these providers on a per unit basis.</p> <p>In addition to this, it is recommended the Council ring fence 1% of the fund to support with the costs of administering the grant as significant level of resource is required to do this.</p>
Rapid Testing Fund	£351,143	CQC Registered Community providers in line with grant conditions set. Allocation will also be extended to voluntary sector providers commissioned by the Council where they are actively engaged in lateral flow testing outside of the wider community offer.
Vaccination Fund	£73,109	The current uptake of both flu and COVID-19 Vaccinations across CQC Registered Care Homes and Community Providers is low in comparison to the intelligence held on the uptake within the voluntary sector. It is therefore recommended that the discretionary element of this grant is allocated to all CQC Registered Care Homes and Community Providers.
Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund	£1,573,580	CQC Registered Care Home and Community Providers contracted by the Council. The grant will be allocated to these providers on staffing numbers reported through CQC. The expectation is that providers should determine the best use of funding for their own circumstances, but we will expect to see proof of expenditure that this has been passed to employees via their PAYE systems with a focus on retention or incentivisation.

- 2.2 In the event of an underspend of either grant, the Council will review the proportion of underspend in each allocation and reappportion across all grant recipients.

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3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 The allocation of the discretionary elements of the Infection Control, Rapid Testing, Vaccination and Recruitment and Retention Grants impact on all the Council's corporate priorities set out below:

- Communities at the heart of everything we do
- A good quality of life for everyone
- Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full
- Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment
- Protecting and caring for those who need us

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are significant public health implications if the discretionary elements of the Infection Control, Rapid Testing, Vaccination and Recruitment and Retention Grants are not allocated.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.9 The need to take this urgent decision means that there has not been sufficient time to seek the usual sign offs.

5. Source documents

5.1 Source documents - None