

Norfolk County Council

Record of Individual Cabinet Member Decision

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Bill Borrett (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention)

Background and Purpose:

As part of the UK Government's commitment to Adult Social Care in its COVID-19 Autumn and Winter Plan, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced on 3rd November 2021 its adult social care winter plan, which set out the support the government will be providing to the sector this winter. The plan included a commitment to provide support for workforce recruitment and retention and initially a ring fenced grant totalling £162.5m was announced. On 10th December 2021, the Government announced that there would be a further grant provided totalling £300m. Guidance and allocations have just been received and amount to £5,223,348 for Norfolk. This is ring-fenced grant and must be spent by 31st March 2022. To reflect the emergency nature of this funding, it will be critical that funding can be allocated as quickly as possible to ensure that actions can be taken to help retain existing care staff and enable capacity to be maximised through any measures that can support recruitment or deliver additional hours.

This paper therefore asks for delegated authority to be given to the Executive Director for Adult Social Services, to agree the allocation of this funding in line with the guidance and in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention.

The workforce grant from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to local authorities follows the same principles as the previously announced Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant, with the exception that this can be used to enable local authorities and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year. It will be paid as a Section 31 grant and will be time limited, with the grant needing to be spent by 31st March 2022. Any unspent monies as at 31st March 2022 will be expected to be refunded to DHSC.

The grant is ringfenced exclusively for actions which enable local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area this winter.

The new funding is a direct response from the Government to the critical levels of social care capacity in the market, the rising pressures across health and social care systems nationally, which are particularly impacting on hospital discharge and performance and the forecast impact over the coming weeks of the rising cases of the new Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Due to the level of grant this will require a key decision. To expediate the distribution of funding, delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services is recommended.

Decision:

To agree that the Executive Director has delegated authority to distribute the grant allocation when received in line with the Government guidance and in order to make full use of this grant within the timescale available.

Is it a key decision? Yes

Is it subject to call-in? No. Please see special urgency notice. Notice also uploaded to Cabinet webpage on 22 December 2021 ([Cabinet - Norfolk County Council](#))

If Yes – the deadline for call-in is: N/A

Impact of the Decision:

Given the urgency it is proposed that the allocation of the funding is agreed in line with the guidance and based on the priorities for the Norfolk social care system over the next 14 weeks.

COVID-19 and large scale national workforce shortages has impacted on the care market:

- a) There is already a significant skills shortage in in the care market, and multiple organisations are looking for the same skilled workforce, together with additional competition from other sectors that are able to increase pay and rewards
- b) The number of available workers continues to be impacted by self-isolating and has recently had further losses due to mandatory vaccination in care homes. This legislation is being widen to the remaining registered care sector and health in April.

All interventions have some risk of negative impact on other areas of the care sector, as the pool of people is likely to be similar. Impacts will be considered as part of the detailed proposal.

Evidence and reason for the decision:

The decision to delegate authority rather than wait for a Cabinet decision is based on the urgency of the funding and the need to work to get this time limited funding to providers as quickly as possible.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

An alternative option would be to recommend a detailed proposal to Cabinet in January. This could create delay to the distribution of funding.

Financial, Resource or other implications considered:

Funding will be from the allocated £5,223,348 Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant allocated for Norfolk. The funding is one-off and must be spent by 31st March 2022 or returned. The proposals contained are limited in value to the maximum value of the grant.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None identified

Background documents:

- [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care](#)
(Published 3 November 2021)

Date of Decision: 26/11/2021

Publication Date of Decision: 22 December 2021

Signed by Cabinet Member:

I confirm that I have made the decision set out above, for the reasons also set out.

Signed:

Print name: Cllr Bill Borrett

Date: 17/12/21

Accompanying documents:

- Use of the Department for Health and Social Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant

Once you have completed your internal department clearance process and obtained agreement of the Cabinet Member, send your completed decision notice together with the report and green form to committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Cabinet

Item No:

Report Title: Delegation of the use of the Department of Health and Social Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant – Additional funding

Date of Meeting: N/A

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Bill Borrett (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention)

Responsible Director: James Bullion (Executive Director – Adult Social Services)

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: DD Month YYYY

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

As part of the UK Government's commitment to Adult Social Care in its COVID-19 Autumn and Winter Plan, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced on 3rd November 2021 its audit social care winter plan, which set out the support the government will be providing to the sector this winter. The plan included a commitment to provide support for workforce recruitment and retention and initially a ring fenced grant totalling £162.5m was announced. On 10th December 2021, the Government announced that there would be a further grant provided totalling £300m. Guidance and allocations have just been received and amount to £5,223,348 for Norfolk. This is ring-fenced grant and must be spent by 31st March 2022. To reflect the emergency nature of this funding, it will be critical that funding can be allocated as quickly as possible to ensure that actions can be taken to help retain existing care staff and enable capacity to be maximised through any measures that can support recruitment or deliver additional hours.

This paper therefore asks for delegated authority to be given to the Executive Director for Adult Social Services, to agree the allocation of this funding in line with the guidance and in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention.

Recommendations:

- a) To agree to delegate the distribution of the grant in line with Government guidance to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The workforce grant from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to local authorities follows the same principles as the previously announced Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant, with the exception that this can be used to enable local authorities and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year. It will be paid as a Section 31 grant and will be time limited, with the grant needing to be spent by 31st March 2022. Any unspent monies as at 31st March 2022 will be expected to be refunded to DHSC.
- 1.2 The grant is ringfenced exclusively for actions which enable local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area this winter.
- 1.3 The new funding is a direct response from the Government to the critical levels of social care capacity in the market, the rising pressures across health and social care systems nationally, which are particularly impacting on hospital discharge and performance and the forecast impact over the coming weeks of the rising cases of the new Omicron variant of COVID-19.
- 1.4 Due to the level of grant this will require a key decision. To expediate the distribution of funding, delegated authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services is recommended.

2. Context

- 2.1 The Norfolk social care workforce is estimated at 27,000. c11,000 people are employed within residential and nursing care and c10,000 within home support. Although vacancy rates can vary considerably, a recent Skills for Care report estimated 8% of care jobs were vacant in the East of England region, which is above pre-pandemic levels. In recent months, providers have reported a worsening situation, which has been seen through a reduction in care capacity available within the care market.
- 2.2 The situation has been exacerbated by wider workforce shortages, which has led to other sectors increasing pay. For care homes mandatory vaccination has also been implemented from 11th November 2021, which has led to at least 350 people leaving the sector. The mandatory requirement has now been extended to cover all health and social care workers, which will come into force in April, but is expected to have a similar impact on workforce numbers across all registered care providers.
- 2.3 Significant pressures are being felt across all areas of the social care system in Norfolk, which is creating difficulty with referrals into social care; concern about safe levels of care, which has led to some providers needing to hand back packages of care and increased pressure in hospitals due to difficulty with supporting safe discharges from hospitals where people require ongoing social care. Nationally, NHS England and NHS Improvement has declared a Level 4 National Incident, in recognition of the impact on the NHS of both supporting the increase in the vaccination programme and preparing for a potentially significant increase in COVID-19 cases. This had led to actions being asked of all parts of the NHS, local authorities and care providers.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Given the urgency it is proposed that the allocation of the funding is agreed in line with the guidance and based on the priorities for the Norfolk social care system over the next 14 weeks.

4. Impact of the Proposal

- 4.1 COVID-19 and large scale national workforce shortages has impacted on the care market:
- a) There is already a significant skills shortage in in the care market, and multiple organisations are looking for the same skilled workforce, together with additional competition from other sectors that are able to increase pay and rewards
 - b) The number of available workers continues to be impacted by self-isolating and has recently had further losses due to mandatory vaccination in care homes. This legislation is being widen to the remaining registered care sector and health in April.
- 4.2 All interventions have some risk of negative impact on other areas of the care sector, as the pool of people is likely to be similar. Impacts will be considered as part of the detailed proposal.

5. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 The decision to delegate authority rather than wait for a Cabinet decision is based on the urgency of the funding and the need to work to get this time limited funding to providers as quickly as possible.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 An alternative option would be to recommend a detailed proposal to Cabinet in January. This could create delay to the distribution of funding.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 This paper covers the allocation of new, one-off funding for NCC. The eventual proposals will be limited in value to the maximum value of the grant allocated to Norfolk, which is yet to be announced.

8. Resource Implications

- 8.1 **Staff:**
None identified.

8.2 Property:
None identified.

8.3 IT:
None identified

9. Other Implications

9.1 Legal Implications:
None identified

9.2 Human Rights Implications:
None identified

9.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):
EqIAs will be conducted, and equality issues will be considered, as part of the development of any agreed elements of the plan that impact on our residents.

9.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

9.4.1 No Data Protection impact identified.

9.5 Any Other Implications:
None identified

10. Risk Implications / Assessment

10.1 None identified.

11. Select Committee Comments

11.1 None

12. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended:

- a) **To agree to delegate the distribution of the grant in line with Government guidance to the Executive Director of Adult Social Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member.**

13. Background Papers

13.1 [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care](#)
(Published 3 November 2021)

13.2 Use of the Department of Health and Social Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant (November 2021)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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