

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4126

Author:

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Department:

Children and Adults

Contact:

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Subject:

Allocation of Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Funding

Total Value:

£639,400 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

- 1) To accept the allocation of £639,400 in Adult Social Care Rapid Testing funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), to support the roll out of additional rapid COVID-19 testing in care homes.
- 2) To approve the allocation of 80% of the grant funding to providers of residential care, to support increased COVID-19 lateral flow device (LFD) testing, in accordance with the conditions of the grant funding.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Director for Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Commissioning and Procurement, to spend the remaining 20% of the grant funding on measures to support the care sector (including care homes and other eligible settings) to operationally deliver LFD testing, in accordance with the grant funding conditions.

Reasons for the Decision(s) In December 2020 the DHSC announced the Adult Social Care Rapid Testing fund to support the roll out of additional rapid COVID-19 testing for staff in care homes, to support visiting professionals and enable close contact visiting where possible. This is a new grant, with separate conditions to the original Infection Control Fund (which ran from May to September 2020) and round 2 of the Infection Control Fund (October 2020 to March 2021), allocations from which have been received by the Council. The aim is to provide further help to protect residents and workers from COVID-19. The Council has received an allocation of £639,400 of this funding paid in a single instalment in January 2021. The grant can be used to cover expenditure between 2 December 2020 and 31 March 2021 and funding unspent by 31 March must be returned to DHSC. The DHSC grant funding conditions stipulate that 80% of the funding must be allocated to care homes in the City on a 'per beds'/per user' basis, including to providers with whom the Council does not have a contract. It is proposed that the funding will be allocated to providers as grants based on the number of CQC registered beds. The remaining 20% funding may be allocated at the authority's discretion but must be used to support the care sector to implement increased LFD testing. This may include support for care homes or for other settings eligible for LFD testing such as supported living or extra care. The funding must be used entirely on activities which support the purpose of the fund and in accordance with the grant conditions, and DHSC will require repayment of any misused funds. Use of this grant must be reported to DHSC monthly, as part of the spending returns for the Infection Control Fund in February, March and April 2021.

Other Options Considered: 1) To do nothing: this option was rejected as the Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund is available to the Council to support the roll out of additional rapid COVID-19 testing in care homes, in order to help protect residents and workers in care settings from COVID-19. If the funding is not accepted and used, there may be an increased risk of the spread of the virus within care homes and other care settings, with significant public health consequences for the City.

Background Papers: None

Published Works: None

Affected Wards: Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests: None

Consultations: Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: None

Equality: EIA not required. Reasons: This decision relates to the continuation of existing services and does not include proposals for a change to a service, policy or function.

Social Value Considerations: Not applicable

Regard for NHS Constitution: Local authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to the NHS Constitution when exercising their public health functions under the NHS Act 2006. In making this decision relating to public health functions, we have properly considered the NHS Constitution where applicable and have taken into account how it can be applied in order to commission services to improve the health of the local community.

Decision Type: Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In: No
The call-in procedure does not apply to the proposed decision because the delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or Vice-Chair) in his/her absence has been consulted and agreed both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all circumstances and that it should be treated as a matter of urgency.

Person Consulted: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Consultation Date: 12/02/2021
To enable funding to be spent within required timescales

Advice Sought: Legal, Finance, Procurement

Legal Advice: There are no significant legal concerns arising from this decision. The expenditure of the grant must at all times be in accordance with any grant terms. Where any funding is being given to third parties to provide support there must be a clear expectation and requirement that the third party will also use the funding so as to meet the grant conditions or not place the Council at risk of being in breach of its obligations.

Advice provided by Naomi Vass (Senior Solicitor) on 09/02/2021.

Finance Advice:

This decision seeks approval to accept and allocate the £0.639m Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund grant from the Department of Health and Social Care in line with the grant conditions.

The main purpose of this funding is to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes, and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible. This includes adult social care providers with whom the local authority does not have a contract. This funding must not be used to pay for activities that do not support the purpose of this fund. This grant is separate from the extension to the Infection Control Fund, and as such cannot be used to support those infection control measures.

The grant has been received in one full installment during January 2021 and can be used to cover expenditure between 2 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. 80% of each installment must be paid directly to care homes (CQC registered bed no's basis). The remaining 20% of the funding must be used to support the care sector to implement increased LFD testing but can be allocated at the local authority's discretion.

For the 80% grant allocation (to be paid directly to care homes), an eform process is being developed for providers to complete declaring that they meet the grant conditions attached to the funding. Once the responses have been received, the funding will be paid to providers in line with the grant conditions.

A plan is being scoped for the 20% element of the grant funding which will be subject to a separate approval process.

A local authority must ensure that the 80% 'per bed' allocation is only allocated on condition that the recipient care home agrees to use it only for the measures outlined in the grant conditions, is completing the Capacity Tracker at least once per week and has committed to continuing to do so for the duration of the fund, and will provide the local authority with information on how they have spent the funding on a monthly basis. If the local authority finds that the provider has not spent the entirety of the funding by the conclusion of the fund, steps must be taken to recover any unspent monies.

Local authorities must also submit monthly returns to the Department of Health and Social Care specifying how this grant (as well as the Infection Control Fund grant) has been spent to cover the periods outlined in the grant conditions. Established processes for the Infection Control Fund will be widened to incorporate this additional grant to enable the information to be received from providers in a timely manner, in line with reporting deadlines.

Advice provided by Hayley Mason (Strategic Finance Business Partner) on 29/01/2021.

Procurement Advice:

This decision relates to the receipt of Adult Social Care Rapid Testing funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, and the allocation of this funding to support the roll out of additional rapid COVID-19 testing in care homes for the purposes set out in the grant funding conditions. As this is a grant funding arrangement, there are no procurement implications, however all funding should be used in accordance with the DHSC grant conditions. Any allocations to providers which are not grants should be compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Team will support this as needed. Advice provided by Julie Herrod (Procurement Officer) on 22/01/2021.

Signatures

Adele Williams (Portfolio Holder for Adult Care & Local Transport)
SIGNED and Dated: 22/02/2021
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 12/02/2021