

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Provider

## **DISTRIBUTION OF RING-FENCED INFECTION CONTROL GRANT**

In accordance with the Adult Social Care Infection Control Grant Determination 2020/21 No.31/5061, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) will distribute to care home providers in Worcestershire an initial tranche of funding. The grant is due to be paid to the authority in two instalments and 75% of the first instalment is to be passed directly to Worcestershire care homes on a per bed basis.

The first instalment (i.e. 75% of 50% of the total grant) equates to a rate of £481.34 per bed.

The purpose of the grant is to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience to deliver infection control.

The funding must be used for COVID-19 infection control measures. A further instalment of 75% of the remaining 50% (due to be received by WCC in July 2020) will be allocated on the same basis as the first instalment. However, if at any point WCC reasonably believes that the funding is not being used for infection control purposes, the second payment will be withheld, until the appropriate usage of the funding can be evidenced, and Worcestershire County Council will seek reimbursement for all or part of the first tranche.

## **Capacity Tracker requirement**

In accordance with the grant determination, payments will only be made to providers who have used the national Capacity Tracker at least once and remain committed to completing the Tracker on a consistent basis. No further allocation of funding will be made unless the provider is completing the Capacity Tracker consistently.

If you have not yet commenced completion of the tracker, or have not entered responses to the recently-added COVID-19 specific questions, please refer to the links below which were communicated to all homes by the NHS North of England CSU (NECS) on 22<sup>nd</sup> May:

Please can you ensure you are completing all sections by 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and updated regularly thereafter, when any response changes. Please direct any queries about how to respond and how to interpret the new questions to [england.bettercaresupport@nhs.net](mailto:england.bettercaresupport@nhs.net).

For any other queries about capacity tracker, including how to access the Capacity Tracker please contact the NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) as usual – who operate the capacity tracker via [necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net).

To register on the Capacity Tracker please visit: <https://carehomes.necsu.nhs.uk/>.

## **Usage of the grant**

Providers must account for all payments made under this grant allocation and keep appropriate records. In so far as a provider does not use the entirety of the allocation in

pursuit of infection control measures, any remaining funds must be returned to Worcestershire County Council. New spend related to the infection control measures set out below can be accounted for from this grant allocation.

In accordance with the grant determination, the following infection control measures are a valid use of the grant:

- Ensuring that staff who are isolating in line with government guidance receive their normal wages while doing so. At the time of issuing this grant determination this included staff with suspected symptoms of Covid-19 awaiting a test, or any staff member for a period following a positive test;
- Ensuring, so far as possible, that members of staff work in only one care home. This includes staff who work for one provider across several homes or staff that work on a part time basis for multiple employers and includes agency staff (the principle being that the fewer locations that members of staff work the better);
- Limiting or cohorting staff to individual groups of residents or floors/wings, including segregation of COVID-19 positive residents;
- To support active recruitment of additional staff if they are needed to enable staff to work in only one care home or to work only with an assigned group of residents or only in specified areas of a care home, including by using and paying for staff who have chosen to temporarily return to practice, including those returning through the NHS returners programme. These staff can provide vital additional support to homes and underpin effective infection control while permanent staff are isolating or recovering from Covid-19.
- Steps to limit the use of public transport by members of staff. Where they do not have their own private vehicles, this could include encouraging walking and cycling to and from work and supporting this with the provision of changing facilities and rooms and secure bike storage or use of local taxi firms.
- Providing accommodation for staff who proactively choose to stay separately from their families in order to limit social interaction outside work. This may be provision on site or in partnership with local hotels.

## **State Aid**

In relation to allocations to residential care providers to implement COVID-19 infection control measures, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) considers that the measures specified in paragraph [3] of Annex C of the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund are covered by the Services of General Economic Interest Decision (SGEI) 2012/21/EU because the measures will help reduce the incidence and spread of COVID-19 and are over and above that which care providers would normally be expected to provide and are of particular importance to and are in the interest of care home residents, workers and their families and the general public. Further, they are not being provided by the market at the level or quality required by the market, and thus to secure their provision compensation needs to be provided to an undertaking or set of undertakings.

Worcestershire County Council is relying on this Decision to make lawful payments of the aid and need to ensure they comply with its requirements.

### **Reporting requirements**

Providers must respond by return, using the pro-forma at Annex A, to confirm receipt of the funding and your acknowledgment and agreement to the grant conditions specified by Central Government.

Providers are also expected to complete the template provided at Annex B and return to [coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk) by 5pm on Friday 19 June to enable the Council to respond to Central Government by the specified deadline. Failure to complete and return this template will also mean that the second payment of funding will be withheld until its receipt. It is expected that providers will identify where they are spending their allocation.

A separate template will also be required for the second tranche of funding for return to [coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk) by 5pm on Wednesday 16 September articulating how the second tranche has been spent.

Yours faithfully,



**Frances Kelsey,**  
**Strategic Lead Commissioner - Adult Services Commissioning Unit**