



For Action

To

Local Authority Chief Executives
Directors of Adult Social Services
Directors of Public Health

For Information

Care Home Providers
Local Government Association

22 May 2020

Dear colleague,

On 13 May the Government announced that it would make available a £600 million Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England to reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience. This forms part of a wider package of support for care home residents and staff, including on infection prevention control, comprehensive testing and additional clinical support, with a named clinical lead for every care home.

This is new funding in addition to the £3.2 billion already provided to Local Authorities to support key frontline services, including adult social care, as well as the £1.3 billion funding for discharge via the NHS. The adult social care sector has a vital role in ensuring the safety and security of the most vulnerable in society and we will continue to keep this funding under review as the situation develops.

The Infection Control Fund will be ringfenced for adult social care and the Grant Determination letter (Annex A) makes clear that it must be used to stop transmission in and between care homes, in particular by minimising the movement of staff to reduce the risk of asymptomatic transmission of the virus.

We must support our valued adult social care workforce in this challenging time and ensure that they do not lose out on wages in doing the right thing. This funding should therefore be used to maintain the normal income of staff members in both residential and domiciliary care who are now restricted in when and where they can work as a result of these measures, and those who are self-isolating with symptoms of COVID-19 or following a positive test. My letter of 14 May and accompanying annexes provide further detail on the measures to be taken.

This funding should only pay for activity to help reduce the risk of infection and is not intended to be used to improve provider financial resilience. The unringfenced funding already provided may be used for wider purposes and to address other costs such as PPE.

Since the start of this outbreak, we have been working closely with the sector and public health experts to put in place guidance and support for adult social care and ensure they have everything they need to respond. The care home support package,

and the £600 million Infection Control Fund, represent the next phase of our response for care homes. I expect local authorities to use this funding to support all care homes in their areas in taking steps to stop the spread of infection, and for money to be passed on as quickly as possible to front-line providers.

The allocation has been published at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ebed5d7e90e071e2b3b2898/allocation-table-for-the-infection-control-fund-for-adult-social-.pdf>.

This is based on the number of CQC care home beds in each local authority area, with an area cost adjustment which reflects regional differences in wages and prices.

My letter of 14 May set out a timetable and process for the submission and review of local care home support planning returns. Annex B of that letter also referred to a process of reviews of whether those plans are being delivered and whether provider issues are being addressed. We are working on these with the sector.

Alongside these plans, it is important that there is transparency about how funding is being used to support vital front-line services, while recognising the diversity of local care markets. We are therefore asking local authorities to publish information on the support they are offering to providers as part of the COVID-19 pandemic from the funding that has been provided to date – this is due by 29 May. I have attached updated guidance setting out the information we are asking local authorities to publish, which can also be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-care-homes/coronavirus-covid-19-care-home-support-package>).

Separately, we will also be asking local authorities to report on how the Infection Control Fund is being used – by 26 June. The Grant Determination attached to this letter includes a template and guidance on how to do this.

We recognise that local authorities also need timely information about provider needs. The Capacity Tracker provides a nationally consistent approach, giving clarity over where issues and needs are arising, and will underpin the successful delivery of our infection control initiative. We are therefore making it a condition of funding to care homes that they complete the tracker.

Support for local areas in drawing up their plans is being provided by the Better Care Support team. Briefing webinars are taking place for local authority and CCG colleagues and for care home providers. Further details are set out in my letter of 14 May.

We recognise the tremendous efforts of colleagues across local government to ensure support for the most vulnerable in our society and will continue to work with you to make sure the sector has all the support it needs to stop the spread and save lives.

HELEN WHATELY MP – MINISTER FOR CARE



Annex A

SUPPORT OFFER TO CARE PROVIDERS

Background

The Government has committed over £3.2bn in COVID19-specific funding for local government, an unprecedented level of additional support. On 15 May, we published the details of a new £600m adult social care infection control fund to tackle the spread of COVID-19 in care homes. We expect local authorities to draw on the helpful guidance issued by the LGA and ADASS on how to support providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): care home support package](#), published on 15 May, we said that:

Local authorities should also publish on their websites their rate uplifts and other extra funding they are making available to care providers e.g. cash flow support etc. We recognise a range of models are being used by local authorities and greater transparency is needed. These should be published by 29 May.

This note is intended to support local authorities in publish this information in relation to the funding that has been provided by central government to date.

Information to publish

We understand that local authorities have taken three broad approaches to supporting providers:

- Unconditional payments, e.g. increased fee rates, one-off or regular payments, commitments to cover excess costs, paying providers on an agreed level of usage.
- Other additional funding, in return for a service or to be reclaimed later following the pandemic, e.g. payment in advance, block contracts, emergency funding.
- Non-financial benefits, e.g. use of council staff, provision of PPE

Please publish in an appropriate location on your website the support you are offering to providers of residential and domiciliary care services, as well as any other social care services you are supporting. We would be grateful if you could confirm when this has been done, and the relevant URL, by email to scfinance-enquiries@dhsc.gov.uk.

We suggest you maintain this as the pandemic develops. We suggest the following format. This may also be used in your cover letter, referred to in Annex B of the letter to local authorities from the Minister of State for Care, Helen Whately MP, on 14 May.

Support to providers that the local authority has contracts with			
	Domiciliary care	Residential care	Other provision
Support being offered			
Total spent¹ to date since on supporting providers the local authority has contracts with in response to COVID-19.			
Support to providers that the local authority <u>does not</u> have contracts with			
	Domiciliary care	Residential care	Other provision
Support being offered			
Total spent² to date since on supporting providers the local authority does not contracts with in response to COVID-19.			

¹ Spent = funding or support has already reached providers.

² Spent = funding or support has already reached providers.

