

COVID 19 HEALTH AND CARE CELL**DATE: 4TH MAY 2020**

DECISION REQUEST / PROPOSAL	Domiciliary Care, Supported Living and Day Care Financial Support
DECISION PROPOSED BY	Jason Oxley
SERVICE AREA AFFECTED	Adult Care and Health
IDENTIFIED CRITICAL SERVICE Y/N	Yes

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is to make additional payments to Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Care Providers of £200 for each person receiving care from them on a Council commissioned package from the week commencing 23 March 2020 the first week of lockdown where direct delivery stabilised following the impact of people and staff self-isolating. The additional payments are proposed to Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Care Providers in recognition of their current additional costs, particularly due to: increased staffing costs (staff self-isolating and providers needing to pay additional staff to cover shifts), additional costs for cleaning products for infection control, additional costs related to procurement and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional costs associated with food supply.

1. DECISION SUMMARY

- (1) To approve the making of additional payments to Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Care Providers of £200 for each person receiving care from them on a Council commissioned package from the week commencing 23 March 2020.**
- (2) To approve:**
 - (a) the making of payments in accordance with the Payment Plan for Domiciliary Care, Supported Living and Day Care Providers throughout the full payment periods of 2020-21 up to 31 May 2020,**
 - (b) that for such period there shall be no retrospective reconciliation of accounts back to actuals spend**
 - (c) that there be a review of the process for payments and their reconciliation for the period beyond 31 May 2020.**

This decision will support the following Council priorities during the period that contingency planning is required to respond to and manage the effects of the covid-19 epidemic, which are:

1. Preserve life
2. Protect the vulnerable people in our communities
4. Support local businesses and the economy

This activity represents contingency activity to support Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Care Providers.

2. INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council fully rely on the independent care sector for provision of care services in Wirral and commissioners recognise the additional costs to the care sector at this time of pandemic coronavirus outbreak.
- 2.2 Daily monitoring of care sector providers demonstrates additional costs, particularly due to: increased staffing costs (staff self-isolating and providers needing to pay additional staff to cover shifts), additional costs for cleaning products for infection control, additional costs related to procurement and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional costs associated with food supply.
- 2.3 North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Care have issued guidance to Directors to ensure that care providers are supported financially to sustain increased capacity and to support providers to maintain their ability to meet the needs of people supported.
- 2.4 The Department for Health and Social Care has issued a guidance entitled, "Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care" which details the expected steps which Local Authorities should take to get the funding they have received quickly to the front line;
 - Protect providers' cashflow, including making payments on plan in advance;
 - Monitor the ongoing costs of delivering care, such as higher workforce absence rates caused by self-isolation, sickness and family caring responsibilities; and
 - Adjust fees to meet new costs
- 2.5 Other Councils are making, or are considering making, additional payments to care home providers to support them.
- 2.6 It is therefore proposed for all Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Providers; to receive a one-off payment of £200 for each person receiving care from them on a Council commissioned package on the week commencing 23 March 2020 (first week of lockdown where direct delivery stabilised following the impact of people and staff self-isolating).
- 2.7 For payment to be made on Plan for Domiciliary Care, Supported Living and Day Care Providers throughout the full payment periods of 2020-21 up to the 31 May 2020, with no expectation to retrospectively reconcile back to actuals. That a review then be undertaken of the process for payments and their reconciliation for the period beyond 31 May 2020.
- 2.8 The proposals will support providers to redeploy staff to cover staff absence and other service pressures where providers have multi service areas, and will support providers to meet costs of backfill staff.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT / H&S AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING DECISION

3.1 This is an immediate response to the emergency Coronavirus impact and a full risk assessment has not been undertaken.

3.2 An option not to provide financial supporting for the care sector may result in:

- Reduced ability to take on new care packages
- Delayed hospital discharges
- Market failure
- Provider cashflow difficulties
- People not receiving their full support packages
- Health and care system blockages
- People remaining in hospital when fit for discharge and at risk of deterioration.
- Difficulties with care provider service continuity.

4. WHAT POWERS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED

4.1 The Council's Adult Care and Health Service have a statutory duty to meet assessed eligible care needs for people under the Care Act 2014.

4.2 The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Councils to support a responsive and resilient care provider market.

4.3 Government issued NHS COVID Discharge Guidance on 19th March 2020, requiring NHS discharges from hospital to take place within 3 hours of a person being deemed medically fit. This guidance requires the provision of sufficient care to release capacity in the hospitals for the expected surge in admissions of people with Covid -19 illness.

4.4 Regard has been had to the Department for Health and Social Care guidance, "Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care".

5. IDENTIFICATION OF CONTINGENCIES OR OTHER OPTIONS

5.1 Consideration has been given to alternative methods of support, including:

- Do nothing,
- Reimburse providers upon receipt of evidence of additional costs,
- A percentage uplift, reflective of current sickness absence levels,
- A percentage uplift for all providers,
- Payment directly to care staff,
- Discounting Council Tax bills,
- Increase the Hardship fund and reduce the eligibility criteria and signpost care workers to make a claim from it.

5.2 The reasons for discounting these alternative methods of support include:

- The need to quickly support providers with additional funds, proportional to their increased costs.
- Simplicity of process to enable care homes to request the additional payments without burdensome processes.
- System considerations, ease of application.
- May not be favourable with providers

- Duplication with other support measures already in place.
- Recent conclusion of fee setting consultation and member decisions on fees.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (APPROXIMATE / PROJECTED)

6.1 For the week commencing 23 March 2020, Wirral Council funded 1732 Domiciliary Care service users and 872 Supported Living service users.

6.2 A £200 one-off additional payment to providers for each of these clients would total approximately £521k.

6.3 Continuing to pay on plan, rather than actuals, through until 31 May 20 for Wirral’s Domiciliary Care, Supported Living and Day Care providers is estimated to cost a further £200k.

6.4 The total cost estimated will be: £721k

Name of Finance Officer involved in decision: Mark Goulding

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The above approach does not affect the standard care home fee rates decided upon by members following consultation, as the proposal is for one-off additional payments.

DECISION PRESENTED TO TSG ON	Date
DECISION OF TSG	APPROVED REJECTED MORE INFO REQUIRED