

COVID 19 TACTICAL CO-ORDINATING GROUP
DATE: 1ST FEBRUARY 2021

DECISION REQUEST / PROPOSAL	Allocation of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government Community Champion Funding
DECISION PROPOSED BY	Rachael Musgrave- Consultant in Public Health
SERVICE AREA AFFECTED	Outbreak Cell
IDENTIFIED CRITICAL SERVICE Y/N	Y

1. DECISION SUMMARY

Request for approval of the proposed spend of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government £375,000 allocation to Wirral Council.

This decision will support the priorities to:

1. Preserve life
2. Protect the vulnerable people in our communities
3. Safeguard our children and young people

2. INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

On 22 October 2020, the Minister for Equalities Kemi Badenoch called for bids against a funding pot of £25m as part of the wider government response to support communities that have been disproportionately impacted by Covid 19.

Proposals were requested to respond to the following themes which had been identified following engagement with a range of councils:

- *That local authorities have been working incredibly hard to front up engagement with communities – the help them follow safe behaviour and link in local and national support.*
- *That this work is often done on top of day jobs, with volunteers and that there are challenges of capacity.*
- *That areas with high prevalence of different groups with their own needs have a particular challenge in engagement, outreach and support.*
- *There are issues of trust, mis/disinformation and ‘message fatigue’*
- *That there’s an appetite to do more but funds are needed to achieve this.*

The funding was made available to support councils to take action on the following priorities:

- To expand COVID communications with at risk groups

- To develop Champions to share COVID-19 vaccine advice and information to boost local vaccination take-up.
- To support extra school programmes, helplines, and phone calls to those in at risk groups.

The funding call was discussed by the Humanitarian BAME thematic sub-group on Wednesday 16 December 2020 and the following activity agreed for submission. These topics also reflect the basis of direction provided by MHCLG during an online webinar.

Funding was sought for:

- Nine BAME link workers to be based across local BAME service providers providing active engagement with local BAME communities, supporting mobile testing and surge capacity, the local track and trace system providing translation and interpretation services and supporting local vaccination take up.
- In-depth data analysis to understand 'health literacy' levels across the borough and the impact COVID-19 has had on the local BAME population.
- Development of health literacy material and training materials to support BAME communities and easy read versions communications based on data analysis.
- Improvements in the quality, translation, and accessibility of health information, including information relating to COVID-19 restrictions and vaccination uptake.
- Health literacy training for health professionals working with local BAME communities.
- Technology to help BAME communities connect and access information.

Wirral Council applied for an allocation from the MHCLG Community Champions Fund of £375,000. Confirmation of the allocation of funding was received by the Council on the 13th January 2021 covering the period 1st March 2021 – 28th February 2022, with an expected go-live date of 1 March 2021 with payments made in monthly instalments.

4. WHAT POWERS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED

Any grant funding and/or projects that develop as a result will be required to adhere to GDPR, health and safety, including social distancing and other COVID-related requirements.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF CONTINGENCIES OR OTHER OPTIONS

This approach has been developed in consultation with the Humanitarian BAME subgroup.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (APPROXIMATE / PROJECTED)

The MHCLG BAME Community Champions allocation is £375,000.

The proposed spend figures below are indicative amounts.

	Item	Proposed spend
a.	Employment nine BAME link workers	£275,000
b.	In-depth data analysis to understand 'health literacy' levels across the borough and the impact COVID-19 has had on the local BAME population.	£15,000
c.	Development of health literacy material and training materials to support BAME communities and easy read versions communications.	£15,000
d.	Support of translation services for the local track and trace system	£20,000
e.	Health literacy training for health professionals working with local BAME communities.	£30,000
f.	Technology to help people connect and access information.	£20,000
	Total	£375,000

Any relevant PRADs will be completed in compliance with procurement rules.

Name of Finance Officer involved in decision: Angie Byrne

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This proposal will help the authority to fulfil various statutory duties and comply with the grant conditions.

DECISION REQUIRED

Approval to progress spend of the MHCLG BAME Community Champion Funding based on the proposed activity and indicative amounts outlined above.

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