

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	Disbursement of Omicron Support Fund
Divisions Affected:	All divisions
'Key Decision:	Yes
Reason Key:	Affects two or more Divisions
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet decision 31 March 2020 Min ref: 41/20

Summary

On 1st March 2022 the Department for Health & Social Care (DHSC) published details of the ADULT SOCIAL CARE OMICRON SUPPORT FUND. This was the final specific ASC Covid funding stream.

Surrey County Council (SCC) has received £1m of Omicron Support Fund monies. Funding was provided so that “Local authorities have discretion to use the funding as needed locally, to support the adult social care sector, including relevant local authority staff, in its COVID-19 response, and in particular increased challenges posed by the Omicron variant”.

The funding was unringfenced and did not have to be spent within a set period. When the funding was received, the Council was paying out the final allocations of the Infection Control and Testing Fund 3 and Recruitment & Retention Fund round 2 funding streams to ASC providers. It was agreed therefore that Omicron Support Fund monies would be retained on the balance sheet so they could be utilised to support ASC providers in the early part of the 2022/23 financial year.

As with all previous Covid grant funding streams, the Council consulted with the Surrey Care Association to seek views on the best way to dispense the limited grant funds across Surrey’s broad ASC provider base. Following this consultation the Adults Leadership Team determined that given this funding stream is unringfenced it would be most appropriate to invite all ASC providers to bid for funds against a set of criteria. Providers were invited to submit applications for a funding allocation towards:

- The cost of staff sickness in April 2022.
- Hardship payments to pass onto staff members who have suffered loss of earnings due to sickness and/or the need to self-isolate.
- The cost of facilitating safe visiting in April 2022, with the option to submit a claim for the period May-June 2022 as well if funds could accommodate.
- Other cost pressures caused by the pandemic in April 2022, with the option to submit a claim for the period May-June 2022 as well if funds could accommodate.

Due to the limited value of grant funds, a decision was taken to prioritise funding for providers who provide services to residents whose care is funded by the Council. This was made clear on the application form.

An online form was prepared to gather applications and this form was sent to providers on 20th May 2022 inviting them to apply with a deadline of 10th June 2022.

Applications were received from 165 providers, totalling £3.1m.

Decision made

It was agreed that SCC would allocate funding to providers as set out in Annex 1. This means that:

- Providers who do not provide services to any residents whose care is funded by the Council will be excluded from funding allocations.
- Providers will receive 75% of their claims for the cost of staff sickness in April 2022.
- Providers will receive 100% of their claims for retrospective hardship payments to pass onto staff who have suffered loss of earnings due to sickness/self-isolation.
- Providers will receive 75% of their claims for the cost of supporting safe visiting in April 2022.
- Providers will receive 50% of their claims for other pandemic related cost pressures in April 2022.
- Claims relating to the cost of supporting safe visiting and other pandemic related cost pressures in the period May – June 2022 could not be included in funding allocations due to lack of funds once the above measures have been paid.

A letter will be sent to all providers notifying them of the outcome of their application and explaining the basis of the funding allocations. This will include those providers who will not receive any funding as they do not provide care to any SCC funded residents.

Reasons for Decision:

To support ASC providers with cost pressures caused by the pandemic in line with DSHC grant guidance.

Decision taken by:	Sinead Mooney – Cabinet Member for Adults Leigh Whitehouse – Executive Director for Resources and Section 151 Officer Liz Bruce – Executive Director for Adult Social Care
Decision taken on:	13 th July 2022
To be implemented on:	Omicron Support Fund monies will be paid to providers on the basis set out in this paper on 15 th July 2022

Alternative options considered

The Council could have chosen to allocate funding to ASC providers on a different basis, e.g. giving every provider an allocation based on their number of beds / number of employed care workers etc. This was dismissed as an option as it would not have targeted funding against identified cost pressures submitted by providers, and it would have led to very small allocations to each provider.

As the grant funding is unringfenced, the Council could have chosen to spend the money in a completely different way and not paid it out to support ASC providers. However, this would have been both contrary to the DHSC recommended grant guidance and would also have not supported the sustainability of the ASC sector in Surrey. As such this approach was dismissed.

Summary of any financial implications

There are no direct financial implications to SCC as all the money paid out to care providers will be funded out of the Omicron Support fund monies received from DHSC.

Payment of this funding to care providers is intended to help maintain market sustainability, which will support vulnerable residents and at the same time should lead to indirect financial benefits for SCC.


Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

Decision taken in consultation with the Surrey Care Association, other local partners, the Executive Director for Adult Social Care, the Executive Director for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Adults.

Background Documents

Cabinet report 31 st March 2020 setting out the council's response to Covid-19.	 SCC Response to COVID-19
Link to Omicron Support Fund guidance	Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Annex 1 – Basis of Funding Allocation for Surrey County Council’s Omicron Support Fund

Summary of funding applications received

	No of providers	Staff sickness		Safe visiting		Other pandemic cost pressures		Total value of claims
		Actual cost of covering staff sickness in April 2022	Claims for retrospective hardship payments to pass onto staff	Actual cost of facilitating safe visiting in April 2022	Forecast cost of facilitating safe visiting in May & June 2022	Actual cost of other cost pressures related to pandemic in April 2022	Forecast cost of other cost pressures related to pandemic in May & June 2022	
All providers	165	£0.80m	£0.16m	£0.33m	£0.58m	£0.41m	£0.78m	£3.07m
Of which providers with zero SCC funded service users	20	£0.18m	£0.01m	£0.03m	£0.08m	£0.09m	£0.12m	£0.51m
Therefore claims from providers with SCC funded service users	145	£0.62m	£0.14m	£0.30m	£0.50m	£0.32m	£0.66m	£2.55m

Basis for allocating funding

Total grant funding available	£1.00m
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Elements of funding applications included in funding allocations	Amount claimed by providers	% to be funded	Use of funding
Actual cost of covering staff sickness excluding providers with zero SCC funded service users in April 2022	£0.62m	75%	£0.47m
Claims for retrospective hardship payments to pass onto staff excl providers with zero SCC funded service users	£0.14m	100%	£0.14m
Actual cost of facilitating safe visiting excluding providers with zero SCC funded service users in April 2022	£0.30m	75%	£0.23m
Actual cost of other pandemic pressures excluding providers with zero SCC funded service users in April 2022	£0.32m	50%	£0.16m
Total use of Surrey’s Omicron Support Fund	£1.39m	72%	£1.00m

Elements of funding applications excluded in funding allocations (either because providers do not have any SCC funded service users or because funding has already been fully spent on costs outlined above)	Amount claimed by providers
Applications from providers with zero SCC funded service users (grant targeted at SCC commissioned services)	£0.51m
Forecast cost of facilitating safe visiting in May & June 2022 excl providers with zero SCC funded service users	£0.50m
Forecast cost of other cost pressures related to pandemic in May & June 2022 excl providers with zero SCC	£0.66m
Total elements of funding applications excluded from funding allocations	£1.68m