

Surrey County Council
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Kingston-upon-Thames
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asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk

Date: xx April 2020

ADULT SOCIAL CARE COVID-19 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFER TO CARE PROVIDERS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to our letters of the 27th March 2020 and the 8th April 2020, I am writing to update and expand upon the approach Surrey County Council (SCC) is making to support adult social care providers through these unprecedented times.

We recognise that the C19 outbreak is placing enormous challenges on care providers that SCC commissions care and support services from. We would like to reiterate our sincere thanks to all providers who continue to provide vital services to vulnerable residents in these very challenging circumstances.

Over the past 2 weeks SCC has received further information about the various approaches being adopted elsewhere in the country and we have considered the recent guidance issued from the LGA and ADASS. We have also listened to representations from providers that the proposal in respect of the hardship fund was unnecessarily bureaucratic and did not offer any assurance of financial certainty. Taking all of these factors into account we are intending to offer all providers an unconditional goodwill grant payment of 10% (based on value of active care packages at the end of March 2020) for the period April – June 2020. This payment will encompass all of the services SCC purchases directly to meet people's assessed care and support needs across all types of care. SCC will endeavour to make these payments as quickly as possible, but we hope providers can appreciate that implementing and communicating these payments across all care sectors will take some time. SCC therefore aims to send each provider a letter confirming the value of the payment to their organisation and when the payment will be made within the next two weeks.

This grant payment will replace the previous plan to establish a hardship fund. SCC will pay providers the full amount for the period April – June 2020 in one single payment. This payment will be made regardless of the level of any actual additional costs incurred.

As set out in the home care section below, SCC is also proposing to pay a premium of 10% for all new Home Based Care clients that providers take on following hospital discharge.

SCC has created a Joint Placements Team with local Clinical Commissioning Groups to facilitate rapid discharge through the swift commissioning of onward care arrangements. In addition to the 10% premium for home care packages following discharge, fees for new care homes placements following discharge are also temporarily being commissioned at higher rates to take account of the challenges care home providers also face in facilitating hospital discharge in the current climate.

In our letter of the 27th March 2020, we set out our proposal to allow a tolerance level of up to 15% to allow providers to flex support packages without requiring prior approval from SCC. Please note that following the decision to make goodwill grant payments, this tolerance level will now apply to Home Based care clients only, as we understand that people's additional care needs can fluctuate on a daily basis. We recognise that people living in

accommodation based services may also have fluctuating needs but this will be on a much smaller scale. In light of the goodwill grant payments now being made, accommodation based providers and all other care providers outside of home care services seeking to increase existing support packages, should discuss and agree the proposed increased with the allocated social worker or contact the relevant duty team before actioning them.

SCC will review the support arrangements to providers from July onwards taking into account the emerging national and local developments in relation to the C19 pandemic. We will write to providers again to confirm support arrangements from July onwards depending on how the situation progresses.

Revised support offer for each care sector

The revised package from the Council can be summarised as follows.

Home care

- 10% unconditional goodwill grant payment to cover the period April – June 2020
- 10% premium payment for all new home care cases following hospital discharge from the 23rd March – 28th June 2020. This premium will be paid in arrears based on the total value of actual care delivered by each provider to all new clients following hospital discharge in the period 23rd March – 28th June 2020.
- Payment on account for the period 23rd March – 28th June 2020 to support providers' cash flow. Please note that after making the payment on accounts to providers, SCC put a credit on each provider's account equivalent to the payment on account value to enable the invoices submitted for actual hours of care delivered to continue to be processed by SCC in the normal way without providers then being paid twice for the same period. In some cases, this has meant that payments for periods of home care prior to the payment on account or for services outside of home care have not been made as providers had expected. A number of providers have queried this. This letter confirms that these payments will be released as soon as possible by SCC – i.e. any home care periods of care prior to the payment on account will be paid along with ongoing payments for other services during the home care payment on account period.
- Providers to continue to submit invoices for actual care delivered in this period.
- If the value of actual services delivered in this period is higher than the payment on account, then SCC will pay the difference, with payments commencing as soon as the payment on account value is exceeded by the value of actual services billed.
- If the value of actual services delivered is less than the payment on account, providers will keep the difference. This is on the express conditions that providers continue to pay their staff for the delivery of planned care where this is less than actual hours in the period (in order to support workforce retention), and providers are responsive to the needs of SCC during the C19 pandemic, including responding promptly to hospital discharge requests.
- Normal payments to commence from 29th June 2020 onwards, unless it is agreed further extraordinary action is required in light of the latest status of the pandemic at this time.

Day care

- 10% goodwill grant payment to cover the period April – June 2020
- SCC will continue to pay at current agreed prices and levels of care where day care services continue to be delivered (whether they are delivered in the normal way or some alternative form).
- If the cost of alternative provision is demonstrably greater than the cost of normal service provision, then these costs should be added to invoices and SCC expects to pay these costs.
- SCC is willing to offer payments on account for the period April to June 2020 in line with home care providers. Please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk if you would like to take up this facility.
- Where day care services are closed and not being delivered on an alternative basis, then providers should not send invoices for these services. This is in line with the overarching principle of SCC continuing to pay for services at an individual client level based on actual services provided.
- If the closure of day care services creates significant financial pressures for your organisation, for instance because costs are still incurred but income is not forthcoming, then SCC will consider making a payment equivalent to the amount day care providers would normally have been paid for the period April to June 2020 (taking into account any other support providers are able to access, e.g. from central government). This payment would be made on the basis that providers continue to pay their staff and make them available for redeployment to support the delivery of other forms of care. The payment would be separate to the 10% goodwill grant payment. If you are in this situation and would like SCC to consider making such a payment then please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk.

Residential, nursing and supported living care services

- 10% goodwill grant payment to cover the period April – June 2020.
- Payments to continue to be made based on the current agreed care plan.
- If the level of care delivered reduces due to circumstances in this period, then SCC will not reduce payments to providers.
- Where an individual is absent from a care setting because they choose to self-isolate with their family at home, SCC will continue to pay the current agreed cost for the care package through the monthly automatic schedule payments.
- Payments for all other absences (e.g. admissions to hospital) and permanent ceases (e.g. an individual passing away) will be made in the normal way at an individual client level.
- Providers who under normal circumstances enter into sub-contracting arrangements with other providers, for example to ensure the provision of stimulating day activities, are encouraged to continue paying for these services wherever activities continue to be provided using alternative means (e.g. virtual platforms etc.) in order to ensure a buoyant market is sustained.

- If a provider of accommodation based services is facing cash flow issues, then please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk and SCC will discuss your circumstances with you and agree the most appropriate support SCC could offer to help address your cash flow challenges.

All other forms of care

This includes a range of support services in the community including outreach, short term breaks and extra care housing. The same general principles apply for these services:

- 10% goodwill grant payment to cover the period April – June 2020
- Providers should only invoice based on actual services delivered.
- Payments on account for April to June 2020 will be considered upon request where services continue to be delivered. Please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk if you would like to take up this facility.
- If services are not delivered and this causes financial pressures, then SCC will consider make a payment equivalent to the amount care providers would normally have been paid for the period April to June 2020 (taking into account any other support providers are able to access, e.g. from central government). This payment would be made on the basis that providers continue to pay their staff and make them available for redeployment to support the delivery of other forms of care. The payment would be separate to the 10% goodwill grant payment. If you are in this situation and would like SCC to consider making such a payment then please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk.

Direct Payments

- SCC will be continuing to ensure Direct Payment recipients receive their normal funds during the C19 crisis. SCC has encouraged Direct Payment recipients to continue to use these funds to pay for their normal care services to ensure they receive the care and support the need and to help support the organisations that provide these services.
- The 10% goodwill grant payments can only be based on the services SCC directly commissions with care providers. If your organisation provides services commissioned by individuals who receive Direct Payments from SCC, this represents a substantial proportion of your overall business and you are experiencing significant financial pressures in relation to these services due to circumstances caused by C19, then please write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk and SCC will discuss your circumstances with you.

SCC fees during the C19 crisis

As set out in the letters sent on 27th March and 8th April and confirmed above, SCC will meet the cost of additional support required for specific individuals during the C19 crisis. SCC has also agreed to retain the 15% tolerance for increases to support without prior approval by SCC for home based care providers in addition to the goodwill grant payments. This is to ensure home care providers can remain agile in how they respond to meeting people's need in these unprecedented times.

The goodwill grant payment does not constitute a change in current rates or a change in our current contractual arrangements. The goodwill grant payment is intended to cover any additional costs incurred due to staff cover, agency use, PPE etc up until the end of June 2020. SCC will review the time period for the goodwill payment, with the potential to extend beyond June if necessary.

Rate amendments will not be considered due to the often changing demand within services at this time and of course the resource required to assess each change and revert fees back to pre-COVID-19 rates after this pandemic.

As SCC is paying the whole 3 month goodwill grant payment up front, and also offering payments on account to support provider cashflow where necessary, SCC would expect the updated support offer to cover the immediate pressures that providers are facing in the period April to June 2020. If a provider incurs additional costs in excess of the goodwill grant payment, and wishes SCC to fund the excess costs, then we would please ask that you write to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk setting out these costs and providing evidence to substantiate they are greater for the whole period of April – June 2020 than the goodwill grant payment. SCC will review this information and discuss the circumstances with you.

We would like to express our sincere thanks for your continued support and dedication in supporting Surrey's most vulnerable residents during this time of national crisis, and we look forward to continuing to work with you when we all get out the other side.

In order to avoid delay or misdirection, we would ask you to please send any replies and correspondence to asc.covid19@surreycc.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Boyle
Assistant Director for Commissioning and Transformation
Adult Social Care, Surrey County Council