

**Report to:** STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING BOARD

**Date:** 26 January 2022

**Executive Member:** Councillor Eleanor Wills – Executive Member Adult Social Care and Health

**Clinical Lead:** Ashwin Ramachandra (Living Well, Finance and Governance)

**Reporting Officer:** Stephanie Butterworth, Director of Adult Services

**Subject:** **ADULT SERVICES WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FUND (ROUNDS 1 & 2)**

**Report Summary:** The outbreak of Covid-19 has been unprecedented and the last 20 months has seen a significant increase in the demand for services and the complexity of people needing social care support. The increase has not been matched by the number of people attracted to work in social care, and this has been compounded with increased numbers of staff leaving the sector.

The Government has recognised the issue with a commitment made to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working closely with the care sector to build sufficient workforce capacity across services. Government has announced the “Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for Adult Social Care Round 1”, which confirmed an allocation of £781,378 to Tameside to cover the period to 31 March 2022.

The Government has recently announced a second round of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant which confirms an allocation of £1,442,545 to Tameside which can be used to enable local authorities and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year.

This report sets out proposals for allocation of the available resource locally to support workforce recruitment and retention across the local social care sector.

**Recommendations:** That Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to agree:

- (i) An allocation of £781,378 made to the Council by Government from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund (Round 1) for Adult Social Care to support the recruitment and retention of staff across the local social care sector to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period be accepted.
- (ii) That £64,700 of this allocation is approved for spend by the Council as a whole sector response across five proposals, namely a recruitment video, Level 3 Trusted Assessor Training Manual Handling, a Local Recruitment Initiative, Blue Light Cards for staff, and Halfords vouchers.
- (iii) That the remaining £716,678 of the grant allocation be distributed across the CQC registered domiciliary, care home, and supported living providers utilising the formula used in relation to previous Infection Control Grants made available through Government.
- (iv) An additional allocation of £1,442,545 made to the Council

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by Government from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund (Round 2) for Adult Social Care to enable the Council and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year be accepted.

- (v) That this allocation of £1,442,545 be distributed across the CQC registered domiciliary, care home, and supported living providers utilising the formula used in relation to previous Infection Control Grants made available through Government

**Financial Implications:**

(Authorised by the statutory S  
151 Officer & Chief Finance Of

<b>Budget Allocation (if Investment Decision)</b>	£781,378 External Grant Funding plus an Additional £1,442,545 Extra
<b>CCG or TMBC Budget Allocation</b>	TMBC
<b>Integrated Commissioning Fund Section – s75, Aligned, In-Collaboration</b>	
<b>Decision Body – SCB Executive Cabinet, CCG Governing Body</b>	SCB
<b>Value For money Implications – e.g. Savings Deliverable, Expenditure Avoidance, Benchmark</b>	

On 3 November the Government issued additional grant funding to LA to support the workforce recruitment and retention in the provider care market of £162.5m. In addition to this, the DHSC published on the 13 December an additional £300m extra for workforce recruitment and retention. The proposals in this paper sets out initially how this investment will be made and will require working in partnership with our providers to ensure this external funding is deployed effectively to maximise the outcomes. National returns are due in early January to DHSC to monitor expenditure and provide assurances. It has been advised that some of the proposals in this paper would be classed as payments in kind or gifts, and would affect individuals PAYE. This may impact those who are in receipt of other benefits. The proposals outlined are broadly in line with what other LA across the Northwest are doing following a Finance Leads ADASS group meeting that took place on the 2 Dec 21.

**Legal Implications:**

(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

As set out in the report Tameside MBC has been allocated £781,378 from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund. Full details of the scheme and its conditions can be found at [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

In summary, the fund is aimed at retaining current capacity or delivering additional capacity in adult care for the period of 21 October 2021 to the 31 March 2022. The expectation is that council's will work closely with local providers to identify and assess the most effective way that the funding can be used to achieve the objective.

Officers met on the 10 November and agreed that a working group should be established as a matter of urgency to undertake the necessary due diligence. The engagement undertaken and due diligence is set out in section 3 of this report.

The scope of the grant is wide to enable council's and providers to identify the best solutions locally. There are however provisions in the grant to the council, which enables the Secretary of State to clawback any funding not appropriately allocated by the Council and also to stop any further grant payments are made.

In addition, the Director of Adult Services and the Council's 151 Officer are required to confirm to the Secretary of State that the funding has been used appropriately to sustain or increase staffing capacity. Therefore the due diligence needs to be robust not only to provide assurance to Members that the funding has been allocated appropriately and delivered on the intentions but also that the Director of Adult Services and the Council's 151 Office are able to discharge their statutory duty by confirming this given potential personal liability.

The report has identified that a proportion of the funding will be passported to the providers for them to utilise ie a distribution formula. It is strongly advised that this is done under a grant agreement to ensure that the conditions of the initial grant also passported to the providers to ensure that it is used for the required purpose. There also needs to be clear monitoring and reporting on the spend so there is a clear audit trail in the event the spend is audited by or on behalf of government particularly as whilst there is a clear plan as to how to allocate the budget outside of the proposals to spend £64,700 of the total funding, there appear to be no proposals as to how the vast majority over £2m will be spent (although there is a proposal as to an allocation formula) and its purpose achieved to create a more stable and sustainable workforce.

**How do proposals align with Health & Wellbeing Strategy?**

The proposals align with the Living Well and Working Well and Aging Well programmes for action

**How do proposals align with Locality Plan?**

The service links into the Council's priorities :-

- Help people to live independent lifestyles supported by responsible communities.
- Improve Health and wellbeing of residents
- Protect the most vulnerable

**How do proposals align with the Commissioning Strategy?**

The proposals follow the Commissioning Strategy principles to:

- Empower citizens and communities
- Commission for the 'whole person'
- Take a 'place-based' commissioning approach to improving health, wealth and wellbeing
- Target commissioning resources effectively

**Recommendations / views of the Health and Care Advisory Group:**

This is a contracting decision so has not been discussed at HCAG

**Public and Patient Implications:**

Those accessing the service have been identified as having eligible needs under the Care Act 2014 or assessed as requiring preventative services to delay eligibility and entrance to eligible services.

**Quality Implications:**

These services support quality outcomes for people to be able to continue living well in their own homes and local communities.

**How do the proposals help to reduce health inequalities?**

The service delivers whole life support to vulnerable people including ensuring individuals have access to healthy lifestyles.

**What are the Equality and Diversity implications?**

There are no negative equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

**What are the safeguarding implications?**

There are no safeguarding implications associated with this report. Where safeguarding concerns arise as a result of the actions or inactions of the provider and their staff, or concerns are raised by staff members or other professionals or members of the public, the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

**What are the Information Governance implications? Has a privacy impact assessment been conducted?**

Information Governance is a core element of all contracts. The necessary protocols for the safe transfer and keeping of confidential information are maintained at all times by both commissioner and provider. Privacy Impact Assessments have not been carried out.

**Risk Management:**

The Government's expectation is that the grant will be fully spent on addressing local workforce capacity pressures through recruitment and retention activity by 31 March 2022. It is clear that 'spent' means that expenditure has been incurred between 21 October 2021 and 31 March 2022. This funding cannot be used to address general financial pressures that providers might be experiencing.

Providers are to agree to act on an open book basis and make cost data available to the Council during this period. Close oversight of spend against the two rounds of non-recurrent funding will be ensured through Adult Leadership Team and the returns that will be submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care.

If it is found that any supplier is found to be taking undue fair advantage, or failing in their duty to act transparently and with integrity, then the Council has a right to take action to recover payments made.

**Access to Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer Trevor Tench



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The outbreak of Covid-19 has been unprecedented and has had a significant impact on businesses of all sizes including adult social care providers. The last 20 months has seen an increase in the complexity of people accessing residential care and a significant increase in demand for service to help people remain in their homes. This has therefore created more employment opportunities across these two areas, but the number of people attracted to work with very vulnerable people in social care has not risen at the same rate to meet this demand. In addition, after such a difficult period there are emerging issues in retaining staff in the sector. This would result in many of the most vulnerable people living in the borough being put at risk, as there may not be capacity to meet their essential needs.
- 1.2. This issue has been recognised by Government with a commitment made on 14 September 2021 in the [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#) to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working closely with the care sector to build sufficient workforce capacity across services.
- 1.3. The [adult social care winter plan](#) published on 3 November 2021 set out the support the government will be providing to the adult social care sector to meet the challenges it faces this winter. The plan includes a commitment to providing workforce recruitment and retention funding, originally announced on 21 October 2021, to support local authorities and providers to recruit and retain sufficient staff over winter, and support growth and sustain existing workforce capacity.
- 1.4. The Government announced a second round of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant on 15 December 2021 which confirmed an allocation of £1,442,545 to Tameside, which can be used to enable local authorities and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year.
- 1.5. The main purpose of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund is to support local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter, in order to:
  - support timely and safe discharge from hospital to where ongoing care and support is needed
  - support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care
  - support providers to prevent admission to hospital
  - enable timely new care provision in the community
  - support and boost retention of staff within social care
- 1.6. For Round 1 an allocation of £781,378 to Tameside has been made from the fund to cover the period to 31 March 2022. This will be released in two tranches - £468.6k in November 2021 (60%) followed by £312.4k in January 2022 (40%).
- 1.7. For Round 2 an allocation of £1,442,545 to Tameside has been made from the fund to cover the period to 31 March 2022. This will be released in two tranches – the first in in January 2022 followed by the second in February 2022.

## 2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1. Discussion with the providers has indicated that they are dealing with significant issues in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff due to:
  - As the economy has opened up a number of staff recruited throughout the pandemic have returned to their previous roles specifically in the retail and hospitality sectors (where comparable pay is higher than is available in the social care sector).

- Staff within the sector are fatigued after 20 hard months supporting vulnerable people.
  - Staff are leaving providers to sign up for staffing agencies who pay at a higher rate.
  - The age profile of workers in the sector, with a high proportion of staff aged 55 and over, has seen a number of workers decide to take early retirement and leave the sector completely.
  - The roles available are highly responsible in supporting vulnerable people, many with very complex needs, including supporting people with personal care. It is clear that whilst some people are interested in roles they do not have a complete view of what the roles entail and a number of people decide very quickly that the job is not for them and leave after only a few shifts.
- 2.2. The conditions of the allocation of the grant are clear that the funding must only be used to deliver measures that address local workforce capacity pressures in adult social care between through to 31 March 2022 through recruitment and retention activity. The Council is expected to work closely with its provider partners to think innovatively about the measures they put in place individually and collectively, including passporting funding directly to providers where appropriate. There is a clear statement around the importance of retaining existing staff capacity as well as encourage new and returning employees.
- 2.3. Where the Council and its providers are already using such approaches, the funding can be used to increase the scale of activity.
- 2.4. Councils can use this funding directly to deliver measures that help all providers of adult social care in their area. This includes:
- care home and domiciliary care
  - care providers with which local authorities do not have contracts
  - organisations providing care and support who may not be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- 2.5. The Government has been clear that the round 1 allocation is a ring-fenced grant that will be paid in 2 instalments to local authorities:
- the first instalment of £468.6k (60%) will be processed as soon as possible and will be made in November 2021
  - the second instalment worth £312.4k (the remaining 40%) will be paid in January 2022 and will be conditional on local authorities having completed a return to the Department of Health and Social Care by 14 January 2022
- 2.6. In addition the Government is clear that the round 2 allocation is a ring-fenced grant that will be paid in 2 instalments to local authorities:
- The first instalment will be paid in January 2022;
  - The second instalment will be paid in February 2022.
- 2.7. The Government's expectation is that the grant will be fully spent on addressing local workforce capacity pressures through recruitment and retention activity by 31 March 2022. It is clear that 'spent' means that expenditure has been incurred between 21 October 2021 and 31 March 2022. This funding cannot be used to address general financial pressures that providers might be experiencing.
- 2.8. A regional meeting to discuss deployment of the grant organised by NW ADASS from discussions concluded the following key points:
- The majority of councils are passporting 60-80% of the fund to providers, prioritising retention, bonuses, "thank you" payments. Remaining 20% focusing on initiatives including recruitment campaigns, jobs fairs or to keep as contingency.
  - Councils were prioritising on-framework providers, or agreeing to focus on particular sectors of the care market (e.g. care at home). Some councils are including non-CQC providers, e.g. specialist homelessness and MH Supported Living.
  - Where possible councils are taking a permissive approach for accessing the funds – e.g.

providing funding with a grant letter and asking providers to opt-out/return funds if they are unable to comply. Some councils are requiring further information and applications. One point of interest was to understand larger providers whose CQC address may be in the council geography, but may have many staff who work outside the area. One council was having more detailed conversations with these providers to test their use of a relatively large sum.

- Councils appear to be agreeing with the oversight of Exec Member via email although some councils are producing Cabinet or executive reports.
- There was criticism of the 60/40 grant allocation with the second allocation in the New Year. One council is providing an increased allocation to providers before Christmas at their own financial risk.
- Dissatisfaction with the limitations of time limited grant funding, the reporting template, and the subsequent difficulties in funding long-term projects and collaborating with providers or across a wide footprint.
- However, some interesting ideas shared on the call – including a payment by results recruitment project in homecare, a potential homecare social enterprise to impact on current market off framework premium, a council and partner auxiliary “bank” of staff to support provider failure and funding driving lessons for young people. (Notable that these initiatives are funded outside the WRRF)

### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. Work has been ongoing locally and across Greater Manchester considering all options to boost the recruitment on retention of staff in the social care sector. The funding is a timely support to consolidate this work and an opportunity to boost further initiatives across the period to March 31 2022.
- 3.2. As indicated in section 2 of this report informal discussions have been ongoing with providers across Tameside in relation to boosting staff recruitment and retention to get through the difficult winter months and beyond – across Adult Services in-house and independent sector providers there are upwards of 2500 staff supporting the social care population all of whom are included in the financial support available. Based on these discussions a small group of senior staff across Adult Services was convened to consider the best use of the money that has been made available through the grant. In reality the discussion of the group was focussed on a small number of ideas from providers with the five proposals identified in paragraph 3.3 being chosen for progressing centrally. Other ideas that were discounted included “golden hellos” as providers were mixed on the benefits of these and were clear that the priority was in relation to loyalty payment to retain their existing skilled workforce, and a “payment by results” recruitment effort just needed too much work to achieve in the timescales for the funding and it was considered that the potential benefits would be quite limited.
- 3.3. It is proposed therefore that the funding is utilised in two specific ways as outlined below.
- 3.4. The first proposal relates to direct Council activity to support the market as a whole in relation taking pressure out of the system and aid recruitment and retention. The following initiatives are proposed to utilise £64,700 of the total funding of £781,378:
  - **Recruitment Video** – it is clear that a number of people recruited to social care roles quickly become aware that the work really is not for them. It is believed from discussions that a video describing various roles across the sector from experienced staff which describes in a “warts and all way” what the work entails would be a really helpful resource that would maximise the efforts of any recruitment campaign and get people into the work that are clear what the roles entail.
  - **Level 3 Trusted Assessor Training – Manual Handling** - the proposal is to get two staff from each of the six “zoned” support at home provider trained up to carry out low level manual handling assessments. This would free up capacity with the Councils

manual handling team and having qualified staff of their own will mean providers can issue their own low level equipment to people they support quickly and flexibly This would free up some MH assessor time and mean providers can get certain items of kit to people they support quickly and flexibly. Courses are run in Manchester throughout January and February..

- **Local Recruitment Initiative** - the proposal is for the Council to run a recruitment day for all providers to attract people to the various social care work opportunities on offer across in-house and independent provision.
- **Blue Light Card** – the proposal is to purchase cards for all operational social care staff working across in-house and independent provision. The Blue Light card provides those in the NHS, emergency services, social care sector and armed forces with discounts online and in-store. This proposal has been identified as an important gesture to recognise the important role operational staff have made alongside the NHS and emergency services over the past twenty months whilst opening up some significant discounts across a wide range of small and large companies.
- **Halfords Voucher** – this proposal is to recognise the important role that staff vehicles have made in ensuring that support to vulnerable people throughout the pandemic. The vouchers can be used to support the cost of vehicle servicing, replacement of tyres and exhausts and so on.

All five proposals meet the requirements of the grant as outlined in paragraph 1.4 above.

- 3.5. The second proposal is that the remaining £716,678 of the grant is distributed across the domiciliary and care home providers (both in-house and external provision) based on the formula used for the previous allocations against the Infection Prevention Grants provided by the Government. Clarification will be given to providers that their allocation must be used in accordance with the criteria and taking note of the examples highlighted in paragraph 2.3 of this report. For information – the Infection Prevention Grant was allocated to provider based on the number of registered beds in Tameside (with some local amendments based on local knowledge, e.g. the differential between Hyde Nursing Homes registered beds and operational beds), along with the number of service users that domiciliary care providers are using. Both these figures were download from the NECS Capacity Tracker. The government identified the split between care home and community services (for the Infection Prevention Grant), whereas the proposal is for a straight split between registered beds/number of service users supported in Tameside.
- 3.6. As previously stated the conditions of the allocation of the grant are clear that the funding must only be used to deliver measures that address local workforce capacity pressures in adult social care between through to 31 March 2022 through recruitment and retention activity.
- 3.7. Some examples of how the funding can be spent include, but are not limited to:
  - Supporting payments to boost the hours provided by the existing workforce – including childcare costs and overtime payments
  - Investment in measures to support staff and boost retention of staff within social care – including occupational health, wellbeing measures, incentive and retention payments
  - The creation and maintenance of measures to secure additional or redeployed capacity from current care workers. For example, shared staff banks, redeploying local authority staff, emergency support measures, overtime payments
  - Local recruitment initiatives
  - Activities to support hospital discharge or to prevent or address delays as a result of workforce capacity shortages (distinct from discharge funding agreed in separate guidance)
  - Activities which support the recruitment of local authority employed social care staff, or which enhance or retain the capacity of existing local authority employed social care staff
  - Local authorities and providers to use the grant to cover reasonable administrative and/or set up costs they incur for new measures that deliver additional staffing capacity through

recruitment and retention activity

- 3.8. The additional allocation of £1,442,545 made to the Council by Government from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund (Round 2) for Adult Social Care is clear that the monies should enable the Council and providers to bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year.
- 3.9. In the spirit of this it is proposed that the full allocation of £1,442,545 be distributed across the CQC registered domiciliary, care home, and supported living providers utilising the formula used in relation to previous Infection Control Grants made available through Government
- 3.10. It is important that we support our communities by ensuring so far as possible we have a resilient economy in terms of both the companies who deliver services and the people they employ.
- 3.11. Providers are to agree to act on an open book basis and make cost data available to the Council during this period. The new arrangements will state that they will continue to pay employees at their usual rate.
- 3.12. The Government have made available various supplier support reliefs during the Covid 19 period, some of which are financial. Suppliers should not be claiming contractual relief from a local authority and claiming separate relief from the Government to the effect that a supplier gains an undue advantage by claiming relief twice for the same hardship.
- 3.13. If it is found that any supplier is found to be taking undue fair advantage, or failing in their duty to act transparently and with integrity, then the Council has a right to take action to recover payments made.

#### **4 GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

- 4.1 As reported earlier in this report the Government has made two allocations to Tameside of £781,378 (Round 1), and £1,442,545 (Round 2) from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund to support social care providers locally to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to continue working closely with the care sector to build sufficient workforce capacity across services. The funding is being made available primarily to recruit and retain sufficient staff over winter, support growth and bring forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year to sustain existing workforce capacity.
- 4.2 Local authorities must distribute the money in line with the grant conditions and are required to provide two reports for each round of grant allocation by the dates below:

##### ***Round 1***

- Reporting point 1: 14 January 2022, covering expenditure from 21 October to 30 November 2021
- Reporting point 2: 29 April 2022, covering expenditure for the entire whole grant period from 21 October 2021 to 31 March 2022

##### ***Round 2***

- Reporting point 1: 21 January 2022, a statement of assurance certifying that their reported expenditure from this grant will be spent in compliance with the grant conditions, and a plan outlining how they plan to spend this funding
- Reporting point 2: 29 April 2022, covering expenditure for the entire grant period from 10 December to 31 March

- 4.3 Clawback provisions apply to this fund including that local authorities must repay any unspent

amounts from the fund and any amounts not used for measures that deliver additional staffing capacity and meet the grant conditions. Where the local authority has passported funds to providers, the provider must return any unspent amounts to the Council at the end of the grant period. If Government reasonably believes spending is not in line with the grant conditions, they may recover grant monies from the Council.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This report sets out a new allocation of £781,378 of Government funding to support the recruitment and retention of staff across the local social care sector to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period.
- 5.2 The proposal is to spend the allocation in two ways; firstly in a whole sector response co-ordinated by the Council across five separate proposals as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of this report: and secondly the remainder of the grant allocation is distributed across the domiciliary and care home providers utilising the formula used in relation to previous Infection Control Grants made available through Government.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 As set out on the front of the report