

## **Council**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15th December 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund
<b>Report of:</b>	Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director – Adults, Health and Integration
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All Wards

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1.** On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021 the government made a commitment 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 with the care sector to build sufficient workforce capacity across services.
- 1.2.** The adult social care winter plan published on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 sets 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 to support local authorities to recruit and retain sufficient staff over the winter and support growth and sustain the sector.
- 1.3.** The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Supplementary Revenue Estimate for the 2021/22 Financial Year of £982,203 to be funded from the Workforce Capacity Fund for Adult Social Care for Local Authorities. The allocation for Cheshire East Council is set out in Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) guidance published on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.

### **2. Recommendations**

Council is recommended to approve:

- 2.1.** That a grant funded Supplementary Revenue Estimate be made, for the 2021/22 Financial Year, of £982,203 to be funded from the DHSC Workforce

Capacity Fund for Adult Social Care for Local Authorities allocation for Cheshire East Council.

- 2.2. That the Executive Director – Adults, Health and Integration be authorised to spend the money in accordance with the conditions of the fund.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The purpose of this funding is to enable Cheshire East Council to deliver measures to supplement and strengthen adult social care staff capacity to ensure that safe and continuous care is achieved.
- 3.2. Local Authorities can use this funding to deliver staffing capacity measures that support all providers of adult social care within their geographical area.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. Do nothing. Where use of the funds not to be approved then they would need to be returned to the Department of Health and Social Care. In doing so would deprive the local care market access to funds that could support both local job creation and the retention of staff with valuable skills within Cheshire East.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1. On 3rd November 2021, the Department for Health and Social Care published guidance on a new funding stream to support the Adult Social Care workforce. The primary purpose of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund is to support local authorities to address capacity pressures within the adult social care workforce in their geographical area, through recruitment and retention activities during the winter months. This fund is designed to:

- support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care;
- support timely and safe discharge from hospital;
- support providers to prevent admission to hospital;
- enable timely new care provision in the community; and
- support and boost retention of staff within social care.

- 5.2. This is a new fund, separate from the most recent Infection Control Fund. As part of the government's COVID-19: Autumn and Winter plan 2021 a commitment was made to supporting local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels over the winter period and to work closely with the sector to build capacity within the workforce. The Adult Social Care winter plan published on 3rd November 2021 includes a commitment to providing this funding to support recruitment and retention of staff over the

winter and to support growth and sustainability within the Adult Social Care workforce.

- 5.3.** Local authorities can use this funding to support all providers of adult social care in their area, including residential and domiciliary care, care providers with which local authorities do not have contracts and organisations providing care and support who may not be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Day care, short stay care services and supporting the capacity of the personal assistant workforce are also included.
- 5.4.** Cheshire East Council will be allocated a total of £982,203. The funding is payable in two tranches with 60% of the first allocation being made to the Council in December 2021 and the remaining 40% in January 2022. All funds must be spent by the 31st March 2022. The definition of spent is that the expenditure has been incurred during the grants qualifying period 21st October 2021 – March 31st 2022.
- 5.5.** In contrast to the Workforce Capacity Fund issued earlier in the year, there is no requirement to submit a proposal to DHSC as to how the funding will be spent. However, there will be points at which the authority will be required to report on how money has been spent and the outputs achieved. The first report is due to be completed and returned to DHSC by 14th January 2022 to cover the funding period from its start date up to and including 30th November 2021.
- 5.6.** Further information is available at:

Guidance overview: Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## **6. Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.1.** No formal consultation process has taken place with the intended recipients of this funding. However, Commissioners and Contract Managers are in constant dialogue with providers across all contract areas. Recruitment and retention are the key concern for providers of Adult Social Care, not only locally, but also nationally and we are already working with providers to identify the most effective ways of supporting recruitment and retention in a way that expands the amount of service we can commission and the number of people we can support.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1. Legal**

- 7.1.1. The Care Act 2014 contains a number of statutory duties that pertain to the provision of services and the care provider market. Failure to use additional available funds in such a way as to support services being delivered to the residents of Cheshire East would be seen as negligent. Ongoing legal advice to be provided if required throughout this process.

## **7.2. Finance**

- 7.2.1. There are no financial implications or changes required to the MTFS as a result of the recommendations in this paper.
- 7.2.2. The service will ensure that all conditions and reporting requirements for the use of the grant are met.

## **7.3. Policy**

- 7.3.1. Supporting the local adult social care workforce ensures that the Council follows through on its commitment to empower and care for the residents of Cheshire East.

## **7.4. Equality**

- 7.4.1. There are no direct equality implications for the Council.
- 7.4.2. There is an expectation that each provider is committed to the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and ensures that those working within the labour market and those looking to join it, are not discriminated on any grounds.

## **7.5. Human Resources**

- 7.5.1. There are no initial Human Resource implications for the Council that have been identified.

## **7.6. Risk Management**

- 7.6.1. The distribution of funds will be in line with activities developed prior to receiving this grant. The plans have been designed to support providers to develop a skilled workforce to support the needs of Cheshire East residents, in a variety of care settings across the authority's footprint. Failure to do could compromise the levels of services that said residents are expected to receive.

## **7.7. Rural Communities**

- 7.7.1. Those residing in Cheshire East's rural communities are more at risk of social isolation and of encountering difficulties in accessing services. Funds being allocated to providers in the potential to improve service availability within these areas. It also has the potential to attract people living in these areas into the workforce and support local communities.

## **7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

7.8.1. This funding stream is for use in supporting the adult social care sector.

**7.9. Public Health**

7.9.1. The desired impact of this fund is to increase capacity within the social care marketplace for residents of Cheshire East to receive the care that they require, within the setting of their preference. In doing so, it aims to achieve the desired Public Health outcome of improving quality and prolonging life.

**7.10. Climate Change**

7.10.1. There are no identified ways in which the Council can reduce its energy consumption during this process, as there will be a requirement for electronic devices to be utilised throughout to achieve the desired outcome. The Council could consider making Ecosia its default internet search engine as they utilise advertisement revenues to plant trees as a way of promoting environmental sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
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