

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL  
DECISION**



**DECISION OF: S151 OFFICER**

**WITH ADVICE FROM: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND DIRECTOR OF  
ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE**

**DECISION NO: 003      (2020/21 ASC: COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND)**

**SUBJECT:**                      COVID-19 Emergency – Care Market Sustainability: Temporary  
fee uplifts for Adult Social Care providers – 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment Period

**KEY DECISION:**              Yes

**REASON:**

The increase is considered urgent in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring capacity and supporting the sustainability of the social care market. This is the second decision to extend the payment arrangements, the first having ended on the 17 May 2020.

**BACKGROUND:**

The immediate impact of the current crisis for care providers has been both complex and significant, and has highlighted major challenges for the sector. Care providers continue to be understandably anxious about the additional costs that they are incurring to ensure safe and effective delivery of their services and Bristol City Council is keen to continue to support them in this situation. The financial strategies emerging from recent ADASS discussions with authorities have typically suggested that between 5% and 10% uplifts for providers have been applied by councils across the country.

Bristol opted to offer a flat rate increase of £100 per week on all care home placements and an increase of £1 per hour on all domiciliary care packages, which was similarly adopted by North Somerset Council. Whilst South Gloucestershire Council adopted a temporary 10% fee uplift for all commissioned Adult Social Care services (except block contracts) and a case by case evidenced approach for services that did not involve personal care e.g. day services.

**REVIEW OF THE FIRST SIX WEEKS**

- The calculation and processing additional payments in such a way that there is clear audit trail, a number of different variables are considered and the payments are not confused as being an increase in base rates has taken time.
- We have had positive feedback from providers about the support this affords, and, from providers who work at our Bristol rates, positive that it is a flat rate for all.
- At the same time pressures on providers have if anything increased, in particular with the much increased specification for PPE to be used by home care providers (who do not generally need to use masks), so some feedback that £1 an hour is welcome but will not cover additional costs. We are considering ways that the PPE pressures could be addressed directly.

- There is feedback from some care homes about additional voids due to infection control and some increase in deaths. We are considering this issue strategically with neighbouring authorities and in the context of emerging national guidance and action plan on infection control in care homes.

## **DECISION:**

To implement a second temporary increase to adult care provider fees as follows for a further period of seven weeks from 18 May to 5 July 2020.

- A flat rate increase of £100 per week on all care home placements currently contracted by Bristol City Council
- An increase of £1 per hour on all domiciliary care including Extra Care, Reablement and Supported Living; and the equivalent percentage increase for Direct Payments
- Pay a month in advance to ease cash flow for the providers
- Pay a top up amount to Home Care and Community Support Service providers who have had packages of care suspended, cancelled or not submitted all / some of the timesheets . The amount of the top up will be calculated to make the total payment equivalent to the average of the latest 3 months (average plus 10% for Extra Care Housing Providers)
- Pay Shared Lives carers £47 per week for long term carers and average of 80% of commissioned hours for day support and night time care. Commence from 6 April 2020 and continue for seven weeks to 5 July 2020
- The payment is to be paid as a temporary Exceptional Special Need to distinguish it from everyday rates. Payments do not constitute a formal increase in relation to the individual care package.

This second payment tranche will cost c.£2.24m for the seven week period.

## **REASONS:**

This proposal reflects guidance provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS), and recognises the significant additional costs that continue to be incurred by care providers during the COVID-19 crisis.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

The following were considered.

- A 'do nothing and review on a case by case' basis was considered and discounted given the scale of the pandemic, Government policy and the LGA/ADASS guidance was very clear about the emerging pressures, indicating that the care market will not be able to sustain its back office and administrative processes in face of COVID-19.
- A simple 10% increase was initially considered, but a differentiated approach to reflect the different costs being sustained by different providers was felt to be more appropriate.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The table below summarises the payments made to date for the initial period from 6 April to 17 May 2020 , together with a projected cost for the second round of payments covering the remaining seven weeks of the three month COVID programme.

The projected total cost of £4.185m is higher than the original forecast of £3.359m (by £0.827m) due to the scale of funds required to 'top-up' the shortfall on commissioned hours for community support and home care services.

It is evident that the scope and scale of the initially-projected effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bristol and the South West has not occurred as predicted. This is primarily due to the success of 'lockdown' measures. The COVID-19 'curve' has become flattened and elongated, necessitating fewer high-level emergency responses, and a more prolonged period of lower-level intervention to sustain the activity of all of the organisations in the health and care sector. For care providers, this means that it will be necessary to extend the support already offered, in order that providers can remain financially and operationally viable, and can access testing and PPE as required.

Due to this, it would be beneficial to reconsider the initial allocation of the £9.3m ASC resource in order to ensure that necessary support can be delivered across the sectors as the situation develops. In addition, it will be necessary to access further funding as the present situation is likely to prevail for months/years.

Additional and Commissioned Hours ("Top-up") Payments	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	Total
	6 Apr - 17 May	18 May - 5 July	
Additional Payment - Residential & Home Care - Phase 1 to 17 May	1,354,429	1,580,167	2,934,596
Direct Payments	115,361	115,361	230,722
Top-up CSS	340,876	397,689	738,565
Top-up Home Care	110,474	128,886	239,360
Shared Lives - Additional & Top-up	19,464	22,708	42,173
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,940,604</b>	<b>2,244,812</b>	<b>4,185,416</b>

The payments will be funded from the COVID-19 government response grant paid to the Council at the beginning of April. However, it is worth noting that additional costs and loss of income for the period of the emergency are likely to far exceed this initial allocation from government.

## **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The Council has a duty to support the care market and ensure capacity and sustainability.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **CONSULTATION**

Discussions have taken place with care providers.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The main risk, as described above, relates to affordability, given the value of the initial

grant made available to the Council by central government.

The Council also commissions packages of care on behalf of the CCG and they will need to agree any continued increases to those prices.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? ~~Yes~~ / No

An equalities impact assessment will be completed on this work.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

None, other than those already highlighted.

This decision is being taken under the urgency/emergency powers provided in the Council's Constitution and scheme of delegation.

The Head of Paid Service and / or Section 151 Officer can take emergency action on behalf of the Council on any matter in cases of urgency or emergency, wherever possible in consultation with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for Finance, Governance and Performance and subject to a full report as soon as possible afterwards to the relevant forum explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER:

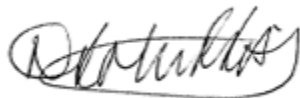
Signed:



**S151 Officer and / or Head of Paid Service**

Title Director of Finance/S151 Officer

Signed



Date: 20 May 2020