

**OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME
RECORD OF OPERATIONAL DECISION**



TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Date: 8 th July 2020	Ref No: 2050
Type of Operational Decision:	
Executive Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Council Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
Status:	
Title/Subject matter: Extension to COVID Provider Offer	
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance – Is the decision:	
(i) within an Approved Budget	x
(ii) in accordance with Council Policy	
Equality Impact Assessment [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	

Details of Operational Decision Taken [with reasons]:

The COVID Provider Offers for Care at Home, Care Homes and Supported Living, all of which are to end 30th June have been reviewed and given the changes in guidance and lockdown restrictions, recommendation is to pare them back to extend to end of July.

The following offers are recommended to continue:

- Paying the difference in costs incurred by having to bring in agency staff due to staff shielding/sickness. The extension of this should have minimal impact on spend as providers can now utilise the Infection Control Grant to fund this, however, the offer is still there should the grant monies not cover everything they use it for.
- Continue to pay for additional costs incurred by the need for increased levels of PPE. The guidance has now not changed for over a month and is likely to remain for the foreseeable. There will come a time where providers have to establish their new 'normal' levels and funding should cease.
- Care at Home 5 day holding payment while in hospital to again continue supporting rapid discharge.
- Discharges into Care Homes to be covered by COVID funding while social work review is carried out.
- That while block booked beds will be ceased, we would work with providers on an individual basis and review any requests for additional support with occupancy levels where this is required.


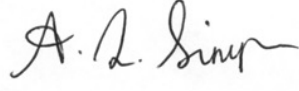
The following offers are recommended to cease on 30th June

- Block booked beds
- Recruitment support e.g. DBS funding
- Care at Home new staff hours payment
- Care at Home and Supported Living funding commissioned hours as with lockdown easing customers will start receiving the same care as previously.
- Any extraordinary expenditure over the above.
- Care at Home enhanced rate
- Payments for same day discharge for Care Homes and Care at Home to continue supporting rapid discharge given it has only been utilised once.

The CCG coordinated COVID-19 funding is secure until the end of July, allowing some flexibility is offering a continuation of part of the COVID Provider Offer. While the Government are easing lockdown measures, the cost implications of COVID remain for the majority of providers. Guidance around the use of PPE has not changed for a number of months and staffing capacity continues to be impacted on by infection, contact tracing and shielding. By streamlining our COVID Provider offer now we are ensuring support is still there where required but easing ourselves and providers into a recovery phase.

The easing of lockdown measures will also allow Care at Home and Supported Living providers especially to look at providing support more in line with pre-COVID.

The extension of at least part of the offer will align with work being carried out on the Adult Social Care Recovery Plan. Market Sustainable plans are being developed so proposal is for extension of part of the COVID Provider Offer to end of July and use this time, where focus can shift further to recovery, to work with providers around long term plans to ensure they can meet the changing demands of the care market. While we would look for block booked bed arrangements to end, should a provider contact us with concerns around sustainability and occupancy, these will be reviewed on an individual basis and potential support provided via the COVID offer.

Decision taken by:	Signature:	Date:
Joint Chief Finance Officer (CCG & LA)		
Director of Community Commissioning		14.7.20
Head of Workforce – Communities & Wellbeing		
Members Consulted [see note 1 below]		
Cabinet Member/Chair		14.7.20
Lead Member		
Opposition Spokesperson		

Notes

1. It is not generally a requirement to consult with any Members on Operational Decisions but where a Chief Officer considers it necessary to consult with the appropriate Cabinet Member and/or Lead Member, they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained to confirm that he/she has been consulted.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**

Background

In a proactive move, to help support Adult Social Care providers in Bury to manage the pressure associated with COVID-19, Bury Council agreed a COVID Support Offer to all providers at the beginning of April for a period of 3 months.

Outline of Support

The COVID Provider offer outlined support including but not limited to:

Recruitment Support

- Promotion of Provider job adverts via Local Care Organisation social media channels and wider
- Funding of DBS checks for new staff
- Upfront payments for new Care at Home staff to ensure capacity within the system
- Reimbursement of any increased costs that our Providers have incurred due to having to bring in agency cost to cover staffing shortfall.
- Access to a staffing pool that providers can access in an emergency to ensure they can still meet the needs of the people they support.

PPE

- Where Providers had to purchase additional or specific PPE, over and above regular stock, to protect staff and support our customers during this pandemic, we will fund these purchases.

- An escalation process whereby Providers can access emergency supplies of PPE, 7 days a week.

Financial support

- Where providers start a new customer from hospital or Choices for Living Well on either the same day, or a date requested by the relevant team, they can claim an additional one off payment of £100. Where they start a new customer from hospital or Choices for Living well over the weekend they can claim a payment of £150. This is aimed at ensuring customers do not have to stay in hospital any longer than they need to.
- Offer to block book vacancies where necessary within our Older People's Residential and Nursing homes. The aim of which was to ensure we maintained capacity within the community sector to assist discharges from hospital. It also provided some Providers with financial security given the large number of vacancies being held as well as ensuring customers do not have to stay in hospital longer than needed.
- Where a resident is diagnosed with COVID-19 and due to their presenting needs requires the Provider to bring in additional staff to support them on a one to one or two to one basis, this increase in care will be funded.
- Care at Home providers will receive a temporarily enhanced rate.
- If care is cancelled or reduced due to COVID-19 we will continue to pay the commissioned hours to ensure they have financial certainty.
- We will pay to keep open a customer's care at home package for 5 days whilst they are in hospital to ensure they can be discharged back home as soon as possible. This is to ensure customers are not having to stay in hospital longer than they need to.
- Where due to COVID-19, providers have had to pay inflated costs for items that are required to ensure the safe running of their service then we look to support funding of them.
- Flexibility around upfront payments where providers require it.

Recommendation

There are currently 226 vacancies within the borough's care homes meaning there is little value in continuing to block book beds to support discharges from hospital. Since the start of May an average of 14.42 beds have been used out of the 37 block booked, with approximately 38% of bed days utilised.

The only home that has been regularly used is Gorse Clough which provides an 11 bed COVID unit. This is our local offer to support COVID+ patients outside of the hospital environment, given the Nightingale Hospital cannot support people with complex conditions.

- It is recommended that the block book arrangements be ended with all homes except Gorse Clough COVID Unit. For an additional 4 weeks this will incur a cost of approximately £58,198.
- While outside of the COVID Provider Offer, an extension to the block booked beds at Spurr House and the D2A provision at Heathlands should also be extended.
- Some homes will have had their beds block booked to support their short term sustainability. Where this is the case they will be invited to discuss their current situation with the Provider Relationship Team. Sustainability plans are being developed but must be done on an individual basis with homes given their specific circumstances.

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- Continue to pay for additional costs incurred by the need for increased levels of PPE. The guidance has now not changed for over a month and is likely to remain for the foreseeable. There will come a time where providers have to establish their new 'normal' levels and funding should cease.
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Risks

- Ceasing the provider offer, specifically the block booked bed arrangements, will likely impact on the sustainability of a number of care homes. Bury Council is required to ensure the sustainability of the market and rapid work will be required to ensure those providers who will struggle are supported.
- GM colleagues have advised they are looking to extend their own offer to August/September. A ceasing of the provider offer, even partly may lead Bury to be an outlier.

Current and future spend

The CCG COVID fund was used to fund the COVID Provider offer. The following table outlines estimated spend against the CCG COVID fund up to the end of June. It also includes forecasted spend up to the end of July should we extend part of the Provider Offer. Those lines highlighted are areas we would propose to extend, at least in part:

Description	Spend up to June (estimate)	Total Forecast Cost up to end of July
Block Book Residential & Nursing Beds	£289,410	£347,608
Additional Costs incurred by Providers (PPE)	£200,000	£400,000
Additional agency costs	£50,000	£70,000
Spurr House Rapid Discharge Beds	£224,755	£301,320
Heathlands D2A	£209,949.82	£281,471.16

Extraordinary Expenditure	£10,000	£10,000
Commissioned Hours	£127,262.29	£127,262.29
Increased Care at Home rate	£45,775.40	£45,775.40
Rapid discharge payment	£100	£100
	£1,157,253	£1,583,537

It should be noted that the Spurr House beds and Heathlands D2A were not included in the Provider offer, however, we have included them in the costings for transparency.

Conclusion

The CCG coordinated COVID-19 funding is secure until the end of July, allowing some flexibility is offering a continuation of part of the COVID Provider Offer. While the Government are easing lockdown measures, the cost implications of COVID remain for the majority of providers. Guidance around the use of PPE has not changed for a number of months and staffing capacity continues to be impacted on by infection, contact tracing and shielding. By streamlining our COVID Provider offer now we are ensuring support is still there where required but easing ourselves and providers into a recovery phase.

The easing of lockdown measures will also allow Care at Home and Supported Living providers especially to look at providing support more in line with pre-COVID.

The extension of at least part of the offer will align with work being carried out on the Adult Social Care Recovery Plan. Market Sustainable plans are being developed so proposal is for extension of part of the COVID Provider Offer to end of July and use this time, where focus can shift further to recovery, to work with providers around long term plans to ensure they can meet the changing demands of the care market. While we would look for block booked bed arrangements to end, should a provider contact us with concerns around sustainability and occupancy, these will be reviewed on an individual basis and potential support provided via the COVID offer.

Advice received from Marie Rosenthal confirmed that any extension would not require further sign off via Cabinet.