

11 February 2021

Dear Care Home Provider,

Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund Ring-Fenced Grant 2021

Further to the Government announcement of the Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund grant, I am writing to set out the arrangements for distributing that fund to Birmingham care homes.

This letter forms the Grant Agreement and sets out further details of the administration of the Grant, its purpose, conditions and reporting requirements. Please read this carefully and ensure that you comply with the conditions, reporting requirements and instructions contained within.

Grant Agreement, Conditions of Payment and Assurance Statement

Section 1 - Background

On 23 December, the government announced an extra £149 million to support the rollout of LFD testing in care homes.

The main purpose of this funding is to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes, and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible. This includes adult social care providers with whom the local authority does not have a contract.

This is a new grant, with separate conditions to the original Infection Control Fund (which ran from May to September 2020) and the extension to the Infection Control Fund (which runs from October 2020 to March 2021).

Section 2 - The Grant

Birmingham City Council's allocation funding is £2,408,435. 100% of the funding is to be allocated to Birmingham located care homes. The grant will be paid to care homes in one instalment:

Payment 1: February 2021

Birmingham City Council shall issue, in a single instalment, a total £2,408,435 to grant conditions compliant care homes within its local authority boundary on a 'per beds' basis, i.e. the number of beds each care home is registered to provide by the Care Quality Commission as at December 2020, and recorded in the CQC December 2020 Care Directory dataset.

The amounts to be paid have therefore been calculated (with rounding) as follows:

Total Birmingham allocation	£2,408,435
Allocation for care homes	£2,408,435
Actual CQC Registered Beds of Grant Conditions compliant care homes	7,204
Total Per Bed	£334.32
Payment 1 Per Bed Amount	£334.32

Section 3 - Grant Purpose

The grant must be spent by care homes on the following measures only:

1. Paying for staff costs associated with training and carrying out lateral flow device (LFD) testing, including time taken to:
 - a. attend webinars, read online guidance and complete an online competency assessment
 - b. explain the full LFD testing process to those being tested, and ensuring that they understand all other infection prevention and control (IPC) measures;
 - c. ensure that any LFD tests are completed properly, including overseeing the self-swabbing process, processing tests and logging results
 - d. wait for results, if staff are coming in to undertake tests on site prior to their shift
 - e. for those care homes that can undertake indoor, close-contact visiting: welcoming visitors, gaining consent and overseeing that personal protective equipment (PPE) is correctly donned
2. Costs associated with recruiting staff to facilitate increased testing
3. Costs associated with the creation of a separate testing area where staff and visitors can be tested and wait for their result. This includes the cost of reduced occupancy where this is required to convert a bedroom into a testing area, but only if this is the only option available to the care home
4. Costs associated with disposal of LFD tests and testing equipment

Section 4 - Specific Conditions

Pursuant to section 31(4) of the Local Government Act 2003 the Secretary of State has attached conditions to the payment of the grant, and no payments shall be made unless certain conditions are met, including the local authority being satisfied that the funding is being used for infection control purposes. Clawback provisions apply, including that the provider must repay any amounts not used for measures which support LFD testing.

The grant funding is allocated to recipient care providers, and recipient care providers accept the funding on condition that the care provider:

1. uses it for the measures outlined in Section 3 only;
2. will provide the local authority with the attached Care Provider Assurance Statement by 26 February 2021 and commits to reporting to the Council on a monthly basis when requested which measures it has used the funding for. The Council will require care homes to complete an online form detailing which measures they have spent the Grant on, and the year-end forecast spend percentage by each measure. Links to the online form shall be distributed on a monthly basis via the Council Commissioning Team's weekly communication bulletin;

3. will provide the local authority with a statement certifying that they have spent the funding on those measures for the local authority return due 30 April 2021;
4. if requested to do so will provide the local authority or DHSC with receipts or such other information as they request to evidence that the funding has been so spent. This may include proof that results of LFD tests have been registered;
5. provide DHSC or the local authority with an explanation of any matter relating to funding and its use by the recipient as they think necessary or expedient for the purposes of being assured that the money has been used in an appropriate way in respect of those measures;
6. will return any amounts which are not spent on those measures outlined;
7. is completing the Capacity Tracker regularly (at least weekly), and has committed to doing so for the duration of the grant;
8. must **not** use the grant for fee uplifts, expenditure incurred by providers before 2 December or activities for which the local authority has earmarked or allocated expenditure or activities which do not support the purpose of this grant;
9. must return to the Local Authority any unused funding, if the care home has not used all or any part of their allocation for the measures outlined;
10. must ensure that (a) there is no increase in any relevant rates from the existing rates, (b) third party charges are paid at the normal market rates, and (c) in no circumstances is any element of profit or mark-up applied to any costs or charges incurred;
11. must account for all payments funded by this grant and keep appropriate records (such as receipts, and proof that LFD tests have been registered). In so far as a provider does not use the entirety of the 'per beds' allocation in pursuit of the measures outlined, any remaining funds must be returned to the local authority;

Section 5 – How the money will be paid

The Council will prioritise distribution of the fund and take all reasonable steps to make payments within ten working days of receipt of the funding from Government.

Where the Council holds a contract with a care home, it will use the latest vendor and payment details to make the Rapid Testing Fund payments.

Where the Council does not hold a contract with a care home, but is currently funding a placement/placements on a spot purchase basis, the latest vendor and payment details will be used to make the Rapid Testing Fund payments.

Where the Council does not hold any vendor or bank details, we will take all reasonable steps to obtain those details and process payments as promptly as possible.

Section 6 – Reporting Arrangements

As set out above, you will be required to submit:

- A signed Assurance Statement by 26 February 2021
- A monthly report to the Council setting out which measures you have used the funding for. Links to the online form shall be distributed on a monthly basis via the Council Commissioning Team's weekly communication bulletin which can also be found at:

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/blog/stm-bulletin>

Section 7 - State Aid

From 1 January 2021, the government is no longer bound by the EU state aid rules. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published guidance on 31 December on complying with the UK's international obligations on subsidy control.

The government considers that this grant, and the measures it is intended to support as specified in Section 3 are consistent with the UK's international obligations on subsidy control. This is because the measures will help detect COVID-19, hence reducing its incidence and spread, and are over and above that which care providers would normally be expected to provide.

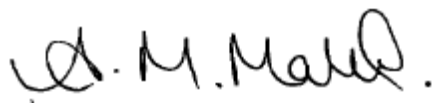
Due to their potential to limit the transmission of COVID-19 and therefore prevent loss of life, these measures are of particular importance to care users, workers and their families, as well as being in the general public interest. Furthermore, without intervention they would not be provided by the market at the level or quality required, and thus to secure their provision, compensation needs to be provided to incentivise an undertaking or set of undertakings.

The measures that can be compensated are detailed in Section 3 above.

Section 8 – Care Provider Assurance Statement

Please complete Appendix 1 'Section 8 – RTF Care Provider Assurance Statement' return this by email to marketintelligence@birmingham.gov.uk by 26 February 2021.

Yours sincerely,



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