

From: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

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To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee

Date: 20 January 2022

Subject: Public Health COVID-19 Grants Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway: N/A

Future Pathway: N/A

Summary:

This report provides an overview of grants accepted by KCC Public Health from central government over 2020/21 and 2021/22 to support efforts to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in Kent and to support those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The grants received are: Test and Trace Support Grant; Community Mass Testing; Practical Support for Self-Isolation; Contain Outbreak Management Fund; and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. The funding received has been utilised across KCC internal services, District Councils, KCC commissioned services and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The total funding received is £75.1m and each grant has a specific remit of expenditure as set out in the relevant grant conditions. Funding can be used to support initiatives up until 31st March 2022, and there is yet to be confirmation of continued funding into the 2022/23 year.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the information contained within this report and to **ENDORSE** the proposed future use of the remaining grant.

1. Context & Overview

1.1. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kent County Council (KCC) Public Health has agreed to accept several Government grants to support efforts towards reducing the transmission of COVID-19 and to support those that have been most impacted by the pandemic in Kent.

1.2. The grants that have been accepted by KCC Public Health are listed below together with the value received to date.

- 1.2.1. Test and Trace Support Grant (£6.3m)
 - 1.2.2. Community Mass Testing Programme (£11.8m)
 - 1.2.3. Practical Support for Self-Isolation (£3.9m)
 - 1.2.4. Contain Outbreak Management Fund (£48.1m)
 - 1.2.5. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Grant (£5m)
- 1.3. Each grant received by KCC has a specific purpose which will be outlined later in this report. As part of receiving funding under the associated key decision, KCC established a robust funding framework, a director level group (named the COVID-19 Finance Monitoring Group (CFMG)) to oversee and approve the allocations, and allocated staff from Public Health Commissioning and Finance to administer, monitor and report on the fund.
- 1.4. This paper provides an overview of the purpose of each grant, a sample of the activity supported to date and how KCC has worked with partners to deliver funding to those most in need.
- 1.5. Please note KCC has received other grants to support local efforts in relation to COVID-19 that are not covered in this report as the administrative responsibility of the grant falls to other directorates. However, KCC Public Health continue to collaborate with relevant directorates to ensure initiatives complement each other and avoid duplication of funding.

2. Test and Trace

- 2.1. The Kent Local Tracing Partnership (KLTP) launched in November 2020 for the purpose of contact tracing residents who test positive for Covid-19 and are classed as hard to reach or uncontactable by the national contact team.
- 2.2. KLTP is fully funded by central government via the Test and Trace grant. The funding allocated to the local Test and Trace activities in Kent to date is £6.3m
- 2.3. Cases received by KLTP will have further call attempts managed via KCC's outsourced Call Centre, Agilisys. These calls are made using a local telephone exchange number. After a 48-hour period, if contact has still not been successful; local Borough and District Councils, via a devolved grant funded service, will visit the residents' home to make face-to-face contact. Confirmed breaches of isolation are escalated to the Director of Public Health and Senior Public Health Programme Manager for further consideration.
- 2.4. As of 2nd December 2020, KLTP has received 36,802 cases for contact tracing of which 14,334 have been successfully traced. The NHS Test and Trace target set by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is for at least 80% of the contacts of an index case to be contacted. When combined with national tracing efforts this has led to an 88% success rate in Kent.

3. Community Mass Testing Programme

- 3.1. Targeted Asymptomatic Testing launched in Kent on 18th December 2020, the first sites were mobilised in Swale (Sheerness Working Men's Club) and Thanet (Ramsgate Port) followed by a rolling programme of 24 sites, two per district, which were mobilised and fully operational by 27th January 2021.
- 3.2. The programme adapted and flexed to meet the demand and pace of the Covid-19 pandemic culminating in a reduction of testing sites to 12, one per district from 1st May 2021.
- 3.3. Alongside supervised Asymptomatic Testing at static sites, Kent Residents also had broad access to Home Direct Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) testing and Pharmacy Collect (funded outside of KCC). The success of Home Direct and Pharmacy Collect resulted in a submission to Department of Social Care and Health (DHSC) for the grant to maintain the testing programme at two hubs only, Maidstone (Sessions House) and Ashford (Eurogate Business Park). This was agreed and as of 1st July 2021 two sites remain in operation.
- 3.4. On the 1st of October 2021, at the request of the Home Office, the Asymptomatic Testing programme adapted to meet the need at Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), Migrant and Afghan relocation and assistance policy (ARAP) Hotels. We have provided a total of 6,645 test kits and have provided support with LFD testing training and Covid-19 awareness to the individuals being accommodated in these hotels.
- 3.5. The programme has carried out a total of 633,877 tests, which has resulted in the identification of 3,021 number of Asymptomatic positive Covid-19 cases.
- 3.6. This programme is funded through a specific DSCH grant claimed monthly. To date, KCC has received £11.8m to provide the service.

4. Practical Support for Self-Isolation

- 4.1. In quarter 4 of the 2020/21 financial year, KCC started to receive central government funding to provide practical support for self-isolation for the residents of Kent. The total funding received to date is £3.9m and is required to be spent by the 31st March 2022.
- 4.2. The grant can be used to provide support for those that are required to, or need to, self-isolate. This could be help with food, heating, or everyday tasks. The grant cannot be used to provide direct financial support.
- 4.3. This grant is separate to the funding received by District Councils where they can provide direct financial support to those that meet the eligibility criteria for financial support.
- 4.4. As part of receiving the funding, KCC distributed £1m across all 12 districts to enable Councils to provide additional support to those eligible for the District Council direct financial support. In addition, District Councils could utilise the

funding to support individuals that may not have been eligible for direct financial support.

- 4.5. KCC also utilised the funding to provide additional capacity within existing services to meet the above usual levels of demand as a result of those needing to isolate. For example, Kent Support and Assistance Service were provided with additional funding to meet the additional demand caused by the pandemic.
- 4.6. Funding was also provided to local voluntary and community sector organisations through a COVID-19 grant scheme. Organisations awarded funding were those able to demonstrate their capacity to offer practical support for self-isolation to their communities. Distributing the funding in this way ensured the market had capacity to meet the needs of their communities when they were required to self-isolate.

5. Contain Outbreak Management Fund

- 5.1. Since quarter 3 of the 2020/21 financial year, KCC has received funding from central government under the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). The COMF is provided to local authorities to help with the proactive containment or mitigation against outbreaks of COVID-19. In addition, it is provided to support those that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- 5.2. The total funding received to date under the COMF is £48.1m. As part of the grant conditions, the funding cannot be used to support activity prior to 1st November 2020 or post 31st March 2022.
- 5.3. The funding has been utilised to support initiatives in line with the grant criteria across all directorates within KCC. CFMG has approved 323 funding requests under the COMF for initiatives that will help to prevent or contain outbreaks of COVID-19 and/or help those that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The requests cover providing additional capacity to existing services and/or establishing new services to meet the challenges presented by the pandemic.
- 5.4. In addition, an extensive grant scheme was launched, providing funding to local community and voluntary sector organisations that could demonstrate they were able to support individuals most impacted by the pandemic. 103 grants of up to £10k have been awarded through this route which will be delivered up until 31st March 2022.
- 5.5. KCC has also worked closely with District Council colleagues to distribute funding from the COMF to Councils. £6m has been allocated across all twelve Councils, with funding allocated based on population, deprivation levels and COVID-19 rates at the time of allocation. The funding has enabled District Council's to implement initiatives relevant to each District and to respond quickly to outbreaks and changes in need.

5.6. Requests for funding are still being received, assessed, and reviewed by CFMG to ensure there is continued support and that funding reacts to where the need is greatest.

6. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

6.1. In November 2020, the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) wrote to Councils to inform them of funding to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) individuals. The total funding received to date is £5m.

6.2. The funding was provided to support services such as access to food deliveries, signposting to services (i.e., befriending), and to support the needs of the individual to enable them to continue to shield at home.

6.3. KCC has utilised the funding to ensure there is support for CEV individuals which includes increasing the capacity of community provision and providing digital devices to help individuals to safely remain connected to friends, family and key services.

6.4. District Councils were also provided with funding to support CEV individuals in their district. £1.4m was distributed across all twelve Districts based on the number of CEV individuals in their area. Funding was utilised to contact individuals and to provide access to essentials such as food and supplies.

7. Working in Partnership

7.1. KCC Public Health has worked in partnership with all twelve districts throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so. The close working relationships have been key to ensuring provision reaches those most in need.

7.2. To date, £9.6m has been distributed across all 12 districts from central government grants outlined within this report. Funding has been utilised by District Councils to ensure there is local and timely support available. Funding provided is closely monitored by KCC in collaboration with the districts to ensure the funding is used in line with the grant conditions.

7.3. The district allocations enabled funding to be directed to local foodbanks to ensure they had the supplies to support their local communities. In addition, it has supported their homeless communities to not only ensure they were safe, warm and dry, but also had access to up to date COVID-19 information and guidance and Personal Protective Equipment.

7.4. In addition, KCC has also worked with Kent Police to distribute funding to support compliance with COVID-19 legislation during the period in which it was a legal requirement. The funding supported additional Officer time to conduct compliance visits and to increase the presence in public spaces.

8. Ensuring Value for Money

- 8.1. Where appropriate, KCC has chosen to vary existing contracts to avoid administrative and start-up costs. This approach capitalises on the previous commissioning exercises where value for money would have been assessed and enables the Council to implement additional measures rapidly.
- 8.2. Funding distributed to District Councils was based on a methodology appropriate to the purpose of the grant to ensure funding was allocated fairly.
- 8.3. Applications for funding are each individually assessed for their suitability in meeting the grant conditions, but also their breadth of coverage and sustainability. Applications for funding are also validated across KCC to understand whether the funding request has already been received elsewhere or whether there is an opportunity for efficiencies.
- 8.4. All contractual documentation includes clauses that enable KCC to reclaim any unspent funding or funding that has been used for purposes outside of the agreed remit of expenditure. All recipients of funding are required to regularly report on spend and activity.

9. Continuation of Support

- 9.1. The initiatives directly supported by KCC and through the districts will fund activity until the 31st of March 2022 which is in line with the central government grant conditions. KCC will continue to monitor and respond to the changing needs over winter, implementing additional interventions and packages of funding where necessary. This will ensure there is continued funding over the winter period to support individuals most impacted by the pandemic and to support local efforts to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.
- 9.2. The grant funding received to date can only be used to support activity up until 31st March 2022. KCC has not received confirmation there will be further funding into the 2022/23 year, however it is likely there will be a need to continue to provide additional support to either support local efforts in reducing the transmission of COVID/19 and/or supporting those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. KCC will liaise with and lobby the relevant central government authorities to evidence the need for the continuation of funding into 2022/23.

10. Recommendations

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is asked to **NOTE** the information contained within this report and to **ENDORSE** the proposed future use of the remaining grant.

11. Background Documents

None

12. Contact details

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