

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 15 April 2020

Staffordshire County Council's iCare Campaign



Cllr Alan White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing said,

“Adult social care staff provide personal care to thousands of vulnerable people across Staffordshire. This demand has only increased as the Covid-19 pandemic continues across the country, at the same time as many existing carers need to self-isolate.

People are still receiving care, but we need more carers to help providers of these services care for our vulnerable people and residents and help ease the current pressures on the NHS.

Our iCare campaign encourages local people to sign up to help, but we need to make sure we have all of the relevant safeguards in place. This way, we can ensure that vulnerable residents across the county will still receive care throughout the peak of the virus.”

Report Summary:

A key element of Staffordshire County Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic is to safeguard the most vulnerable people and residents in the County. We need to ensure that the most serious and urgent needs of existing service users are always prioritised, so that they do not become unwell, not only because this is important in its own right but because it avoids placing an unnecessary additional demand on the NHS at this time of crisis. As part of this response the Local Resilience Forum and Staffordshire County Council's Incident Management Team, have been planning for how to bolster social care provision in the event that the market starts to fail, through a Rapid Response Workforce, known as the iCare Campaign. The recommendations below support actions that have been and will need to be taken to ensure suitable social care (especially personal care) provision can be maximised to support vulnerable people and residents across Staffordshire, particularly throughout the peak of the virus via the use of volunteers and new employees sought via the iCare process.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a. In order to ensure Staffordshire County Council's approach is aligned with normal CQC guidance as much as possible in these exceptional circumstances, Cabinet notes the decision of the Director for Health and Care to use a “self-reference”, known as a Self-Declaration Form, alongside a request for a current/last employer reference (where relevant) and failing that a character reference, when checking suitability of volunteers and new employees sought via the iCare process. If there

is an urgent need it may be the case that individuals are deployed before external references have been received at Staffordshire County Council's own risk. A Self-Declaration Form will be used alongside a Self-Disclosure Form detailing any Criminal Convictions as is required when working with vulnerable adults.

- b. Cabinet notes the decision of the Director for Health and Care to pay all iCare volunteers for travel (flat rate 45p per mile) and subsistence (flat rate £5 per day) until the rates for travelling and subsistence to be paid by the Secretary of State under the National Emergency Volunteer Scheme are published, at which time Staffordshire County Council will encourage all volunteers to take this route.
- c. Cabinet notes the decision of the Director for Health and Care that if Nexxus does not have the capacity to support the rapid onboarding and deployment of large numbers of new employees (50+ per week) then Staffordshire County Council will provide the appropriate support by way of bolstering capacity and resource to enable this to happen.
- d. Cabinet approve the allocation of a proportion of the additional grant funding received from government, up to a maximum of £6.75m, and allocate this to the budget for the Director for Health and Care to deploy volunteers and new employees as set out in paragraphs 9 & 10.
- e. Cabinet delegate responsibility to the Director for Health and Care, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing and the Director for Corporate Services to develop and implement an additional financial incentive to retain and attract people into the care market (for personal care and in care homes), if elements of the provider market were still to fail despite iCare interventions.
- f. Cabinet approve the earmarking of a proportion of the additional grant funding received from government, up to a maximum of £5m, and allocate this to the budget for the Director of Health and Care to be used as a financial incentive to retain and attract people into the care market (for personal care and care homes), if elements of the provider market were still to fail despite iCare interventions, subject to the requirements of recommendation e.
- g. That the Director of Health and Care provide weekly update reports to the Leader, Cabinet Member for Health and Care and the wider Cabinet.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 15 April 2020

Staffordshire County Council's iCare Campaign

Recommendations of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing

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Report of the Director of Health and Care

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. In responding to the coronavirus pandemic, Staffordshire County Council has identified one of its key risks as the vulnerable people in receipt of social care including personal care. This risk has many facets to it, in particular our focus is on maintaining a marketplace that can provide home care and care home services. We need to ensure that the most serious and urgent needs of existing service users are always prioritised, so that they do not become unwell, not only because this is important in its own right but because it avoids placing an unnecessary additional demand on the NHS at this time of crisis.
2. If part of the market was to fail in terms of providing personal care in people's home, or in a care home setting, Staffordshire County Council would need to take all reasonable endeavours in order to be able to rapidly mobilise a Rapid Response Workforce to ensure continuity of personal care in response to the crisis.
3. Our approach to creating this Rapid Response Workforce for personal care is called iCare and is based upon bringing in volunteers and new employees to work in this marketplace. This approach was launched on Friday 27th March and relies on a rapid process of:
 - a. Campaign – driving interest
 - b. Recruit – brief, check, clear and approve individuals for this Workforce
 - c. Train – training for individuals to fulfil personal care activities
 - d. Deploy – Deploy approved and trained staff into the marketplace where there is failure.
4. Where individuals want to sign-up to iCare but are already working in the care sector, we are thanking them and asking them to continue working in their current role. This avoids any perverse effect of inadvertently destabilising existing care providers.
5. Where individuals sign-up to iCare but throughout the process decide they do not want to provide personal care, they are passed on to our Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure for deployment into other voluntary opportunities.
6. Where individuals sign-up to iCare and want paid employment in the personal care marketplace they will be referred for employment opportunities onto other providers in the market place where we know there is demand for new staff, or to Nexus if the individuals only want to deliver personal care for a short period of

time during this crisis (or existing providers do not have the managerial capacity to recruit staff at this time, due to the effects of coronavirus). The Nexxus rate is a rate which is intended not to destabilise the wider care market.

7. We are informed that Nexxus currently has capacity to onboard 50 new applicants per week. However, if the numbers exceed 50+ per week, Staffordshire County Council will need to provide support to Nexxus by bolstering capacity and resource. We are in regular dialogue with Nexxus and we will raise any concerns immediately through Staffordshire County Council's Incident Management Team.
8. We are aware that individuals who express an interest via the iCare campaign to be a new employee and who are already furloughed with another employer, might consider temporary employment opportunities in the care market during this time. This would massively help Staffordshire County Council manage the significant risks in the care marketplace. It would be for the individual to agree with their current employer that they will not be in breach of their contract of employment and it is acknowledged this might present a risk to Staffordshire County Council in the future if this leads to someone losing the job in which they are furloughed. The County Council would encourage all employers in Staffordshire to support their staff in accessing these essential second job roles in the care market at this time.
9. If we are successful at driving large numbers of people into employment in the personal care marketplace this will lead to a temporary increase in cost to Staffordshire County Council. The table below shows what this might cost the County Council based on an average cost of £425 per week per new Full Time Employee. This funding would come from the additional £22m social care grant provided by Government.

Summary of potential costs - New Staff		
Number of New Staff in the Market	Cost per week £000	12 Week Cost £000
50	21	225
100	42	510
500	213	2,550
1,000	425	5,100

10. In order to complete the process, set out in paragraph 3 a-d, as quickly as possible there are a number of areas where decisions have had to be made about

our approach to CQCs guidance on two references, DBS checks and travel and subsistence payment for volunteers. The guiding principle is a balance of risk. If the risk of provider failure were to emerge quickly, then a proportionate approach to the issues set out below, will be necessary to ensure an appropriate deployment of volunteers and new employees to provide urgent personal care, and thereby avoid harm which might otherwise occur to vulnerable adults who could have received the support. The recommendations and advice below are made because this crisis response has been created at pace due to the speed of impacts from coronavirus, which are emerging quickly, and therefore capture this proportionate approach. Legal advice has been sought on each of the areas set out below.

References:

Legal advice has been sought in relation to self-references for individuals. Our approach will be to request two references, one of which will be a Self-Declaration to speed up the process given the urgency of the situation. The Self-Declaration will be in essence, a declaration form based upon similar questions that an individual would be required to complete when they apply to Staffordshire County Council for a job role that involves the requirement for a DBS check/has a safeguarding connotation to it/requires work with vulnerable adults. Further, the questions may also be based upon the same or similar type questions posed to an employer when seeking a safeguarding reference for a prospective employee. This is an A4sheet of questions. These are asked over the telephone when a Staffordshire County Council representative makes contact with the interested party who has indicated a willingness to provide personal care via iCare. If the interested party passes through the process, then they will sign the Self-Declaration Form when they attend for training and as part of the checking of original paperwork for the DBS check. This form will be used and considered alongside the Self-Disclosure Form for Criminal Convictions.

At the same time, we will request a single reference from current/last employer (where relevant) or failing that a character reference. It is acknowledged this reference might take time to arrive (especially with some companies closed during the coronavirus pandemic) therefore subject to the Self-Declaration Form referenced above being accepted, individuals will be deployed before external references have been received, at Staffordshire County Council's own risk.

DBS Checks:

Emphasis and importance through-out the iCare process (both volunteer and new employees) has been placed upon the DBS provision. The Coronavirus Act 2020 has not relaxed the requirements in England, however legal advice has been sought and advantage will be taken of the relaxation of provisions about how identification documents are sourced and viewed e.g. it is acceptable to place reliance, at this time, on scanned documents with a follow up of hard copy documents when the individual attends to commence volunteering or employment.

Relevant DBS checks will still be put in place for every individual we intend to deploy. Those people who have a DBS on the Update Service will be instantly

checked and deployed on clearance. The Disclosure and Barring Service has set up a Rapid Response system whereby DBS applications are processed quickly with a fast turnaround to the issue of a certificate and Staffordshire County Council intends to make full use of this service, unless applications can be processed by way of the Update Service also offered by the DBS.

Where individuals already have an Enhanced DBS with an Adults Barred check dated within the last 3 years, regardless of the organisation, Staffordshire County Council will deploy immediately.

Where individuals already have an Enhanced DBS with Childrens' Barred check dated within the last 3 years, Staffordshire County Council is advised to do an Adults Barred check first and then deploy immediately.

For those with other DBS's dated within 3 years, DBS's older than 3 years or no DBS, The Rapid Response Service will be used to check the Adults Barred list and this result will be used to assess suitability whilst waiting for an Enhanced Adults DBS to be completed. The individual will be deployed as an accompanied worker on receipt of a cleared Adults Barred check from the Rapid Response Service.

DBS has also provided the following statistics by way of reassurance to their users around information content:

- around 95% of all Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS checks have no information included on them;
- only 0.02% of Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS checks state that the individual is on a Barred List.

In the ordinary course of events, when Staffordshire County Council receives a positive DBS outcome, the decision to recruit is taken by the recruiting Manager. Ordinarily the recruiting Manager has the relevant professional experience to make this determination i.e. they are a professional in the adult care setting and can determine acceptance or not of the candidate against a positive entry. The entry may not prevent an individual from undertaking a care role but there may be some positive returns that are not clear in this regard. The step built into the iCare process at this time, is that it will be a decision taken by a relevant professional. Named Professionals within Staffordshire County Council's employment will be identified to undertake this task. This is so that a non-professional may refer a positive DBS outcome to a professional within the adult care setting for determination as to whether the individual progresses through-out the iCare process.

This decision-making process will be monitored and may have to be reviewed if capacity becomes an issue.

Travel and Subsistence Expenses

If volunteers are to be paid for travelling and subsistence, then Staffordshire County Council is required to make a decision at what rate. It is advised that a flat rate per mile is paid of 45 pence per mile (based upon Staffordshire County

Council's agreed current casual rate up to 10,000 miles travelled per annum). This is for all mileage travelled with no deduction, as Staffordshire County Council would ordinarily expect for employees travelling to and from their place of work and home. These are not employees. In addition, with regard to subsistence, Staffordshire County Council will need to determine the rate paid for volunteers. There are current rates of subsistence available for employees of Staffordshire County Council, which are quite complex for this scenario. It is therefore considered reasonable that Staffordshire County Council consider a flat rate payable to a volunteer rather than accord with the rates payable to employees of Staffordshire County Council. Therefore, £5.00 per day is the determined rate.

The table below sets out the potential cost where one Volunteer covers a high number of miles (50 miles) and working days (5 working days) per week with maximum subsistence per working day.

<i>Volunteer Expenses</i>		
<i>Number of Volunteers</i>	<i>Cost per week £000</i>	<i>12 Week Cost £000</i>
<i>50</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>100</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>165</i>
<i>200</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>330</i>
<i>300</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>495</i>
<i>1000</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>1650</i>

The table sets out a range of costs, it is most likely that Staffordshire County Council will have around 300 volunteers, which would cost £0.495m. For 1000 volunteers this would be £1.65m. This would be paid for through the £22m social care grant received from Government.

It is important to note that the guidance as to the powers conferred upon the Secretary of State to pay compensation for travelling and subsistence for Emergency Volunteers has not yet been published so there is no benchmark to go by at this time. Once the published rates are available under the Emergency Volunteer Scheme Staffordshire County Council will encourage its volunteers to take this route.

11. Once an individual has been checked and approved for work, they will go through training and then be deployed to meet need within the marketplace. Before being

deployed they will go through a light induction process and may shadow existing personal care professionals to build their confidence.

12. The iCare campaign has been pushed out through many channels to maximise exposure, including but not limited to, Staffordshire County Council's email newsletter to 58,000 people, through business links, colleges and universities, the DWP and through Staffordshire's Voluntary Sector infrastructure.
13. The response to the iCare campaign in the first week demonstrated the amazing good will and commitment of residents to making a difference in Staffordshire and in support for the vulnerable people and residents who require personal care.
14. If this proves not to be enough and we lose too many people from the market, therefore placing vulnerable people at risk, the Director for Health and Care may need to consider other financial incentives to retain and attract the care workforce. This could be a significant cost given the estimated 20,000 people already in the Staffordshire care workforce.

Legal Implications

15. Legal advice has been taken on the considerations of the Senior Leadership Team as to the use of References, DBS and Travel and Subsistence expenses.
16. There are no identified legal risks that require consideration within the detailed body of this Report.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

17. A summary of the potential costs of the recommendations in this report is in the tables in paragraphs 9 and 10. As part of the national response to Covid19 the government provided local authorities with an emergency social care grant, of which our share is £22m, this is the funding that will be used for any costs outside our usual budgets.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

N/A

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