

Report to:	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Date of meeting:	6 September 2022
By:	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Title:	Independent Sector Home Care staff fuel support payment
Purpose:	To seek Lead Member agreement to the payment of a one-off £150 gross payment to independent sector home care provider care staff

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to agree a one-off lump sum £150 gross payment to Independent Sector Home Care Provider care staff

1 Background

1.1 The recent increase in fuel prices poses a significant challenge to home care companies in terms of recruitment and retention. Professional care workers who have to drive between clients to provide home care now face substantial increases in the cost they incur in fuelling their cars.

1.2 Essential home care services are provided by trained staff of home care companies who deliver such services in people's homes. The support is built around the specific care needs of the individual. The level and type of need will vary between individuals and the care support offered may range from support with personal care needs to more specialised care such as to those with dementia.

1.3 Home care workers employed by the home care companies must drive between clients, especially in rural areas, to deliver these services.

1.4 In addition to problems with recruitment and staff retention, increased fuel prices create other challenges for home care companies. These include increased costs of running their businesses and high levels of absenteeism.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 In East Sussex, there are over 2,200 care workers employed by independent sector home care providers. They provide personal care to individuals across the county, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. At any one time, in the region of 2,200 vulnerable adults receive home care commissioned by the Adult Social Care and Health Department in East Sussex. Beyond that, there are many individuals who arrange and fund their own Home Care. Home Care is an essential service which enables people to remain living in their own homes.

2.2 In March 2022, the Homecare Association conducted a survey of its members to assess how the homecare sector was being impacted by increased cost of living, particularly the rapid rise in fuel prices.

2.3 Overall, 627 Home Care providers submitted an approved response to the survey, with more than a fifth (21%) stating that care workers had either given notice, intended to look for work elsewhere or had already done so because they cannot afford to put fuel in their cars. Furthermore, 92% of providers were either concerned or very concerned about the effect of the rise in fuel costs on the financial viability of their company.

2.4 In East Sussex, we are aware that a number of home care workers have recently left their organisations in favour of working in care homes, which are fixed site and therefore do not require travelling between clients homes.

2.5 The proposed payment to Home Care Providers mirrors the proposal to be considered by the Governance Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2022 to make a one-off payment of £150 gross to all staff on the single status grades who are designated as a contracted car user and have undertaken business mileage since 1 April 2022. [[Agenda for Governance Committee - 2 September, 2022](#)]

2.6 A one-off payment of £150 gross to all independent sector home care staff in East Sussex would amount to circa £337,200 and would be funded from one-off Adult Social Care reserves.

2.7 If agreed, the one-off payment would be made to East Sussex Home Care organisations based on staffing information listed on the Capacity Tracker on a specified date. The Capacity Tracker is national digital platform where independent CQC registered home care and other providers share a range of data including staffing information. Capacity Tracker data has been used for allocating Covid19 grants to local care providers during the pandemic.

2.8 The ESCC Adult Social Care and Health Department will require written confirmation that the Home Care Provider will passport the fuel support payments directly to their staff, after making the standard payroll deductions for Tax and National Insurance, prior to the payment being made.

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 In recognition of the financial pressures on Independent Sector Home Care workers as a result of the rising costs of fuel, it is proposed that a one-off payment of £150 gross is made to Independent Sector home care workers, based on staffing levels reported on the Capacity Tracker on a specified date.

3.2 As noted in paragraph 2.5, the recommendation mirrors that being made to Governance Committee for ESCC staff on the single status grades who are designated as a contracted car user and have undertaken business mileage since 1 April 2022.

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