

Section 31 local authority grants for additional drug treatment crime and harm reduction activity in 2021/22 – Universal Funding component

REPORT TO: Cllr Caroline Dickinson, Executive Member, Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing

DECISION DATE: 8 April 2021

SUPPORTING ANNEX; None

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

For the Executive Member, Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing, in consultation with the relevant Corporate Director and the Corporate Director Strategic Resources to approve the submission of an application to Public Health England for a Section 31 Local Authority grant to expand and strengthen inpatient detoxification provision in 2021/22.

BACKGROUND TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION

North Yorkshire County Council (via the Director of Public Health) received an invitation on 11 March 2021 to submit an application to Public Health England for a Section 31 Local Authority Grant to expand and strengthen inpatient detoxification provision in 2021/22.

The invitation is referred to as the 'inpatient detoxification component of the funding package'. North Yorkshire County Council is expected to submit an application as part of a consortium of two or more local authorities (LAs), as this is the only means of drawing down the available funds. The initial deadline for submission of applications was 26 March 2021.

The evidence base for investment in drug treatment and recovery is strong and shown to be cost effective to the public purse ([Public Health England, 2018](#)).

The North Yorkshire County Council Public Health and Procurement teams have held planning meetings with colleagues from Leeds City Council, Calderdale Council and Barnsley Council; Humankind, who provide the commissioned drug and alcohol service across the LAs listed; and PHE to provide some guidance and steer.

The funding scheme is underpinned by the development of a consortium proposal, developed by regional/sub-regional consortia, to address identified needs through building increased and improved inpatient detoxification capacity in the drug and alcohol treatment system. The application from the consortia that NYCC are part of focusses on medically managed inpatient detoxification. PHE have stated that funds need to be held by a nominated local authority to enable joint commissioning by region/sub region. For the purposes of our application, this LA will be Leeds City Council.

Each LA has been made aware of their individual indicative allocations, which have been calculated based on the number of alcohol and opiate users in treatment using NDTMS data in each local authority within the consortium. Funding from this grant can be spent on both revenue and capital, as required.

The grant expenditure must be incurred over a maximum period of 12 months starting as early as possible in the first quarter of 2021/22. Payments will be made on a quarterly basis during 2021/22. The final payment made in 2021/22 may cover forthcoming committed spend up to the end of the 12-month grant period.

Priorities have been agreed and the Public Health/Procurement teams are continuing to play a part in discussion regarding submission of this application. The agreed spend plan for this grant includes:

- Increased bed night capacity across two specialist NHS units – e.g. an additional 1100 bed nights split evenly across Chapman Barker Unit and Edward Myers Unit, based in Manchester and Staffordshire respectively;
- Improved accessibility of inpatient detoxification to a wider cohort of services users – i.e. those with multiple needs, living a street-based lifestyle. Often, commissioned services are unable to conduct a full assessment process due to the service users; however, the increase in resource will allow greater flexibility with the offer of detoxification. Crucially, it will also allow the services to offer detoxification much earlier in individuals' treatment journeys and not when 'all other routes have been exhausted', but as a preferred treatment option based on an assessment of a service user's individual needs drug and alcohol related deaths;
- Creation of a part-time coordinator post – this post will coordinate spend against the grant money and report against targets. This post will also look to optimise uptake/impact of the additional inpatient detoxification capacity too.

Public Health England agreed to extend the deadline for our consortium until 9 April 2021 due to the level of discussions that were still required, in addition as recognising the need for all LAs to prioritise the Universal Funding component of the Section 31 Grants that had been released at the same time. The timescales for development of the spend plan are extremely tight (2 weeks) given that the Public Health Team and partners continue to be pivotal in addressing and responding to COVID-19 across North Yorkshire.

Leeds City Council will be acting as lead LA within our consortium and will be drawing down funds from this grant. Capacity will be required from the Public Health and Procurement teams to remain a part of discussions within this forum where needed. It should however be noted that unforeseeable events may mean that aspects of the spend plan may not be deliverable, which may lead to re-coup of underspend by Public Health England.

The Grant will devolve to Leeds City Council via a Section 31. North Yorkshire County Council will not be required to transfer funds to partners and commissioned services to implement spend plans.

LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE

Under the Constitution and Executive Members Scheme of Delegation, the decision to authorise the submission of a bid for grant/other external funding over £100,000 is taken by the individual Executive Member following consultation with the relevant Corporate Director and the Corporate Director Strategic Resources. Para 6 (a) of the Executive Members' Delegation Scheme and Financial Procedure Rule 8 apply.

The Consortium Memorandum of Association has been reviewed by legal services.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve North Yorkshire County Council's application to Public Health England for a Section 31 Local Authority grant to expand and strengthen inpatient detoxification provision in 2021/22.

REPORT AUTHOR

Dan Atkinson
6 April 2021