



Friday, 16 December 2022

Dear Colleagues,

### **Use of COVID Outbreak Management Fund**

As you are aware, the COVID Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) is intended to enable local authorities to fund the management of COVID-19 outbreaks and issues incidental to this. The funding was originally intended to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and earlier this year we wrote to you saying the monies can be carried over until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Following discussions with the Association of Directors of Public Health and Local Government Association, we are writing to provide some further clarification on the use and carry over of any unused funding. This is to help address queries we have been receiving from LAs and in itself does not look to replace the terms of the grant.

### **Scope of use of the fund**

The main scope of the fund remains the control of COVID-19 and dealing with its management and consequences. For the avoidance of doubt, this scope can also include funding work on:

- Public health action on addressing the impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes and health inequalities,
- Public health projects aimed at directly addressing health inequalities arising from the pandemic
- Public health prevention projects intend to prevent or mitigate health inequalities or unequal impact on populations in future outbreaks

By way of example (these are not exhaustive), the following could be funded if supported by a clear public health rationale:

- public mental health programmes to address needs which have arisen as a result of the pandemic
- welfare advice where people have lost their employment due to economic changes from the pandemic
- school nursing, health visiting or sexual health activity for people who could not access support during COVID and whose needs have worsened
- Interventions to address specific needs in the local community and workplaces which have arisen as a result of the pandemic

We are not intending to provide exhaustive or prescriptive guidelines. The key criterion is that the Director of Public Health must be able to articulate a clear public health rationale for the funding.

### **Carry Over**

We can confirm that carry over of funding is allowed into the 2023-24 financial year for purposes of COVID control and COVID recovery, including mitigating the impact of COVID on health and health inequalities in your populations.



### **Criteria for local approval, and audit arrangements**

The use of the funding remains open to audit by government, and to local audit. Any spend must meet the following criteria:

1. The funding proposed must have a clear business rationale/business case for it which must be relevant to:
  - a. Public health action on the impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes and health inequalities, and
  - b. Public health recovery projects aimed at directly addressing health inequalities
2. The rationale/business case must state the public health outcome intended for the spend and its link to the impact of and recovery from COVID-19 and pandemic related health inequalities
3. The rationale/business case must be signed off by the Director of Public Health
4. The rationale/business case should be taken through local approval processes for COMF spending

Local areas each have their own process for approval of COMF spending but the signed agreement of the Director of Public Health is required in addition to these if this approval is not part of the local process.

### **Restrictions and exclusions**

We would remind you the money cannot be used to provide direct payments to individuals.

### **Getting support with planning spend and understanding eligibility and rationale**

We intend to organise a webinar where Directors of Public Health can discuss proposals and ideas and share good practice. In the meantime, ADPH and LGA are in a position to advise and support you with ideas of how others have used the funding, and what approval processes others have in place.

Yours sincerely,

**Rich Alesbury**

Deputy Director Engagement (Interim)

Regions Directorate | Health Protection Operations

[Covid19\\_LAfundingrequests@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:Covid19_LAfundingrequests@ukhsa.gov.uk)