



Report of the Chief Officer – Social; Care Commissioning

Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care)

Date: 23rd July 2008

Subject: Capital Grant for Improving the Care Home Environment for Older People 2007/2008

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Scrutiny Board for Adult Social Care of the process of selection and allocation of the Capital Grant money awarded to the Council by the Government for 2007/2008. Appended to the report is a schedule setting out the homes in which the grant has been expended (or where work is underway), a number of illustrations are offered demonstrating material improvements which have been made as a consequence.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 In December 2006 the Secretary of State for Health announced there would be provision of a grant to Local Authorities in 2007/2008 to enhance the physical environment in care homes registered to provide nursing or personal care where the majority of places are for older people (including Local Authority Care Homes) Leeds City Council was awarded a grant of £1,040,000 for this purpose. The Grant was to be used for capital expenditure projects to improve and enhance the physical environment in which residential and nursing care is provided for older people as a consequence of the Authority discharging its functions pursuant to Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948. (Provision of accommodation).
- 2.2 The process of deciding how the grant was to be allocated was not prescribed by the Government therefore Commissioning Officers from Adult Social Care were tasked with devising and implementing a distribution process and selection criteria. From the outset, one of the key principles established was to ensure that dignity (the requirements of which are detailed in a companion report) and quality of care were adopted as the basis for all the decisions about the distribution of the grant. The purpose of the grant was to help older people living in care homes to do so with

dignity and to enable care homes to be more responsive to the needs of older residents.

- 2.3 The government laid down some criteria for allocation of the grant in that:
- Improvements should directly benefit residents – improvements of areas that are exclusively used by staff would therefore be inappropriate;
 - Improvements should not be of such magnitude as to prompt a demand for increased fees;
 - Care home providers should be given a degree of discretion and flexibility in making the intended improvements. However, they should maintain a clear audit trail of their decision-making processes, which can be made available if requested.
 - The grants are not intended to enable large-scale or expensive redevelopments which benefit only a small number of care homes.
 - The grant should not unreasonably favour homes owned by the Authority itself

3.0 The Grant Allocation Process

- 3.1 During January 2007, the Council undertook a consultation exercise with its major partners over the distribution of the Capital Grant money. Those consulted included Leeds Care Association, partner organisations in the independent and directly provided sectors and the Residents and Relatives Association. Discussions were also held, at this time, with the local dignity champions in the Primary Care Trust.
- 3.2 From the consultation, a set of local criteria were established to evaluate grant applications from care homes. In addition, an allocation panel was established comprising officers from Adult Social Care Commissioning, the local dignity champions from the PCT and the Chair of the Leeds Older People's Forum.
- 3.3 In February 2007, the Council wrote to all residential and nursing care homes for older people, to invite them to submit an application for grant funding for a capital project of their choice. Care homes were informed that grant funding should support improvements that would make the greatest difference to the quality of life of residents. For example, projects might have included:
- Upgrading dining rooms to improve food intake. For example by providing screening to provide privacy ;
 - Redecorating or upgrading residents' bedrooms to individual residents choice in order to engender a sense of self-worth;
 - Upgrading bathrooms and toilets to make them less institutionalised, enhance self-care and promote independence and privacy;
 - Improving gardens or outside spaces used by residents, to encourage outdoor exercise and activities;
 - Alterations that would give the residents greater privacy.
 - Providing information technology that benefits older residents, for example residents' access to internet, email etc
 - Equipment and/or alterations to promote exercise.

But could not include projects such as:

- Refurbishment of staff rest rooms or other facilities not used by residents;
- Staff training or any other revenue activity;

- Medical equipment such as syringe drivers, monitors etc, which do not have an impact on the physical environment;
- Routine maintenance that offers no noticeable improvement in the care environment (e.g. boiler replacement).

Individual care homes could make a *minimum* bid to the value of £5000 for projects within their home.

3.4 By the closing date of 14th March 2007, the Council had received 76 bids from independent sector care homes and 19 bids from local authority run establishments.

4.0 Allocation of the grant

4.1 The Grant Allocation Panel met over a number of days in March 2007 to consider the bids that had been submitted. The panel used the locally agreed criteria to select successful bid applications. Part of that criteria included an analysis of each homes latest CSCI report on the outcomes of their inspection of the home against the National Minimum Standards and evidence that the home had consulted with residents prior to making the bid. As bids had been received totalling in excess of £2 million, in some cases the total amount allocated was less than that bid for, to enable the whole grant to benefit as many residents in Leeds, as possible. Where the amount awarded was less, the Council sought assurance from the bidder about what works would be completed for the money allocated.

4.2 Members of the Scrutiny Board can see which homes were allocated the grant, together with the amount allocated and what it was to be used for, in the table shown in Appendix 1. In Appendix 2, members of the Board can see where a bid was rejected and the reason for that rejection.

4.3 The Department of Health was kept informed of the allocation process and the outcome of the evaluation process and approved all grant allocations the Council had made.

4.3 Where a home was successful in their application, they were required to enter into a standard grant agreement with the Council approved by the Finance division of Corporate Services .

5.0 Outcome of the Capital grant Work

5.1 As part of the grant process, commissioning officers within Adult Social Care have monitored the completion of the works undertaken as part of the grant funds allocated. Photographs have been taken of work undertaken before and after and payments have only made to the homes once works have been observed to have been completed.

5.2 Examples of the works that have been completed are included in Appendix 3 in the form of before and after pictures.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board are requested to note the contents of this report, its appendices and illustrations.