

Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund Round 2 – Key points for members – 20.12.21

On 16th December, the guidance on the [£300 million Workforce Recruitment and Retention fund](#) was published. This aims to provide urgent support for care providers to alleviate workforce pressures. The conditions of the grant state that the money must be spent by 31 March, and the grant is to be paid in 2 instalments, the first in January and the second in February. The [grant allocations can be found here](#).

The main purpose of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, Round 2, is to support local authorities to urgently address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter. It builds on the first round of this funding but has one key difference: **it can be used to support payments to boost the hours provided by the existing workforce – including childcare costs and overtime payments.**

Do note that the guidance says: *unlike round 1 of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, the second round of the fund can be used for **bringing forward planned uplifts relating to pay in advance of the new financial year**. However, it should be noted that the fund is time limited between 10 December 2021 and 31 March 2022 and any ongoing burden would be incurred at risk.*

Round 2 guidance also points specifically to the issue of workforce capacity issues & hospital discharge delays: *Noting the link between adult social care workforce capacity and hospital discharge, **local authorities should engage with CCGs and NHS trusts to work collaboratively to address workforce pressures which in some areas are delaying people from returning to their home from hospital.***

Like Round 1 of the WR&RF, the money should be used to **support the full range of social care providers, regardless of whether the local authority already commissions care from them** and LAs are encouraged to passport the money directly and speedily to social care providers. This guidance for round two says:

'To ensure maximum productivity of any payments to providers, local authorities should be mindful of ensuring money is available to support the sector quickly. Therefore, if a local authority chooses to make payments to providers, they should endeavour to passport funds as early as possible to ensure that providers have time to use the resources to maximum effect.'

'If a local authority chooses to make payments to providers financed by this grant, it must ensure those providers will use the funding within the grant period to support new expenditure that retains existing workforce capacity or delivers additional staff capacity, and which has not already been funded by the Infection Control Fund or other sources of public funding. In addition, care providers should keep sufficient records to be able to demonstrate what specific staffing capacity was secured using this funding. Further information can be found in the 'Financial management and the risk of fraud' section of this guidance.'

Another condition of passported funding is to complete the Capacity Tracker at least once a week:

*'If passporting funds, the local authority should work constructively and collaboratively with providers receiving those funds to ensure that it imposes conditions on the **provider requiring that***

they commit to completing the capacity tracker at least once per week until the conclusion of the fund.'

There are reporting requirements for LAs on Round 2 of the WR&RF (Jan 2022 & April 2022) and of course, this, in turn, means that LAS who do passport the funds directly to care providers will need to put in place due diligence reporting requirements from those care providers.