

NCF Summary of Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund Grant Conditions – 10.1.22

The grant conditions for the [£60m Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund](#) have been published. This was first announced on [29 December](#) as a top-up to the Infection Control and Testing Fund round 3. These grant conditions are in addition to those for the following:

- [Infection Control and Testing Fund \(Round 3\)](#) – [NCF Briefing here](#)
- [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund \(Round 1\)](#) – [NCF Briefing here](#)
- [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund \(Round 2\)](#) – [NCF Briefing here](#)

The Purpose

The purpose of this fund is to support the sector with measures **already covered** by the infection prevention and control (IPC) allocation of the Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within and between care settings through effective IPC practices. This grant **cannot** be used for measures already funded by the workforce recruitment and retention funds. The grant conditions also stress that while this grant acts like a ‘top-up’ to the Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) it can’t be used to ‘double-fund’ the same activity, it must be something on top of this.

Timescales

The money will be paid in **full in January 2022** and we assume should be used for activities in January 2022.

Reporting Requirements and Eligibility

Reporting requirements and conditions have been minimised to allow LAs to get the money out as quickly as possible. As such reporting for this grant will be added to the LA reporting requirement for the Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) reporting point 2 in February. We would anticipate that LAs will therefore ask providers for information about the Omicron Fund and Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) ahead of this.

Providers must ensure that the Capacity Tracker has been completed at least twice (2 consecutive weeks) and have committed to completing the Tracker at least once a week to be eligible.

LAs can only passport this money to care providers that are **registered with CQC**. However, the grant conditions do allow LAs to provide money for direct payments for personal assistants.

What can this fund be used for?

The guidance lists the following as appropriate uses of the grant. In red are grant conditions we believe are new additions or older conditions from one of the original infection control funds which are not currently in the Infection Control and Testing Fund round 3:

- ensuring that staff who are isolating in line with government guidance receive their normal wages and do not lose income while doing so

- paying for temporary cover for staff who are unable to work because they are unwell due to COVID-19 and/or are isolating in line with government guidance, in order to maintain safe workforce capacity in care services
- **paying for temporary staffing (overtime or agency) to maintain safe staffing levels**
- limiting staff movement between settings in line with the latest guidance, to help reduce the spread of infection – this includes staff who work for one provider across several settings, staff that work on a part-time basis for multiple employers and agency staff
- limiting or cohorting staff to individual groups of people receiving care, including segregation of COVID-19 positive residents in care homes
- **steps to limit the use of public transport by members of staff**
- **providing accommodation for staff who proactively choose to stay separate from their families in order to limit social interaction outside work**
- **support to providers in purchasing CO2 monitors or air cleaners for use in care homes to monitor and improve ventilation**
- **enhancing local authorities' current direct payment offer to support care provided by friends and family, including any additional support the carer may need to assist them to continue in their caring role**
- **providing additional support to care homes or other providers that are currently experiencing an outbreak to ensure that they are able to put in place sufficient IPC measures**
- **providing support to community groups and paying volunteer expenses**

You will note that many of the above overlap with the grant conditions of the Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) but the same activity cannot be double-funded.

Please also be aware of the grant condition that states that the fund can be used to help put in place 'steps to limit the use of public transport by members of staff'. We are aware that in previous iterations of the fund, members paid for taxis to meet this aim and ended up with a tax bill because HMRC treated these as a taxable benefit. It's also not clear whether private car sharing is an appropriate alternative to public transport.