

Workforce Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday 10th February 2021 11:30-13:00

Chairs: Vic Rayner (National Care Forum)
Colin Angel (United Kingdom Homecare Association)

Attendees: Anna Boaden (DHSC)
Jamie Weatherhead (DHSC)
Francesca Naish (DHSC)
Roseanne McGlade (DHSC)
Francesca Naish (DHSC)
Daniella Gardner (DHSC)
Chloe Nuttall-Musson (DHSC)
Emma Logan (DHSC)
Eleanor Kershaw (DHSC)
Victoria Hasan (DHSC)
Andy Tilden (Skills for Care)
Karen Culshaw (CQC)
Jon Sutcliffe (Local Government Association)
Karolina Gerlich (Care Workers' Charity)
Ann Mackay (Care England)
Matthew Egan (Unison)
Vicky Fletcher (HSE)
Melanie Weatherly (Care Association Alliance)

1. Staff testing

- Updates in social care testing:
 - Care home staff can now take LFD tests to take at home, increasing the ability of care homes to subscribe to the testing regime. This is a less invasive process for care workers and also means that if they test positive, they do not need to worry about being near a care homes.
 - PCR weekly staff testing has been rolled out in day care from 1 February, including for cleaning staff and drivers
- DHSC discussed other areas of work it is undertaking to improve Covid-19 testing including publishing clearer guidance for providers and staff

2. Vaccination Rollout for Staff

- The DHSC Vaccination team addressed concerns from WAG on practical considerations of administering vaccines to the workforce
- WAG discussed feedback on the vaccination rollout, including the need for clear information and resources to encourage staff to take be vaccinated

3. Workforce Capacity Fund

- The Government has launched a new £120 million Workforce Capacity Fund. This is ringfenced funding paid directly to local authorities to support them and providers to increase capacity of the workforce and combat staffing crises brought on by the pandemic
 - Funding is accompanied by guidance setting out best practice examples and broad criteria on how the funding can be spent, maintaining flexibility for the provider where possible
 - Skills for Care have followed this with webinars providing more information
- DHSC asked for feedback from WAG on the Fund. Feedback in the meeting covered:

- Potential difficulties that local authorities may face in spending the funding
- Any regional differences in the impact and reception of the Fund
- Clarifications to the guidance

4. Short-term recruitment drive into social care

- The short-term recruitment drive was launched alongside the longer term National Recruitment Campaign on 9 February; this included a press notice being released which has been reflected in wider media
- WAG discussed feedback on the recruitment drive, including how communication and information could be improved, and the need for rapidity to prevent individuals from dropping out of the scheme
- The link to the sign up to the recruitment drive, or find out more information, can be found [here](#)

5. National Recruitment Campaign

- The National Recruitment Campaign was launched across media platform and will be live intermittently on various channels until mid-April
 - DHSC have provided resources to promote the campaign, and which can be modified to support existing campaigns running at a local level; these are available on the campaign website
- More information on the campaign can be found on the [Everyday is Different](#) website

6. Taskforce recommendations

- The Government accepted all of the Taskforce recommendations submitted last year, and they were captured in the Winter Plan
- DHSC discussed its plans for long term reform in the adult social care sector
- Feedback from WAG included reform priorities such as improving the perception of social care work and improving retention

7. Workforce wellbeing initiatives

- Skills for Care have published their [Workforce wellbeing resource finder](#), which will help staff and managers find and navigate their way through the many available resources.
- The [Hospice UK/Just B helpline](#) which offers counselling for wellbeing, bereavement and trauma. It is open 8-8 every day and the number is 0300 303 4434
 - This is being taken forward for another year and so will continue to be available
- WAG discussed ways to encourage take-up of wellbeing resources by the workforce