

Workforce Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday 10th March 2021 11:00 – 13:00

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

Attendees: Deborah Sturdy (DHSC)
Anna Boaden (DHSC)
Jamie Weatherhead (DHSC)
Vicky Dare (DHSC)
Robert Frost (DHSC)
Rebecca Digby (DHSC)
Kavneet Jolly (DHSC)
William Thursfield (DHSC)
Ellen Thompson (DHSC)
Jessica Nightingale (DHSC)
Eleanor Kershaw (DHSC)
Victoria Hasan (DHSC)
David James (CQC)
Emily Muir (Skills for Care)
Vicky Fletcher (HSE)
Matthew Egan (Unison)
Karolina Gerlich (Care Workers' Charity)
Ann Mackay (Care England)
Anna McEwen (Shared Lives Plus)
Jon Sutcliffe (Local Government Association)
Melanie Weatherly (Care Association Alliance)

1. Update from local authority reporting on the Workforce Capacity Fund

- Two reporting points have now passed. During the first, local authorities submitted plans for spending their funding allocations. The second was a light touch interim return, covering the outputs that have been delivered. These are currently being reviewed and DHSC.
- The second payment is going to local authorities soon; all of the funding needs to be spent by 31 March
 - Funding can be spent on wellbeing measures; stakeholder engagement has shown that wellbeing is integral to retention and so funding can be used for this. The guidance has been updated accordingly
 - Local authorities are able to use the funding as they see fit because this is a Section 31 grant
- Feedback from WAG included the use of funding for overtime, and timelines for spending the funding

2. Vaccination of social care workforce

- 99% of eligible care homes have now been visited for the first dose; roughly 94% of care home residents in England have had their first dose
 - Roughly 93% of staff have had their first dose, but this is lower in some regions including London
 - Roughly 60% of CQC-registered younger adult care home staff and domiciliary staff have been offered the first dose
 - Standard operating procedure for unpaid carers was published this week

- Feedback from WAG included a discussion on which groups have had lower take-up of the vaccine and the reasons for this, as well as the attitude of providers to vaccine provision.

3. Testing of social care workforce

- Testing has been rolled out to most of the workforce including care homes, supported living, domiciliary care, day care centres and most recently to personal assistants
- DHSC outlined the main challenges it faced in the testing programme and the work it was doing to overcome this
- Feedback from WAG included discussion on the Rapid Testing Fund and staff reactions to the testing programme
 - If any staff have had difficulty booking home test kits online, they should call 119 to resolve the issue

4. Call to Care campaign

- DHSC has made significant progress in boosting workforce capacity in the sector
 - Call to Care launched on 8 February with the view to bring short term additional workforce capacity to the sector, and targeting those including jobseekers and those on furlough
 - The National Recruitment Campaign is also currently ongoing

5. Social care reform

- DHSC discussed its plans for the reform agenda, as well as its intention to publish proposals by the end of the year
 - DHSC will be undertaking the relevant and important stakeholder engagement to facilitate this
 - The Spending Review is one of the key fiscal milestones that will impact proposals