

Forward Plan reference number: Not applicable

Report title: COVID funding – Support for Health and Social Care Staff	
Report to: Nick Presmeg – Executive Director – Adult Social Care.	
Report author: Moira McGrath. Director of Commissioning.	
Date: March 2022	For: Approval
Enquiries to: Emily Oliver. Emily.oliver@essex.gov.uk . Claire Cowdery. Claire.cowdery@essex.gov.uk	
County divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 In the February 2022 budget statement, the Leader of Essex County Council announced an additional £500,000 to support key workers within the County whose health and wellbeing may have been negatively impacted by COVID. We have worked with subject experts to develop proposals to use these funds to greatest effect. The proposals include expanding on an already successful service delivered by Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) called 'Here For You' as well as investing in specialised wellbeing support to care home, domiciliary care, and supported housing staff.

This report seeks approval to fund two different and independent proposals with this funding.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree to enter into a section 75 agreement with EPUT to make available the Council's budget for the 'Here for You' service and formalise delegation of functions to EPUT.
- 2.2 To agree to commission additional support/services to the care provider market to support wellbeing and COVID recovery as detailed in this report.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on staff within health and social care. In 2020, Essex Partnership University Trust launched a scheme called 'Here For You' – a vital confidential counselling service for health and social care staff. Within ECC's February 2021 budget statement, funding of £500,000 was announced to expand the offer and further promote the service to even more of our County's health and social care staff.

“Essex Partnership University Trust has a scheme called ‘Here For You’ – a vital confidential counselling service for key workers. We will work with EPUT, offering them additional funding of up to £500,000 to expand the offer and further promote it to even more of our county’s key workers” (ECC February Budget Statement)

- 3.2 Two different proposals have been identified for approval within this paper using the funding announced. It is recommended that the identified funding is used to fund both of these proposals.

Since the funding announcement, we have worked with EPUT to deliver some pilot sessions with care home staff across three care homes in North East Essex. This work has included engaging with the managers to determine the needs of the staff and undertaking a number of reflective practice sessions with staff to provide a suitable, safe and supportive space to be able to reflect on their experiences of working during the COVID 19 pandemic. Over 90% of the 54 attendees from the reflective practice sessions within the pilot either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the reflective space was helpful and supportive. It is proposed that these sessions are extended beyond care homes into the entirety of the health and social care system, including all care providers, and ECC teams. This forms Proposal One within this paper.

We have also worked with provider quality leads to identify additional services or resources that could further support our care providers to manage the longer-term impact of the pandemic. This forms Proposal Two within this paper.

3.3 PROPOSAL ONE: Bespoke ‘Here For You’ offer.

All health and social care staff have had access to the EPUT ‘Here for You’ Offer on a reactive, independent basis. This proposal allows us to expand this offer by taking a proactive approach and taking the service, and focus sessions, directly to staff. As we move to a more stable time within the pandemic, it is an ideal time to reflect, and will also ensure that staff have the capacity and head space to be able to engage.

This approach will also support integration of the service. It has been recognised that although ‘Here For You’ has made significant inroads with Social Care to be able to deliver appropriate support to staff, there is currently insufficient resource to be able to fully embed the offer within organisational structures. As the workforce is spread across many different organisations, both publicly and privately funded, integration is complex and in need of sufficient resource. Despite much support from Essex County Council, Skills for Care and Essex Care, it has been challenging for EPUT to engage with health and social care employees, care homes, and Domiciliary Care and Supported Accommodation staff thus far.

Staffing dedicated to social care within 'Here For You' currently amounts to a total of approximately 0.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) psychological resource. An increase in this resource would support the development of new pathways and enhance integration within the Social Care system.

The full proposal for the extension of the EPUT service can be found within Appendix One.

In summary, EPUT have proposed that additional funding be used to recruit the following dedicated staff for 12 months:

- 1 FTE Principal Psychologist – to embed the resource within existing Social Care structures and provide overall leadership.
- 1 FTE Senior Psychologist - to offer clinical work, including drop-in sessions for assessments; individual treatments; group provisions and an ability to tailor the offer to the needs presented.
- 1 FTE Social Worker - with therapeutic training and an understanding of the complexities within the Social Care system to support with clinical work, improve uptake of the service offer and further support integration.

The roles will be overseen by a Consultant Clinical Psychologist (0.1FTE) who will provide supervision and overall strategic direction for the service. The service will be delivered within ECC, as well as to providers including care homes, domiciliary care and supported accommodation. The total for this service is £236,498 per annum.

If the service is successful (delivering the outcomes and KPIs as developed as part of the implementation plan/steering group) the contract will be extended for an additional 9 months bringing the total to £413,871.50.

The service will deliver targeted support, workshops, drop-in sessions and training, on an individual and a group basis.

Recruitment to this service is not anticipated to be a risk. EPUT is currently undertaking an international recruitment drive which is working well. There are currently 45 qualified overseas psychologists engaged with the recruitment programme and EPUT are working to expand this number.

3.4. PROPOSAL TWO: Provider recovery and wellbeing services

Following consultation and research by provider quality leads within ECC, a number of opportunities have been identified which will support provider staff wellbeing, resilience and recovery. These range from mental wellbeing tools to physical exercise classes. A full outline of this proposal can be found in Appendix Two.

4. Options

4.1 Option One: Do nothing.

Pros:

- Funding is released.

Cons:

- Health and social care staff have no additional support or service provision to respond to their health and wellbeing needs.
- Existing 'Here For You' offer is not maximised due to lack of integration and social care resource within service.

4.2 Option Two: Invest in bespoke 'Here For You' resource and wellbeing and recovery opportunities for care providers

Pros:

- Extending existing provision to wider group of health and social care staff.
- Dedicated and targeted support for care home, domiciliary care, and supported accommodation staff.
- Extended service offer for ECC staff as part of our corporate wellbeing offer.
- Appropriate use of funds in line with budget statement.

Cons:

- Internal staffing resource required for implementation and oversight of service.

5. Next steps

Should funding be approved for these proposals, next steps are summarised below:

5.1 Bespoke 'Here For You' service:

- Steering Group will be established to develop implementation plan, and to provide ongoing oversight and monitoring of the service.
- Key performance indicators to be agreed between 'Here For You' and ECC to ensure ongoing effectiveness of the service.
- ECC and EPUT will enter into a section 75 agreement.
- Service to begin as soon as possible/as recruitment allows (expected March 2022)
- Service will initiate integration into existing social care structures and will tailor the offer to the particular needs of employees within this sector, including those employed directly by ECC.
- Two reports will be produced by the provider to consider benefits and outcomes – one at 6 months and one at 10 months to determine any additional investment to extend the service beyond the first year.

5.2 Wellbeing and recovery opportunities for care providers:

- All proposed services would be implemented and offered to care providers at the earliest opportunity.

- Services will be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness by provider quality leads

6. Links to Essex County Council's priorities

6.1 This decision contributes to the council's key priority around equality and levelling up, by significantly increasing the mental health support we are able to provide to social care workers, helping improve both their quality of life but also, by extension, their capacity to care for and support vulnerable people in our County. There are no direct climate change implications in this decision.

6.2 This decision links with our organisation [Wellbeing Strategy 2020 - 2025](#) aims to:

- Create a safe and healthy work environment which fosters a culture of positive wellbeing, where the wellbeing of our people is seen as integral to everything we do.
- Improve general wellbeing for our diverse workforce and ensure that wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility across ECC.
- Embed wellbeing as a central part of our strategic priorities for our leaders and councillors across all functions within ECC and ensure that all are aware of our statutory obligations.
- Be identified as an employer of choice who cares about wellbeing and recognises the role wellbeing can play in the bigger picture. including improving productivity and ways of working.
- Provide impactful wellbeing support based on the needs of our people, using a collaborative approach.

7. Issues for consideration

7.1 Funding will be made available to EPUT as part of the delegation, pursuant to a section 75 agreement which allows for reimbursement of underspend, and will include KPIs and agreed monitoring intervals. We will work collaboratively with EPUT to ensure that the service is effectively delivered and that productivity within the service is maximised.

7.2 Financial implications

The budget statement allocated up to £500,000 for this additional support to health and social care staff. The breakdown of proposed costs is below. The total costs represent a maximum spend of £479,614

Overall Expected Expenditure

Element One: Bespoke 'Here For You' resource (12 months delivery)	£236,498
Element Two: Wellbeing and recovery opportunities for care providers	£65,742
Potential 9-month extension of 'Here For You' resource	£177,374
TOTAL	£479,614

Element One: Bespoke 'Here For You' resource

The following breakdown of costs is for service delivery for a 12-month period. If successful, the service will be extended for an additional period, up to 9 months.

Assuming implementation from November 2021, Funding for the 'Here For You' resource will be spread across 2 financial years (2021/22 and 2022/23) and will extend into 2022/23 should an extension of 9 months be agreed. Funding within each financial year is as follows:

Financial Year	Delivery Dates	Funding
2021/22	Nov 21-March 22	£ 98,541
2022/23	April 22 - Oct 22	£ 137,957
2022/23 (if extended for 9 months)	Nov 22 - March 23	£ 98,541
2023/24 (if extended for 9 months)	April 23 - July 23	£ 78,833
TOTAL		£ 413,872

NOTE: Assumes start date of November 2021

Element Two: Wellbeing and recovery opportunities for care providers

Financial Year	Delivery Dates	Funding
2021/22	Nov 21-March 22	£27,392
2022/23	April 22 - Oct 22	£38,350
Total		£65,742

7.3 Legal implications

ECC and EPUT will need to enter into a section 75 agreement to formalise the arrangements in relation to the 'Here For You' service.

8. Equality and Diversity implications

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 8.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9. List of appendices

APPENDIX ONE: EPUT PROPOSAL FOR BESPOKE 'HERE FOR YOU' RESOURCE



Microsoft Word 97 -
2003 Document

APPENDIX TWO: WELLBEING AND RECOVERY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARE PROVIDERS



Microsoft Word 97 -
2003 Document

10. List of background papers

February Budget Statement.

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Nick Presmeg Executive Director for Adult Social Care	07/03/2022

--	--

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Councillor John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	8/10/21
Executive Director, Finance and Technology (S151 Officer) <i>Please send to your Head of Finance/Finance Business Partner who will arrange S151 sign off.</i> Nicole Wood	n/a
Jennifer Mellani on behalf of Paul Turner Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	02.03.2022