

FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

21 September 2022

Report of the Director - Public Health

Use of Contain Outbreak Management Funding to strengthen Covid Community Champion and Social Connectedness work in Derbyshire

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. Purpose

3.1 Seek Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approval to utilise Contain Outbreak Management Funding to support the following:

- a) £0.200m to strengthen Covid-19 Community Champion work in Derbyshire localities for a further 12 months noting the full breakdown of allocations outlined in 4.6.
- b) £0.200m to strengthen Social Connectedness work for a further 12 months from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 noting the breakdown of allocations in 4.14.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 The Contain Outbreak Management Fund is time limited grant funding which enables councils that deliver the public health function to consider additional activity and approaches that help mitigate the ongoing impact

of Covid-19 in local communities. The different funding streams below outlined how the use of this funding can continue to support local communities to live safely alongside Covid-19.

The Covid Community Champion Scheme

- 4.2 In March 2021 the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approved the launch of the Covid-19 Community Partners Scheme, (now known as Covid Community Champion Scheme, utilising £0.210m funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. The scheme was subsequently extended for a further 12 months in December 2021.
- 4.3 The aim of the scheme was to ensure that consistent, timely and accurate Covid-19 information was cascaded at a community level to support Derbyshire residents throughout the pandemic. Voluntary sector partners across Derbyshire co-ordinated the partner programme on behalf of Public Health by facilitating the setting up of district/borough Covid connector networks, recruiting and training a network of volunteers and leading the dissemination of key messages to communities through a variety of mechanisms. Derbyshire County Council supported activity with supportive social media posts and activity.
- 4.4 Nine Derbyshire voluntary sector organisations collaborated to develop the approach. Since March 2021 400 champions have been recruited, who have a reach in excess of 185,000 people. This project offers a valuable opportunity to link with residents in a meaningful way and will support clear dissemination of Covid-19 messages over the winter. There is an opportunity to build on the network developed to also share information about other public health issues, such as the importance of flu vaccinations and advice regarding Long-Covid. All this complementary information will enable communities and individuals to have increased resilience to Covid-19.
- 4.5 In addition, representatives from each of the local VCS providers, and a number of community champions have also formed a County Community Champion Forum. This Forum serves as a valuable knowledge exchange spaces The Community Champion Forum is led by Public Health and co-delivered with the Joined Up Care Derbyshire Communications and Engagement Team and Healthwatch Derbyshire. The Council has been able to utilise this avenue to disseminate information about a range of subjects including Covid-19 guidelines, national restrictions, vaccine access, alongside general messaging for improved health and wellbeing.
- 4.6 It is proposed that this work continues for a further 12 months from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, in order to expand and grow the

approach and sustain levels of work throughout an uncertain winter period. The table below provides details of how the funding will be allocated to local organisations:

District/Borough:	Organisation to be funded	Funding proposed
Amber Valley	Amber Valley CVS	£0.025m
Bolsover	Bassetlaw and Bolsover CVS	£0.025m
Chesterfield	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
Erewash	Erewash Voluntary Action	£0.025m
Dales	Derbyshire Dales CVS	£0.025m
High Peak	High Peak VCSE Alliance	£0.025m
North East Derbyshire	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
South Derbyshire	South Derbyshire CVS	£0.025m
Total:		£0.200m

- 4.8 The needs and demands of communities across Derbyshire have evolved throughout the pandemic. The work of the Covid Community Champion scheme continues to focus on Covid related support, such key health protection messaging, however, work is also expanding to address other concerns. Recognising this change, the Covid Community Partners Forum will change its name to The Community Partner’s Forum from autumn 2022.

Social Connectedness

- 4.9 Social Connectedness work has been running in Derbyshire since March 2019 and was initiated in response to a national policy to reduce loneliness and isolation called ‘A Connected Society’ (HM Government, 2018). A ‘Social Connect Group’ has been established in each district/borough directed by a locally derived social connectedness action plan.
- 4.10 Restrictions placed on people throughout the pandemic resulted in people spending less time with family and friends. This has resulted in a longer-term increase in people experiencing loneliness. Pre-pandemic, research suggested that around one in five (20%) people reported being ‘often’ or ‘always’ lonely. Since Lockdown that figure has increased to 41% of UK adults reporting they feel lonely, according to the British Red Cross.

4.11 Local partners are also reporting that many community groups have still not fully increased activity to pre-pandemic levels. This limited activity is due to changes in attitude to volunteering, and ongoing concern about transmission of Covid-19. Lack of activity is further exacerbating levels of loneliness across the population.

4.12 Evidence from the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Public Health suggests that intervening early to tackle social isolation and loneliness will prevent more costly health and care needs from developing, as well as aiding community resilience.

4.13 Key outputs of the project to date include:

- 90 interventions have been funded across Derbyshire to address and support social connection of local communities.
- 1,700 people supported since September 2019.
- Five full time Social Connect workers have been appointed by voluntary sector partners to drive forward work
- Four Social Connect Groups have set up small grant funds, providing support to 40 projects with 500 beneficiaries.
- The Connect Derbyshire Conference was held in June 2022 to showcase some of the work funded by Public Health that had been undertaken to connect people and communities. 140 people were in attendance from a range of different organisations. From the feedback received 100% of the participants found the event good / excellent and 100% of the participants improved their knowledge on what makes people and communities more connected. 100% of the participants made pledges to further reduce loneliness and isolation because of the conference.

4.14 Therefore, it is proposed to extend funding to strengthen and support Social Connectedness work across Derbyshire for a further 12 months from 1 October 2022 until 1 October 2023, by building on and strengthening existing provision delivered by voluntary sector partners, as outlined in the table below:

District/Borough:	Organisation to be funded	Funding proposed
Amber Valley	Amber Valley CVS	£0.025m
Bolsover	Bassetlaw & Bolsover CVS	£0.025m
Chesterfield	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m

Erewash	Erewash Community Action	£0.025m
Dales	Derbyshire Dales CVS	£0.025m
High Peak	High Peak VCSE Alliance	£0.025m
North East Derbyshire	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
South Derbyshire	South Derbyshire CVS	£0.025m
Total:		£0.200m

4.15 The additional funding will maintain and embed social cohesion and connectedness within the communities for an additional 12 months. This will enable partners to review work to date, continue to develop action plans to include approaches to improve social connection and reduce loneliness. Oversight of this work will be provided by the Health and Wellbeing Partnerships across Derbyshire. Continued investment will support communities in Derbyshire to access advice, help and support from trusted networks.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Do nothing: the Council will lose the opportunity to build further capacity across Derbyshire communities, utilising one off funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Funding.

6. Implications

6.1 See appendix 1.

7. Background Papers

- 2 December 2021 - [Cabinet Member for Health and Communities Report: Extension to COVID Community Champions scheme utilising the Contain Outbreak Management Fund](#)
- 28 February 2019 – Cabinet Report: Public Health Localities and Place-based Programme and Investment 2019-20

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 That the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approves the usage of Contain Outbreak Management Funding to fund work as follows:

- a) £0.200m to strengthen Covid-19 Community Champion work in Derbyshire localities for a further 12 months noting the full breakdown of allocations outlined in 4.6
- b) £0.200m to strengthen Social Connectedness work a further 12 months from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 noting the breakdown of allocations in 4.14 .

10. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- a) The Covid-19 Community Champion Forum is well established and offers a clear communication mechanism between communities, Public Health and the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care System.
- b) Social isolation has increased as a result of the pandemic. The Social Connectedness project outlined in this report will contribute towards building community resilience to bolster protection from any future waves of Covid-19

11. Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?

No.

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Implications**Financial**

- 1.1 Since the start of the pandemic, the Council has received a number of different grants to support the response to Covid-19, one of which is managed by Public Health. For 2022/23, based on allocations carried forward from 2021/22, there is £17.627m available from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. £0.200m will be allocated from Contain funding to fund Covid-19 Community Champion work, and £0.200m to fund social connectedness work.
- 1.2 The Covid Community Champions funding will be allocated as follows for the period 1 January 2023 until 31 December 2023:

District/Borough:	Organisation to be funded	Funding proposed
Amber Valley	Amber Valley CVS	£0.025m
Bolsover	Bassetlaw and Bolsover CVS	£0.025m
Chesterfield	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
Erewash	Erewash Voluntary Action	£0.025m
Dales	Derbyshire Dales CVS	£0.025m
High Peak	High Peak VCSE Alliance	£0.025m
North East Derbyshire	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
South Derbyshire	South Derbyshire CVS	£0.025m
Total:		£0.200m

- 1.3 The Social Connectedness funding will be allocated as follows for the period 1 October 2022 to 1 October 2023.

District/Borough:	Organisation to be funded	Funding proposed
Amber Valley	Amber Valley CVS	£0.025m
Bolsover	Bassetlaw & Bolsover CVS	£0.025m
Chesterfield	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
Erewash	Erewash Community Action	£0.025m
Dales	Derbyshire Dales CVS	£0.025m
High Peak	High Peak VCSE Alliance	£0.025m
North East Derbyshire	Derbyshire Voluntary Action	£0.025m
South Derbyshire	South Derbyshire CVS	£0.025m
Total:		£0.200m

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has power to provide grants under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations state that grants below £0.100m require Cabinet Member authorisation.
- 2.3 The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made. This includes conditions for clawback of funding in certain circumstances

Human Resources

- 3.1 The funding will enable local providers to deliver projects and services. Derbyshire County Council accepts no employment or future redundancy liability, with all employment and related matters to be managed by the providers.

Corporate objectives for change

- 4.1 The recommendations in this paper support delivery of the following priorities for the next year in the Council Plan:
 - Continued to deliver the ongoing Covid-19 response and recovery in relation to health protection, alongside wider partnership action to tackle health inequalities
 - Worked with partners to promote positive mental wellbeing and improve support for local people, with a particular focus on children and young people at both school and in the community