

PUBLIC

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DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

3 June 2021

Report of the Director of Public Health

USE OF THE CONTAIN OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT FUND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SELF ISOLATION SUPPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Member to fund Citizens Advice Derbyshire for additional surge capacity to provide specific advice, information and resources that support individuals to successfully plan for and adhere to self-isolation requirements linked to COVID-19.

2. Information and Analysis

Local welfare assistance and advice provision is likely to be in high general demand throughout the 2021/22 financial year. The financial impact of the pandemic in relation to employment and reduced income security will be a factor for residents in Derbyshire, especially as furlough and self-employed income schemes come to an end.

As Derbyshire continues to respond to COVID-19 individuals will still be asked to self-isolate if they test positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive. In some instances, this request to self-isolate will create challenges for individuals in terms of financial hardship or concerns about their rights during this period. The proposed activity seeks to proactively prevent this, ensure that access to the £500 self-isolation support is maximised and where additional requirement for support is required, a local solution is in place. The project outlined in this report will link and work together with other self isolation support mechanisms, to ensure that local people in Derbyshire adhere to self-isolation guidance and have appropriate advice and support in place to allow them to successfully do this.

2.1 Rationale and evidence to support approach

Recent research by [Public Health Wales](#) has identified that one in five have indicated that self-isolation is a challenge for many individuals. The research further highlighted:

- Of the top 5 issues listed that prevent self-isolation, financial support and planning was item 4 on the list.
- Only 68.5% of the population plan for self-isolation.
- Those with a higher confidence in the ability to self-isolate did so.
- Individuals with high levels of income precarity were significantly more likely to say they had left home during self-isolation to purchase food or medicines.

The research made several recommendations, which included that increased financial support should be made available to enable individuals to get essential items, and that financial and practical support helped to minimise the potential health and economic harm of self-isolation.

2.2 Citizens Advice Surge Capacity to provide self-isolation support

Derbyshire Citizens Advice have identified that securing additional capacity for a period of 12 months will allow them to offer dedicated over the phone advice to individuals who are currently or may be at risk of experiencing financial difficulties whilst they self-isolate.

The Citizens Advice advisors will, during or in advance of a person self-isolating, be able to provide practical financial advice and specialist advice regarding employment rights and status for example, reducing anxiety and concern of an individual who may feel that they are at risk during a period of self-isolation.

There is considerable evidence of the effectiveness of advice from Derbyshire Citizens Advice of improving local wellbeing based on research studies of its work, including services based in GP and health settings. In Derbyshire Return on Investment suggests that for every £1 invested in advice linked to health, there are average returns over many years of £12 financial gains and £8 in debts managed (Citizens Advice 2021)

Demand data analysts at National Citizens Advice are predicting both an across the board increase in demand for advice but large spikes between 10-50% in key advice areas such as debt, redundancy and income protection.

The funding requested in this report will enable Derbyshire Citizens Advice to increase access to:

- Quality telephone advice which will allow people to be helped quickly, especially when at risk of a crisis, such as needing to self-isolate.
- Ongoing and detailed follow up advice and casework to enable an effective response to people who present with multiple issues who are particularly vulnerable to situations such as self-isolation
- Money Advice to build capacity to assist people experiencing chronic financial challenges arising through COVID related change of circumstances.

Collaborative pathways will be developed with the Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service, Derbyshire Discretionary Fund, local contact tracing team and Community Response Unit so that staff working in these areas can signpost individuals to CA support (and vice versa) as required as part of a more local and holistic response to supporting individuals to effectively self-isolate or plan for self-isolation.

It is intended that by providing advice and support needed to achieve financial stability, individuals will be less likely to challenge the rules in the future and this will enable them to self-isolate, work safely and to provide accurate test and trace information as the financial jeopardy of doing so is substantially mitigated.

Funding will be allocated on a locality basis to our four Citizens Advice Offices that cover the following localities:

- Chesterfield
- Derbyshire Districts (Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Amber Valley, Erewash)
- Mid Mercia (South Derbyshire)
- North East Derbyshire (Bolsover and North East Derbyshire)

This allocation will secure 7.4 additional FTE adviser capacity across the county at a cost of £223,358. This will be broken down as follows:-

Area Office	Funding in £	FTE
Chesterfield	46,905	1.5
Derbyshire Districts	84,877	2.9
Mid Mercia	44,671	1.5
North East Derbyshire	46,905	1.5
Total	223,358	7.4

Citizens Advice will monitor and evaluate the project and will sample a small number of users to understand whether the advice provided enabled them to effectively plan for and/or undertake a period of self-isolation. Learning will be shared to inform future local activity in this area.

3. Financial Considerations

For 2020-21 DCC has been allocated a total Contain funding grant of £20.182m of which £19.058 m has been rolled over to 2021-22. A further £3.958m of Contain funding has also been allocated via a grant funding arrangement from the Department of Health and Social Care for 2021-22. Expenditure associated with the delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan will utilise the Contain framework grant funding.

The authority is also able to claim additional funding in arrears for Community Testing.

4. Human Resources Considerations

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.

5. Legal Considerations

On 14 January Cabinet approved the initial investment of Contain Outbreak Management Fund, and it was agreed that up to £500,000 of the initial £6.45m would be allocated towards support for those to self-isolate through expert advice and welfare support. Derbyshire has received subsequent allocations of Contain funding, but due to the election period it has not yet been agreed with elected members how the remainder of this funding is allocated, so this proposal funds part of the activity that contributes up to the cap of £500,000.

Funding to Citizens Advice will take the form of a contract variation under protocol 9 council of the financial regulations, but is also compliant with the Public contracts regs 2015 72c, which states that where all of the following conditions are fulfilled: —

- (i) the need for modification has been brought about by circumstances which a diligent contracting authority could not have foreseen.
- (ii) the modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract;
- (iii) any increase in price does not exceed 50% of the value of the original contract or framework agreement.

The contract variation will need to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: equality of opportunity, health, environmental, transport, property and crime and disorder considerations.

7. Background Papers

USE OF THE CONTAIN OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT FUND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SELF ISOLATION SUPPORT – Public Health SMT Report: 26 April 2021

INVESTMENT OF CONTAIN OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT FUND – Cabinet: 14 January 2021

<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s5754/6b%20Investment%20of%20Contain%20Outbreak%20Management%20Fund.pdf>

8. Key Decision

Yes

9. Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No

10. Officers Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member approves funding to Citizens Advice Derbyshire for additional surge capacity to provide specific advice, information and resources that support individuals to successfully plan for and adhere to self-isolation requirements linked to COVID-19.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health