

STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING: GETTING MORE OUT OF OUR SPENDING

Proposal 3: Support Funds Coordination

Portfolio Lead: Adult Social Care; Children and Families

1.0 Summary of Proposal

- 1.1 This proposal seeks to review discretionary and statutory support funds and grants offered to local citizens in need of additional help with a view to creating an efficient and consistent approach to the coordination of support funding.
- 1.2 A systematic review of Support Funds coordination across the Council which will consider:
- Removing the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme (SLAS),
 - Coordinating statutory, national and other local schemes to mitigate impacts where possible,
 - Further capitalisation against the Disabled Facilities Capital Grant (DFG),
 - Review of Direct Payments (including Independent Support Funds and Self Directed Support) to assess the current processes and systems that are in place for the equitable distribution of this across all service provision.

2.0 Proposal Update

- 2.1 As part of a systematic review of Support Funds coordination across the Council, the following progress has been made:

Removing SLAS

- 2.2 A review has been undertaken to determine the level of support provided by SLAS over the past six years following its inception in 2013/14. This includes obtaining information on the number of applications by demographic and geography, the number of approvals and reasons for rejection.
- 2.3 As part of the proposed removal of SLAS, consultation has commenced and will run until the end of December 2018.

Coordinating statutory, national and other local schemes to mitigate impacts where possible

- 2.4 In order to mitigate the impact of the proposed closure of SLAS, the Council are working to identify possible alternative approaches.

Desktop research

- 2.5 A survey of more than 150 council-run schemes by Church Action on Poverty¹ (October 2018) found that nearly a quarter had been shut down since 2013, while a further quarter have reduced spending by 85% or more.
- 2.6 Research by GM Poverty Action² (GMPA) in September 2018 found that across Greater Manchester:
- Bolton: Funding fell by 21% between 15/16 and 17/18
 - Bury: Funding fell by 55% between 15/16 and 17/18
 - Manchester: Funding for the scheme has remained steady over the last three financial years. Around four in ten applications for support to the scheme are successful.
 - Oldham: No specific budget allocated for the scheme. In 13/14 and 14/15 Oldham MBC received government grants totalling £2m. Unspent elements of this ring-fenced grant have been rolled forward via a specific earmarked reserve
 - Rochdale: Funding for the scheme increased by 14% between 15/16 and 17/18. Around two-thirds of applications for support are successful
 - Salford: Funding for the scheme increased by 49% between 15/16 and 17/18
 - Stockport: Funding for the scheme fell by 7% between 15/16 and 17/18. There was a 25% fall in the number of successful applications for support
 - Tameside: Funding for the scheme fell by 15% between 15/16 and 17/18. There was a 27% drop in the number of applications for support over the same period, but only a small drop in the number of successful applications for support
 - Trafford: Funding for the scheme fell by 35% over the last 3 financial years. There was an 8% increase in the number of successful applications for support over the same period
 - Wigan: Whilst funding for the scheme has remained steady over the last three financial years, funding is limited and actual spend has dropped by 28%. The number of successful applications for support has fallen by 62%.

¹ <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/news/pressroom/resources/reports>

² <https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/local-welfare-assistance-scheme/>

- 2.7 The GMPA research shows that where schemes have closed, local authorities either signpost individuals to a directory of support offered by other organisations or to the Government's Budgeting Loans website.
- 2.8 The GMPA research identified that the funding for Stockport local welfare scheme reduced by 7% between 2015/16 and 2017/18. However, in comparison to 2014/15, funding for the scheme has actually reduced by 45%.

Financial Year	Amount
2018/19	£490,414
2017/18	£593,144
2016/17	£647,503
2015/16	£640,270
2014/15	£887,500 (funded by DP Welfare Grant)

Alternative Provision

- 2.9 The Council are conducting a mapping exercise to quantify the level and type of support provided by other organisations across the Borough. Initial discussions have taken place with other organisations to identify possible alternative provision. Further details will be provided in future reports.

Alternative Model

- 2.10 An initial investigation has started to explore an alternative delivery model. Whilst in the early stages of the review, this may involve operating a slimmed down scheme with reduced support, a reduction in staff numbers and a change to providers. Further details will be provided in future report.

Disabled Facilities Capital Grant

- 2.11 A review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) has been undertaken to identify the opportunities to further capitalise costs from within Adult Social Care against the grant. A desktop exercise has been undertaken to look at the use of the DFG grant across the GM footprint. Further updates will be provided in future reports.

Direct Payments

- 2.12 A review of Direct Payments, Independent Support Funds and Self Directed Support has commenced. The review will consider the process for assessment, support planning and audit of all current and future arrangements. Further updates will be provided in future reports.

Other Support Funds

- 2.13 The initial scope for this review also includes Section 17 payments made by Children's Social Care, Discretionary Housing Payments and the Council Tax

Discretionary payments fund (the main Council Tax Support Scheme is outside of the scope of this review). Work has commenced to compare eligibility for the different strands, look for overlap, and ways to maximise the overall benefit derived from their application.

3.0 Scope

3.1 The following table sets out the financial scope for these reviews:

	Saving Name	2018/19 Cash Limit Budget £000	Full Year Saving £000	Revised Cash Limit £000	Phasing	
					2019/20 £000	Cumulative 2020/21 £000
3	Service Funds Coordination	9,929	(990)	8,939	(807)	(990)

N.B Direct payments are the largest element of the net budget described in the above table. The Stockport Local Assistance Scheme is included and accounts for £0.486m of the total.

4.0 Key Milestones

4.1 Updated milestones include:

Milestone description	Date expected	Output at milestone
Review of DFG; SLAS; Direct Payments and other support funds	November 2018	Identify costs that can be capitalised against the DFG. Anticipate implications of withdrawal of SLAS funding on other council funding streams and explore tools to establish a 'family view' of support fund allocation.
Consultation on any changes to services where required	Starting October 2018	Consultation undertaken
Cabinet consideration of proposals	February 2019	Cabinet recommendation on proposals
Subject to Cabinet Decision – proposed implementation date of new offer	April 2019	New service model live

5.0 Consultation and Engagement Update

- 5.1 Significant consultation has commenced regarding SLAS including:
- Online survey went live in Friday 26th October 2018. Paper copies are available in Libraries.
 - Stakeholders questionnaire was sent out Monday 29th October 2018
 - Consultation will staff has commenced on Thursday 8th November 2018
- 5.2 Postal survey to services users sent out week commencing 12th November 2018.
- 5.3 Focus groups will take place at the end of November/early December 2018.
- 5.4 The consultation will run until the end of December 2018. The results, will be reported to Scrutiny Committees in January 2019 and the Cabinet meeting in February 2019.

6.0 Interdependencies, Constraints, and Risks

- 6.1 There will be constraints on any reduction in provision of Direct Payments on the basis that any Direct Payment would have to be sufficient to meet any individuals' needs.
- 6.2 The risks that will be evident from stopping the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme will be that there is little or no provision for adults and families in an emergency, when there is an immediate threat to health or safety.

7.0 Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment	
Proposal 3: Support Funds Coordination	18/09/2018
	Stage: Draft

Stage 1: Do you need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

About Equality Impact Assessments

Yes, an EIA is required as this proposal seeks to review support funds across the organisation.

The changes focus on a number of key service elements. This includes: the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme (SLAS); coordination of statutory, national and other local schemes; Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG); and Direct Payments.

The review of current support funds will result in creating an efficient and consistent approach to the coordination of funding service delivery

As the proposal is developed it will incorporate feedback from consultation and any changes to the proposed new service design. The full EIA will be available when this is completed.

Stage 2: What do you know?

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Analysis will be gathered in relation to service uptake and service users to determine the protected characteristics affected by the proposal. Where we have

it, we will include information about socio economic status.

Information will also be gathered about the staff affected by the proposal.

In addition, consideration will also be given regarding:

- Borough wide demographics and needs
- Consultation and engagement feedback

The following data has been supplied by the SLAS team. Data for 2015/16 and 2018/19 are based on part year figures and have therefore been estimated.

Applications

SLAS have received a total of 13,379 applications for support since 2012/13.

Year	Number of applications
2013/14	2804
2014/15	2599
2015/16	1984
2016/17	1782
2017/18	1864
2018/19	2346

Single people (45%) and single parents (40%) make up the majority of applicants to SLAS. Couple with children account for 9%, whilst couples without children and living with non-dependents account for 3% each.

Since 2013/14, the proportion of applicants who are single parents has increased from 27% to 54% in 2018/19.

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16-17	17-18	18-19	Average
Couple with children	8%	8%	7%	7%	8%	13%	9%
Couple without children	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Living with non dependent	6%	4%	4%	5%	2%	2%	3%
Single	55%	56%	52%	50%	43%	29%	40%
Single parent	27%	28%	34%	35%	45%	54%	45%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

People aged 25 – 39 years account for the majority of applicants (46.0%), followed by applicants aged 40 – 65 years (37.1%). Under 25's account for 15.4% of applicants whilst 1.5% are aged over 65 years.

Since 2016/17, there has been an increase in the number of applicants who identify as disabled.

	Number of applicants who identify as disabled	Proportion of all applicants, percent
2016/17	516	29
2017/18	571	31
2018/19	764	32

Since 2016/17, the proportion of female applicants has increased.

	Female, percent	Male, percent
2016/17	60.4	39.6
2017/18	64.9	35.1
2018/19	70.9	29.1

The majority of applicants are White British (84%).

Ethnic Group	Percent
White British	84
Unknown	8
Asian	3
Other	2
Black	2
Mixed	2

Since 2016/17, there has been an increase in the percentage of applicants who identify as Asian, Mixed and Other. This may be due to a reduction in the percentage of 'unknown' applicants and an indication of improved recording methods.

Ethnic Group	2016/17, percent	2017/18, percent	2018/19, percent
White British	82.2	84.2	84.1
Unknown	11.1	7.6	6.1
Asian	1.5	2.6	3.5
Other	1.8	1.9	2.5
Black	1.6	1.8	1.1
Mixed	1.9	2.0	2.8

No information is available for applicants regarding:

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation.

Approval

On average, 67% (8964) of applications are approved. The number of approvals for 2018/19 is estimated to be slightly higher than 2017/18. However, in comparison to 2016/17, this equates to a 23.1% reduction.

	Number of approvals	Percentage of applications approved (%)
2013/14	No data available	72
2014/15	No data available	63
2015/16	No data available	57
2016/17	1243	70
2017/18	954	65
2018/19	956	66

Based on 3153 approvals from the past 3 years, the top three reasons for approval are:

- Resettlement (48.3%)
- Exceptional pressure (8.3%)
- Benefit delays (6.3%)

	16/17 (%)	17/18 (%)	18/19 (%)
Admin error	1.5%	1%	2%
Benefit changes	4%	4%	<1%
Benefit delays	10%	6%	3%
Benefit sanction	2%	1%	<1%
Debt	5%	5%	1%
Does not meet criteria	1%	1%	1%
Domestic violence	3%	3%	1%
Down-sizing	<1%	2%	<1%
Emergency travel	<1%	<1%	0%
Exceptional pressure	9%	10%	6%
Fleeing harassment	<1%	<1%	<1%
General	7%	8%	2%
Leaving care	4%	5%	2%
Loss of employment	<1%	<1%	0%
Lost or stolen money	1%	<1%	<1%

Low income	3%	1%	<1%
Medical need	2%	1%	<1%
No customer response	1%	<1%	<1%
No funding available	<1%	0%	0%
Offer refused	1%	<1%	<1%
Other funding available	2%	1%	<1%
Preventing care	<1%	<1%	<1%
Refugee	<1%	<1%	0%
Relationship breakdown	2%	<1%	<1%
Resettlement	39%	47%	59%

No data is available to determine approvals by demographic.

Since 2016/17, it is estimated that 36.6% of the total amount awarded has been awarded to people living in Brinnington and Central.

Ward	Estimated total spend between 16/17 and 18/19 (£)	Percent (%)
Brinnington & Central	396,051	36.6
Edgeley	81,833	7.6
Davenport	74,430	6.9
Reddish North	66,341	6.1
Manor	52,041	4.8
Bredbury Green & Romiley	49,066	4.5
Reddish South	45,723	4.2
Offerton	45,947	4.2
Blank	44,902	4.1
Bredbury & Woodley	36,306	3.4
Hazel Grove	37,004	3.4
Cheadle Hulme North	33,407	3.1
Heatons North	22,657	2.1
Marple South	16,976	1.6
Cheadle Hulme South	15,239	1.4
Heatons South	14,584	1.3
Heald Green	11,601	1.1
Stepping Hill	9973	0.9
Marple North	9491	0.9
Cheadle & Gatley	8064	0.7
Bramhall North	6891	0.6
Bramhall South	3978	0.4
Total spend	1,082,507	100

Type of award

Since 2013/14 there has been a shift from the majority of awards being crisis

loans, to the majority being for resettlement.

	Resettlement, percent	Crisis, percent
2013/14	33	67
2014/15	50	50
2015/16	56	44
2016/17	66	34
2017/18	68	32
2018/19	70	30

Stage 2a: Further data and consultation

Subject to approval to progress to the consultation stage, an extensive consultation will be undertaken. The EIA will identify who will be consulted and how it will be accessible.

The consultation will seek to address any gaps in the information already known about service users and staff in order to address the impact against them.

Stage 3: Results and Measures

To be completed following the consultation stage.

Stage 4: Decision Stage