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**Social Care Workforce Development Programme Discussion Paper**

In April 2017 Social Care Wales took responsibility for the Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP), which is made up of £7,149,350 of funding from Welsh Government which is matched with a 30% contribution from local authorities.

Upon taking responsibility of SCWDP, we sought as far as possible to maintain consistency of the existing approach and focus which Welsh Government had previously utilised, while we take time during this financial year to consider, in partnership, how best to utilise the fund in future.

We believe the best way to consider the future of the grant is through a shared understanding of the underpinning principles. As part of reconsidering the grant we suggest it is rebranded to be the Social Care Wales Regional Workforce Development Grant, this more clearly describes that this is not one national workforce development programme, but a grant to support social care workforce development in each region.

**Social Care Wales Regional Workforce Development Grant Core Principles:**

The proposed principles to underpin the future operation the grant are

* Promote the effective development of the current and future social care workforce to enhance skills and capacity
* Encourage and develop its partnership focus at a regional level
* Be based on a matched funding approach
* Focus on measurable and achievable key strategic priorities
* Act as the main route for Social Care Wales to distribute any financial support to the sector for training and development
* Be administered in line with good practice
* Support long term sustainable planning for Learning & Development

The annex that follows explains our thinking behind each of these principles in a bit more detail.

**Feedback**:

We would really value your feedback on the proposed and any additional principles to underpinthe grant in future. Feedback should be sent to SCWDP@socialcare.wales by 25th September.

We would want to issue the 2018/9 circular by January 2018 in order to have agreed plans early in the 2018/9 financial year.

Annex:

**Principle: Promote the effective development of the current and future social care workforce to enhance skills and capacity**

This means the grant should support the full span of the workforce, in any type of setting or service. In doing so, we must recognise that in any one year there may be priorities that focus on a particular sub set(s) of the workforce. We recognise both paid social care workforce as well as carers and volunteers.

Each region will need to evidence decisions on how the grant is proposed to be used against grant priorities, demonstrating and measuring added value and impact. We also want to support creative approaches to the development of the workforce. We recognise that this does not just mean traditional learning and training therefore we are open to proposals that support and create a wider culture of learning and continuing professional development.

**Principle: Encourage and develop its partnership focus at a regional level**

In each region the grant should be administered by a partnership recognising all social care interests to support joint ownership for the development of the workforce. The partnership should agree how the grant will be spent in the region, to meet needs in the region, in line with the priorities of the grant. The grant will be hosted by a nominated local authority in each of the seven statutory regional health and social care partnership areas. This approach should enable a region to consider the current workforce skills and knowledge and future care and support needs of the population, in order for the grant to support long term needs.

**Principle: The grant should be based on a funding approach**

The grant should retain a matched funding approach of 70% funding from Social Care Wales, and a minimum 30% matched contribution from the region.

The grant is intended to support the social care workforce; however, we would want to support the ability to pool budgets with health or other sectors to develop integrated approaches where there is evidence of this need.

Regions will provide evidence to underpin proposed approaches in an annual plan, which has been agreed by the regional partnership statutory board.

**Principle: The grant should focus on** measurable and achievable key strategic priorities

The previous programme requirements have been defined via a circular for some years, this has been detailed to support a range of areas. We recognise that this grant is only a contribution to supporting the development of the social care workforce. While it is recognised that a degree of flexibility should be maintained to meet specific pressure points and the workforce development strategy in each region, it is proposed in future the grant should have a fewer number of national priorities. This should enable us to demonstrate the impact of the fund in meeting priorities. Priorities may span more than one financial year.

Longer term we would see the national priority areas being defined by a national workforce strategy. Proposed national priorities for 2018 are domiciliary care; supporting social care managers and supporting outcomes focussed practice.

To support the sector to access workforce development resources, Social Care Wales will also look to signpost to other training resources and funding.

**Principle: The grant should act as the main route for Social Care Wales to distribute any training and development financial support to the sector**

It is recommended that where ever possible Social Care Wales establishes national programmes in response to sector needs (for example the Step Up to Management Programme, Social Services Practitioner, CPEL; Team Manager Development Programme, Middle Manager Development programme; Practice Learning Opportunities Fund) any financial contribution to learner costs we are able to make would be allocated via a ring fenced amount in the grant.

The core grant has previously been distributed on a population based formula, but in ring fenced activity we may wish to vary this approach dependent on need.

**Principle: The grant will be administered in line with good practice**

Welsh Government are currently undertaking a review of grant funding, we would seek to build on best practice and learning from this review in the administration of the grant. We would want to find balance between robust grant management, with minimising resources spent on administration, both for the region and Social Care Wales. We would want to keep the process under review to continually improve and learn from the approach.

We do not believe the grant long term, should be a vehicle for collecting current workforce information. There are a range of existing mechanisms, but we believe the plans of CSSIW to expand the SASS, alongside an extended workforce register should provide us all with a rich set of data.

**Principle: The grant should support long term sustainable planning for Learning & Development**

We recognise the need to plan on more than a one year timeframe, as far as is possible we would seek to maintain the grant at the same level from year to year. This is clearly dependent on the level of resource Social Care Wales receives from Welsh Government. We also recognise we are in a period of austerity and wide ranging challenges for social care, so at any point in time we should anticipate in our planning potential increases or reductions of up to 10%.

In developing regional plans, regions will be asked to consider how the grant investment supports sustainability.