

Guidance for the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) – COVID 19 (April 15 2020)

The Minister for Housing and Local Government wrote to all Local Authorities and GAVO on 3rd April 2020 setting out temporary arrangements for the HSG and CCG grants to respond to the novel coronavirus (COVID 19). COVID-19 presents unprecedented challenges to all of the early intervention, prevention and support services delivered through the 7 programmes within the CCG.

This document provides temporary and time limited guidance on the grant conditions for the Children and Communities Grant with immediate effect and up to 30 June 2020. Welsh Government will continue to keep abreast of the evolving situation to establish whether the timescales associated with this guidance need to change.

We recognise that children, families and vulnerable people will be under additional emotional, financial and psychological pressure at this time. For the safety and wellbeing of all it is crucial that services are delivered in a way that is consistent with the expert scientific advice being provided by the Welsh Government.¹ Please be aware that the advice and, therefore, guidance may change.

Intended Audience

This guidance is intended to be used by all those involved in managing and delivering the Children and Communities Grant and the 7 programmes within it. Please share this guidance with your teams and programme leads across your Authority.

The aims of this guidance

The aims of the guidance are to:-

1. Set out the CCG terms and conditions in light of COVID-19
2. Ensure children, young people, families and vulnerable people remain the priority to access services through the CCG
3. Maintain contracts and working arrangements with Third Sector organisations
4. Set out the flexibilities for each of the 7 programmes up to 30 June 2020
5. Confirm the revised claims and monitoring arrangements for 2020/21
6. Describe what planned expenditure for 2019-2020 can be carried over to 2020-21
7. Provide further contact details

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

1. Grant terms and conditions in light of COVID-19

- 1.1. Welsh Government recognises that the commitments made in the Local Authority's Application for Funding for 2020-21 (Delivery Plans) were made before the COVID-19 virus hit Wales.
- 1.2. To enable Local Authorities to adapt service delivery to reflect changing circumstances you will be allowed to diverge from the grant applications you recently made for the CCG for the first 3 months of 2020/2021. This does not mean that there is an extension to the overall purposes of CCG. It does mean that you are able to adapt the detail of your delivery plans to reflect the support needs of children, families and vulnerable people as the current situation develops.
- 1.3. This might include continuing to fund commissioned services which are not operating on the terms contracted as social-distancing measures impact. For example, staff being off sick or service users self-isolating and not being available for support work.
- 1.4. In making and recording your own decisions on these matters, you should consider the actions necessary to protect your providers and ensure that service provision can quickly recover when the current situation has diminished. The temporary arrangements apply to CCG for an initial period of 3 months from 1 April until 30 June 2020.
- 1.5. It is recognised that commitments made in the Delivery Plans will need to be reconsidered by each Local Authority as some actions may need to be paused or accelerated to allow you to respond to the challenges that COVID-19 presents. For example, we are not expecting you to have progressed with new approaches as described in your Delivery Plans.
- 1.6. For at least the first 3 months of the 2020-21 operational year, we expect you to focus your resources into revisiting the needs of local citizens in light of the crisis, and deliver more of your services to customers through telephone, on-line and social media to adhere to public health advice regarding social distancing and self-isolation.
- 1.7. Staff employed through the CCG funds should be paid in full throughout this 3 month period as per the UK Government criteria set out in their Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme guidance. You will need to check for updates regularly via the following link. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>
- 1.8. We expect planned activity and outcomes for the first quarter of the financial year to be significantly impacted as Local Authorities respond to the crisis. We will not be asking for detailed reports on how staff are deployed across programmes within the CCG as we want you to focus on managing and delivering crucial services, however, strategic reporting and high level programme monitoring will remain as part of the claims cycle.
- 1.9. **Recording staff and activities which are diverted to respond to COVID-19**. Changes such as these will need to be recorded for audit purposes and you will also need to record the rationale for the decision and associated timescales. With the exception of the CfW+ programme who need you to

complete the 'Redeployment tracker' as part of the wider employability agenda, you will not be required to submit this information to Welsh Government, but you will need to retain the information and Welsh Government may request to see this information at some stage in the future. The information should include:-

- (a) Who – note the details of the staff members to be re-deployed, including which programme they are funded from within the CCG;
- (b) When – note the time period of redeployment i.e. start and end dates (latter where known);
- (c) What – note the redeployment role and note a brief description of the activities they'll undertake.
- (d) Why – Provide rationale for the decision

2. Ensure children, young people, families and vulnerable people remain the priority to access services through the CCG

2.1. The purpose of the Grant remains the same. Local Authorities need to deliver early intervention, prevention and support services to meet the needs of their local citizens. It is recognised that the support element of the programmes is likely to dominate services throughout this crisis, but Local Authorities will need to make decisions based upon local need to establish how to support the most vulnerable over the coming months in line with COVID-19 temporary individual programme guidance.

3. Maintaining contracts and working arrangements with Third Sector Organisations

3.1. We recognise Third Sector organisations will need to adapt how they make contact with individuals throughout this crisis, for example, many providers will have stopped non critical face to face contact or group work, may be running increased phone / digital contact services as an alternative method of delivery, whilst some due to the nature of the service and current CV19 guidance, may have had to pause services completely.

3.2. It is critical that these contracts are maintained throughout the crisis, and you are given the flexibility to utilise the skills and experience of your delivery mechanisms to meet novel challenges faced by you. It is recognised that outcomes may be impacted during this period, which will not affect eligibility for funding.

3.3. You will need to ensure that you are able to resume normal working practice through Third Sector contracts once this crisis is over.

4. COVID -19 additional individual programme guidance

4.1. Additional guidance relating to Covid-19 has been considered by the lead Programme and Policy officials across Welsh Government for each of the 7 programmes within CCG. The information in this section is current at the time of publication. Any further changes to programme guidance will be issued separately to you and logged for audit purposes.

4.2. Flying Start and Families First

- Separate Families First and Flying Start [COVID-19](#) guidance has been issued to Local Authorities, please refer to that guidance and speak with your Flying Start/Families First Account Manager should you have any questions regarding delivery of the programmes during this 3 month period.
- To ensure the sustainability of Flying Start childcare, you can continue paying registered and Local Authority run Flying Start settings for 3 months commencing 18 March 2020, as announced by the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services.
- A further announcement was made regarding the repurposing of the Childcare Offer on 6 April 2020 by the First Minister, stating free childcare will be offered to the children aged 0-4 for parents who are key workers to respond to COVID-19. To ensure there is no duplication of funding, Local Authorities should use the CCG to pay for Flying Start eligible childcare in the usual way, childcare provided in/through Flying Start settings for the purpose of supporting the COVID 19 response (children of critical workers and vulnerable children not within the Flying Start area or outside of the Flying Start childcare age range) would be funded through the Childcare Offer.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+)

Key messages:

- CfW+ should continue to support people seeking employment, albeit the support will be provided through different communication methods;
- Participants should be supported and encouraged to take advantage of job opportunities currently being created in some sectors, including supermarkets, care and deliveries;
- Delivery teams, in particular Employer Liaison Officers, will provide Welsh Government with local labour market and business intelligence - this is being fed directly to Ministers;
- When the pandemic is over, CfW+ must be able to resume normal service quickly and continuing participant relationships during this period will, therefore, be critical;

- It is highly likely that there will be a very different labour market following the pandemic where demand for employability support will be much increased and it is critical CfW+ resource (staff and non-staff budgets) is safeguarded in readiness to respond.
- In the short term, recognising the exceptional circumstances, Welsh Government will pause the requirement for 20% of job outcomes to be disabled people and those with Work Limiting Health Conditions. This will be reviewed, along with other targets outlined in CfW+ Delivery Plans for 2020-21, when we emerge from the pandemic and current restrictions.
- CfW+ delivery teams should continue to maintain participant records and submit monthly numerical updates to their CfW+ Account Managers in the usual way. Welsh Government will not require the participant data collected quarterly at Q1 stage due in July 2020 but, if circumstances allow, will commission combined Q1 and Q2 returns to be submitted in October 2020.

4.3. Childcare and Play

We anticipate that there will be an increased need for childcare provision and support for the childcare sector across Wales over the coming months.

We are content for posts funded under the C&P element to work more flexibly, which means they may need to change what they are doing as compared to your activities set out in your Delivery Plans, be that to scale up activity or scale it back on other areas.

4.4. Legacy Fund

The purpose of the Legacy fund remains unchanged, however, it is recognised that resources you have allocated to this programme may need to be reviewed and temporarily diverted over the coming months. Where Third Sector organisations are contracted to deliver services, we would expect you to maintain staffing levels to be able to resume services as planned following the crisis, and in the meantime you are able to utilise the resources as deemed necessary within the parameters of the CCG grant.

4.5. Promoting Positive Engagement with Young People (PPE)

Youth Justice Board Wales has provided communication to youth offending teams about contingency planning. You should refer to this or any updated guidance provided.

Given the current situation we understand that there may need to be changes to the scale and scope of the programmes supported by Promoting Positive Engagement funding, particularly where it targets groups of young people.

4.6. St Davids Day Fund

The purpose of the St David's Day Fund remains unchanged. During the time, local authorities will need to flex their original allocations as care leavers are highly likely to require more support. We would expect local authorities to be doing what they can for care leavers whose lives are being adversely affected because of coronavirus. For example, helping with income loss, food supplies, household bills and other essential living costs ensuring tenancy arrangements are protected and so forth.

5. Claims and monitoring arrangements

- 5.1. The first claim for CCG in 2020-21 will be due in October 2020 and there will be no change to that timetable as things stand.
- 5.2. Data which is required for each of the programmes as set out in the final grant offer letters for 2020-21 will continue, any changes to the timetable for submitting data will be notified in due course.

6. Planned expenditure carried over from 2019-2020 to 2020-21

- 6.1. Due to social distancing requirements to stop the spread of COVID -19, we are aware that some planned activities such as training courses, group sessions or similar needed to be cancelled, which has resulted in funds not being allocated to services as intended.
- 6.2. It is permissible to utilise the planned expenditure from the final few weeks of 2019-2020 (which would usually form part of your quarter 4 claim) on activities which needed to be postponed as a result of the impact of COVID -19 in the 2020-21 financial year. Strict monitoring will need to be in place for a clear audit trail to demonstrate the cause of any underspend, the amount carried forward, and clear links to expenditure for the 'carry over'. You will not be able to claim for more than the outturn provided in your Q4 estimate submitted to the Funding Alignment team in March 2020, and any expenditure relating to 2020-21 planned activities should be claimed in that financial year.
- 6.3. If you wish to carry over funds from 2019-20 to 2020-2021 on the basis described, please contact the Funding Alignment Team. More advice on how to claim this will be issued separately.

7. Contact us

- 7.1. This guidance should provide you with sufficient information for you to be able to utilise the flexible funding approach to be able to respond quickly to the COVID -19 crisis, delivering the programmes within the grant as you deem relevant. Should you have any queries about this guidance please contact the Flexible Funding Mailbox (flexiblefunding@gov.wales) or for anything urgent please speak to one of our team which are set out below

Funding Alignment Team Contacts			
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