

Workforce Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday 2nd December 2020 10:00-12:00

Chairs: Colin Angel (United Kingdom Homecare Association)
Vic Rayner (National Care Forum)

Attendees: Anna Boaden (DHSC)
Jamie Weatherhead (DHSC)
Shabbir Qureshi (DHSC)
Robert Frost (DHSC)
Charles Coleman-Manktelow (DHSC)
Eleanor Kershaw (DHSC)
Victoria Hasan (DHSC)
Henry Pattison-Hudd (DHSC)
Dani Lee (DHSC)
Matt Woodcock (DHSC)
Rebecca Digby (DHSC)
Nisan Yesildaglar (DHSC)
Ann Mackay (Care England)
Zameer Bhunnoo (HSE)
Matthew Egan (Unison)
Karolina Gerlich (Care Workers' Charity)
Melanie Weatherly (Care Association Alliance)
Karen Culshaw (CQC)
Emily Muir (Skills for Care)
Jon Sutcliffe (Local Government Association)
Susie Singleton (Public Health England)

1. Restricting staff moment consultation

- DHSC discussed the consultation on proposed restrictions on staff movement, and provided an update on the results and plans going forward

2. Testing of home care workers

- DHSC discussed the policy in place for visitor and home care worker testing
- For testing of home care workers, individual agencies place an order for PCR test kits, which are conducted once a week between Thursday and Sunday by each care worker. The results are generally available within 48 hours, after which the workers follow the relevant procedure
- WAG discussed potential issues and gave feedback on testing procedures

3. Occupational health

- DHSC has completed the process of looking into the occupational health provisions available across the sector, and sought feedback on what other services would be useful to the workforce

4. Vaccines

- Social care workers fall into the high priority category of those receiving the new Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, which will be administered from Monday 7 December
- DHSC is encouraging as much uptake as possible

- WAG discussed details of how the vaccines will be administered and potential obstacles to staff being vaccinated

5. Spending Review

- DHSC discussed outcomes of the Spending Review, the process by which government departments secure funding for their respective sectors and stakeholders
 - This year the Spending Review was for a one-year period
- There has been a 4.5% cash terms increase in the core spending power of local authorities
 - DHSC are providing councils with access to over £1 billion of new funding for social care. Of this, £300 million is a new grant, and councils can raise £790 million by a new 3% adult social care precept
 - DHSC has taken into account the ability of individuals to pay council tax and will address this through using some of the social care grant funding for equalisation between councils
- DHSC expect to provide councils with estimated funding of around £3 billion to help manage the impact of COVID-19 across their services, including in adult social care, and to compensate for income losses