

REPORT TO: IJB Audit and Risk Committee

MEETING DATE: 6 June 2023

BY: Andrew Main – Strategy Officer, Planning and Performance, ELHSCP

SUBJECT: End of Sustainability Payments

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To notify members of the end of Sustainability Payments, including the Social Care Staff Support Fund (SCSSF), and provide them with the closing position.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The IJB Audit and Risk Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the end of Sustainability Payments and the SCSSF as at 31st March 2023.
- 2.2 Note that the final meeting of the Sustainability Payment Panel was held on Wednesday 10th May 2023. The closing date for submission of final quarter 4 claims was Sunday 30th April 2023.
- 2.3 Note the closing financial position.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The *Guidance for financial support for social care providers during COVID-19¹* (sustainability payments) was first introduced in December 2020 initially until March 2021. This guidance set out the arrangements for providing financial support to social care providers for costs relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 The East Lothian Sustainability Payment Panel was also established in December 2020 to administer the sustainability process on behalf of Scottish Government / COSLA.

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3.3 The guidance was subject to regular review and update with a full version history available online². The guidance and associated timescales were updated and extended on numerous occasions:

- December 2020 – publication of first version until end of March 2021.
- March 2021 – extension until end of June 2021.
- July 2021 – extension of SCSSF and non-delivery payments until end of September 2021 / extension of additional costs until end of March 2022.
- October 2021 – extension of SCSSF until end of March 2022 / extension of non-delivery payments until end of October 2021.
- November 2021 – introduction of more targeted non-delivery support effectively ending submission of claims of this type.
- April 2022 – extension of additional costs and SCSSF until end of June 2022. In scope additional costs reduced.
- July 2022 – extension of SCSSF until end of September 2022 / extension of additional costs until end of March 2023. In scope additional costs reduced to those relating to testing and vaccination only.
- October 2022 – extension of SCSSF until end of March 2023.
- 31st March 2023 – end of additional cost and SCSSF support.
- 30th April 2023 – closing date for submission of all claims.

3.4 Over the course of 96 sustainability payment panels a total of 378 claims from 33 providers totalling £3,290,535.86 were approved for payment. This total included £1,357,391.01 in non-delivery / reduced occupancy claims and £1,933,144.85 in additional cost claims.

3.5 Some key data:

- Average of 11 claims per provider.
- Number of claims per provider ranged from 1 to 34
- Average of £8,705 per claim.

3.6 In July 2020 East Lothian Council Internal Audit commenced an audit of the sustainability payment process, which reported to the IJB Audit and Risk Committee in December 2020. The internal audit concluded: *“Based on our assurance work undertaken and the audit evidence reviewed, it is our view that the ELHSCP has appropriate processes in place to ensure that social care sustainability payments are made in accordance with the National Principles for Sustainability and Remobilisation Payments to Social Care Providers during Covid-19.*

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-arrangements-for-social-care-providers/pages/version-history/>

Sustainability Payment Panel meetings are being held on a weekly basis, there is evidence of all claims from providers being properly considered and detailed records are maintained of all Panel decisions made and of correspondence with, and supporting evidence submitted by, social care providers.”

- 3.7 The sustainability payment panel held its final meeting on Wednesday 10th May 2023 where it approved all remaining claims. All associated files will be retained on the shared drive until further notice in line with the ongoing COVID-19 inquiry.

4 ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

7 DIRECTIONS

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Financial – sustainability payment process administered on behalf of Scottish Government / COSLA and all funding has been received. Any remaining funding will now be reconciled by the Chief Finance Officer and East Lothian Council Finance Business Partners.

- 8.2 Personnel – none.

- 8.3 Other – none.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

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