

Strategic Planning and Commissioning Team
E4, County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1YS

2nd November 2011

Dear Colleague,

Changes to grant funding and commissioning of services

I am writing to you to confirm changes we are making to the following Essex County Council grants and funds:

- Community and Voluntary Grant
- Carers' Grant
- Learning Disability Development Fund
- Dementia Grant

This letter sets out how we intend to move away from annual and one-off grant funding towards an outcomes based commissioning approach, aligned to the Council's broader intentions of continuously improving as a commissioning organisation.

Our commissioning strategies and delivery plans have identified an ambitious range of outcomes for the people of Essex. To achieve these we need to use our available funds more efficiently and in a way that will have the greatest impact. This means that we need to commission services in line with our priorities and in response to identified need based on the principles of personalisation, enablement, choice and control. Wherever possible, we aim to commission jointly with the Health service and other partners.

We have recognised that this cannot be comprehensively delivered through the existing system of short-term grant funding, and that we need to move towards a planned programme of longer-term commissioning. Consequently, there will be no grants application process, or automatic roll-over of funding when the current annual grant funding reaches its agreed end in March 2012. All grants were only ever assured for one year at a time and when these were rolled forward for 2011/12 an explanation was given that by 2012/13 we would be moving to a commissioning approach. We have also signalled this in a range of ways including conferences and meetings such as the Roads to Personalisation Conference earlier this year. We will however use the same available funds to commission services, and, in some cases, to provide individual services or initiatives to encourage new and innovative approaches.

Reviews of a number of key strategies and a risk analysis concerning the current grant based services will help us to determine the services we will need to commission from April 2012 and ensure that, where appropriate, we provide continuity of provision for vulnerable or potentially vulnerable citizens.

As part of the new approach, we will also be revising our performance management and evaluation frameworks, and we will ensure that there are clear and equitable tendering and procurement processes in place. To ensure that we are able to communicate any changes to this approach, could you please ensure your organisation and contact details are correct on Bravo Solution, Essex County Council's electronic supplier portal. You can find this portal by using the following website address; <https://essex.bravosolution.co.uk>

We are planning a number of consultation meetings over the next few months, to help us to ensure that our commissioning priorities and approaches best reflect and respond to the identified needs of people in Essex and I would welcome your involvement in that consultation process.

We will write to you again in early December to update you on progress and the schedule of key activities leading up to the planned start of commissioned services in April 2012.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the changes we are adopting please contact:

Community and Voluntary Grant

Chris West, chris.west@essex.gov.uk, 01245 434 844

Carers' Grant

Lynda Hampel, lynda.hampel2@essex.gov.uk, 01245 434 708

Learning Disability Development Fund

Chris Loy, chris.loy@essex.gov.uk, 01245 437 866

Dementia Grant

April Lawlor, april.lawlor@essex.gov.uk, 01245 434 453

Yours sincerely



Craig Derry
Director
Strategic Planning and Commissioning