

Appendix 3: Other Audits and Grant Claims

Highways Maintenance and Challenge Fund

Purpose of Funding

Funding was provided to assist with the Belton Way highways protection works.

Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that:

- it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes
- work undertaken related to the Belton Way project.

Opinion: Unqualified

Pothole and Challenge Fund

Purpose of Funding

Funding was provided to assist with plans to repair potholes and bridge strengthening works

Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that:

- it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes
- work undertaken related to pothole repairs in the borough.

Works relating to bridge strengthening have not yet been undertaken and so the budget has been carried over to 2021/22. The spend will be certified as part of the 2022/23 audit plan alongside the other highway grants received in 2021/22.

Opinion: Unqualified

Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance

Purpose of Funding

To assist in delivering transport improvement schemes, which can include:

- road markings and re-surfacing
- upgrades to traffic signals
- bridge strengthening
- installation / replacement of sign lights and street lights
- upgrades to electronic bus information screens.

Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that it:

- fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes
- Work undertaken related to the areas outlined above.

Opinion: Unqualified

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Supporting Families Programme, Payments by Results Scheme Grant 2021/22 - claim April to June 2021

Objective

To assess compliance with the terms and conditions of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) new Programme Guidance for making Payment by Result (PBR) claims for the year April 2021 to March 2022 under the 2021-22 Phase of the Supporting Families Programme.

Background

The new phase of the programme aims to build resilience by providing whole family support at the earliest possible point and help prevent escalation into statutory services. The Council has agreed to achieve measurable outcomes with a minimum of 258 families assisted by March 2022 under this Programme.

In line with the previous Troubled Families Programme, the new phase requires that Internal Audit verifies a 10% representative sample of PBR claims before they are made to ensure there is supporting evidence to confirm families:

- met the required criteria to be considered for entry to the Supporting Families Programme
- have achieved either continuous employment or significant and sustained progress against all problems identified at the point of engagement and during intervention as defined by the Council's agreed Outcomes Plan.

The new Programme Guidance has been updated to allow for a second PBR claim to be made for a family receiving support where a certain set of circumstances have been met. This is particularly pertinent as families recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion – claim period April to June 2021

Between April and June 2021, 43 PBR claims were presented to audit, prior to submission to the MHCLG.

The Team Manager reviews a minimum of 10% of claims to confirm appropriate evidence has been provided.

One of the 43 claims was withdrawn because it was found to have been claimed previously and did not meet the circumstances for a second PBR claim. This left 42 claims for submission to the MHCLG, nine of which were second PBR claims for families who had received additional support since the first PBR claim was made.

Internal Audit randomly selected four claims for review, two of which had been checked by the Team Manager and two which represented second PBR claims for families previously supported. For all four claims, suitable evidence was available to support:

- entry into the programme
- a claim for significant and sustained progress against all problems identified at the point of engagement and during intervention

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- the circumstances required by the new Supporting Families Programme for a second PBR claim to be made in recognition of the additional support given to those families.

Supporting Families Programme, Payments by Results Scheme Grant 2021/22 - claim July to September 2021

Objective

To assess compliance with the terms and conditions of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) new Programme Guidance for making Payment by Result (PBR) claims for the year April 2021 to March 2022 under the 2021-22 Phase of the Supporting Families Programme.

Background

The new phase of the programme aims to build resilience by providing whole family support at the earliest possible point and help prevent escalation into statutory services. The Council has agreed to achieve measurable outcomes with a minimum of 258 families assisted by March 2022 under this Programme.

In line with the previous Troubled Families Programme, the new phase requires that Internal Audit verifies a 10% representative sample of PBR claims before they are made to ensure there is supporting evidence to confirm families:

- met the required criteria to be considered for entry to the Supporting Families Programme
- have achieved either continuous employment or significant and sustained progress against all problems identified at the point of engagement and during intervention as defined by the Council's agreed Outcomes Plan.

The new Programme Guidance has been updated to allow for a second PBR claim to be made for a family receiving support where a certain set of circumstances have been met. This is particularly pertinent as families recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion – claim period July to September 2021

Between July and September 2021, 64 PBR claims were presented to audit, prior to submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with one claim being identified as a second claim for a family for which a PBR claim had previously been made.

Audit work identified that of the 64 claims, a further six claims represented reclaims for families for which a previous PBR had been made. Of these six:

- four were removed from the PBR claim finally made as they did not meet the criteria for a second claim in that the required two years gap between the first and second claims had not elapsed. Going forward these claims will be reviewed to identify whether they meet criteria for a subsequent claim to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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- two were included as meeting the now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' criteria for a second claim.

Of the remaining 60 claims submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for a PBR claim the Team Manager had:

- independently reviewed four of the claims where families were supported by the Early Help team, to confirm appropriate evidence had been provided for a PBR to be claimed. This represented the usual 10% check of claims made.
- reviewed evidence for a further nineteen cases related to Child in Need (CIN) claims where families had been supported by Social Care teams.

Internal Audit randomly selected six claims for review which included four worked on by the Early Help team and two of the CIN claims reviewed independently by the Team Manager. For all six claims, suitable evidence was available to support:

- entry into the programme
- a claim for significant and sustained progress against all problems identified at the point of engagement and during intervention.