

Appendix C: Guide to the CPCA Climate Change Care Homes Programme

The Combined Authority set up a funding programme to support independently owned nursing and residential care homes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to become more energy efficient while helping to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

This followed the gathering of evidence by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (CPICC) on the relative vulnerability of the area to future climate events, based on the geography and land-use. The CPICC also highlighted the heat and energy needs of existing buildings as a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and recommended demonstrator projects to encourage private sector investment.

The modification of care home buildings is not only beneficial to the environment, but also advantageous to existing and prospective residents, who are ultimately more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (such as the record-setting temperatures experienced in Cambridgeshire last year).

Given the financial difficulties that the last few years have presented for the care sector, it was considered important that the CPCA offer an opportunity for independently owned care homes, and their residents, in improving the energy efficiency of properties and cut energy bills where possible.

The extreme summer heat we experienced in 2022 is likely to occur more often as a result of climate change; as this becomes a common occurrence in the UK, it will add further pressure on care homes to protect their vulnerable residents, particularly from heat-related health dangers. By supporting improvements, we can help the care sector make vital savings to overhead costs, including reducing energy bills, enabling a potential redistribution of funds to invest in care facilities. This will also help reduce greenhouse emissions, directly contributing towards the net zero target.

Following the impacts of the COVID pandemic on the care sector, it is understood that investment in climate ready measures is likely to be more difficult in the short term. In addition, it's understood that in some instances there exists limited capacity and expertise to identify appropriate energy saving measures.

Why is energy efficiency important in care home settings?

Reducing energy wastage will have a direct impact on lowering care homes' overhead costs, enabling them to redistribute finances to improve or maintain their facilities, ensuring the continued health and wellbeing of their vulnerable residents.

Therefore, by supporting wider climate change initiatives, our funding programme can also help the care homes achieve their own care quality objectives.

Our Proposed Approach and Rationale

Our initial approach concentrates investment support on independently owned nursing and residential care homes, as it is believed these services face the greatest amount of challenge in making the required alterations. Facilities that have access to ample financial resource are unlikely to meet our criteria for support.

Based initially on data drawn from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), followed by some further refinement, there are 174 nursing and residential homes in the CPCA area, of which 32 are independently owned. The remaining 142 homes are owned by various groups.

Why we have created this grant programme?

The extreme summer heat we experienced last year is likely to occur more often as a result of climate change; as this becomes a common occurrence in the UK, it will add further pressure on care homes to protect their vulnerable residents, particularly from heat-related health dangers. We recognise the challenges faced by the care industry, particularly following the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, and how difficult it will be to prioritise energy efficiency investment, against other more pressing demands on care homes' finances and resources. We also understand that for many care homes limited resource capacity persists as a major problem, making it harder to find the time and expertise to identify appropriate energy saving measures.

Therefore, we are offering support that specifically addresses the needs of the care sector, to make the transition to an eco-friendly operation easier and more efficient.

Before we launched our scheme, we wanted to gauge interest among those 32 independent care homes to enable us to target our support appropriately. We invited those care homes to complete a brief survey, and register interest in receiving more information regarding our proposed scheme, once it has opened for applications.

What funding is available and how does it work?

There is £2m available from The Mayor's gain share fund. Our proposal is to contribute grant funding towards the targeted care homes' investment in capital projects. The amount of grant available from us will depend on the level of interest from the independently owned nursing and residential care homes and the type of capital projects but we are looking at funding up to 75% of individual total eligible capital project costs. This does not include support towards salary or running costs. Each application will be considered on its own merit and ensuring value for money and reducing carbon emissions will be key factors for success. Only one application per independently owned nursing and residential care home is permitted.

We have tested our methodology and approach with both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough care commissioning teams and made some adjustments as necessary. We will form a steering group to include representatives from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough care commissioning teams and our Net Zero Energy Hub.

What type of capital projects are eligible for support?

Some examples of eligible capital works that can improve energy efficiency and help reduce energy bills and emissions include:

- Renovation or replacement of an inefficient non-fossil fuel heating system
- Renovation or replacement of an inefficient non-fossil fuel hot water system
- Installation of a cooling system
- Installation of solar panels
- Installation of SMART energy controls
- Installation of better loft insulation
- Installation of cavity wall insulation
- Installation of a ground source heat pump and associated piping
- Air source heat pump
- Any equipment for dealing with frequent flooding
- LED lighting
- Infrared lighting

We are keen to support the installation of other alternative systems or measures to those reliant on fossil fuels, such as solar or heat pumps. There may also be an opportunity to consider nature-based solutions (such as cooling effect from trees) rather than technology-based investment (and reducing the need for air-conditioning), although we appreciate that this may be some time into the future before any benefits are realised. Depending on the cost and ease of installation we are focussing on the adoption of alternative non-fossil fuel systems.

How our financial support will benefit eligible Care Homes

By investing in new, state-of-the-art heating and cooling systems and equipment, care homes can expect a reduction in energy costs, potentially enabling a redistribution of finances for investment in other care facility measures and priorities. In addition to cost savings, developing an eco-friendly care home demonstrates to existing and prospective residents support for climate change goals, and a commitment to reducing waste to prioritise resources on care quality.

Successful grant applicants will have the opportunity to feature in any associated publicity that the Combined Authority undertakes. For example, an article in local newspapers about how financial support from the Combined Authority has benefitted several homes, (mentioning them by name), which could lead to more interest in the homes from future clients.