

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 14 November 2022	<b>Decision Maker:</b> Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
<b>Report title:</b>		Allocation of grants to care homes to enable installation of air filters	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Camberwell Green, Dulwich Hill, Dulwich Wood, Goose Green, London Bridge and West Bermondsey, North Bermondsey, Nunhead and Queen's Road, Peckham, Peckham Rye, Rotherhithe, Rye Lane, South Bermondsey, St George's, St Giles	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing approve grant funding for a pilot programme to enable 16 care homes to install air filter units. The aim of the air filters is to improve indoor air quality in terms of pollutants and COVID-19.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This funding programme is part of a wider programme which includes schools. As a result, information about both schools and care homes is included in this report.
3. The potential health effects of pollutants and airborne viruses are exacerbated in indoor spaces that are badly ventilated, occupied for long periods of time, or of poor air quality. Air filters can reduce exposure to pollutants and viruses in order to protect pupils and vulnerable populations, maximise school attendance, and reduce community transmission.
4. Some schools have already been offered air filters through other routes:
  - i. DfE funding was available to install air filters in Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools as a COVID-19 mitigation measure. All but two schools already had systems in place. Of these two, one did not want air filters, and one did not meet funding criteria. These two schools will be included in this offer.
  - ii. DfE funding was available to install air filters in maintained schools as a COVID-19 mitigation measure. No schools met DfE funding criteria.

- iii. 34 schools were offered a free air quality audit and £5k grant to use on air quality measures as part of Southwark's Air Quality Audit. So far, two schools chose to spend their grant on air filters.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 5. The Council's Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2017 – 2022, and the Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan set the framework for protecting the health of the population with regards to poor air quality and COVID-19.
- 6. Two SEN schools, 34 other schools, and all 16 care homes will be offered grants to install air filters. Academies and free schools are included. Independent schools are not included.
- 7. Only two SEN schools were selected because the other SEN schools already have systems in place.
- 8. The 34 other schools were selected based on having PM2.5 levels of 11.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> or above, which is a measure of air pollution. This is because schools in high pollution areas are likely to have worse indoor air quality, which filters can address, and may be less able to use natural ventilation to reduce COVID-19.
- 9. The number of air filter units required by each school and care home depends on room size and other factors. Settings will therefore be able to choose how to use their grant according to their specific needs.
- 10. Schools will receive £1000 for each 25 pupils up to a maximum of £10k per school. This will enable schools to decide how best to position the air filter units as determined by the number of pupils in a class and/or the size of the classroom.
- 11. Each care home will be offered a grant for up to 5 air filter units to install in 'common rooms' such as the recreation, TV, or dining areas, depending on the size and usage of the room. The maximum size of grants is £10k per care home.
- 12. Grants will be sent to schools and care homes in autumn and winter 2022.
- 13. Schools and care homes will be requested to sign a grant funding agreement setting out the expectations and use of the grant funding.
- 14. The air filter offer will be evaluated by an independent evaluation partner. This will inform any future air filter offers the Council may decide to implement.

## **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

### **Community impact statement**

15. Funding is being allocated to schools experiencing the highest levels of air pollution (PM2.5), SEN schools, and care homes which have disproportionately more residents vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution and COVID-19. An evaluation will be conducted to assess the case for extending the air filter offer to additional settings.

### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

16. The health effects of air pollution are experienced unequally. This pilot targets people who are at higher risk: children, older people, and those spending time in high pollution areas.

### **Health impact statement**

17. Air pollution contributes to cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses as well as cancer. COVID-19 can lead to a range of negative health outcomes, especially among older people and those with certain health conditions. Severe cases are rare among children, but children do still get sick from the virus and contribute to community transmission. Air filters are a tool to reduce these health risks.

### **Climate change implications**

18. Air filters will be used to improve the environment in which people spend a large proportion of their time, reducing the harmful effects of pollutants. As electrical devices, air filters will require energy consumption. This may be counter-balanced by reducing the need for natural ventilation in winter, which can result in heat loss and the associated extra energy expenditure.
19. Schools and care homes may wish to consider installing refurbished air filter units, where possible.

### **Resource implications**

20. Funding for the air filters offer is from the existing Public Health COMF budget, supported by existing capacity within Public Health.
21. Each school or care home will receive a grant of up to £10k. The overall grant funding is approximately £335k excluding the evaluation.

### **Legal/Financial implications**

22. Please see the concurrent reports of the Director of Law and Governance and the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance below.

## Consultation

23. No consultation has taken place.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Director of Law and Governance

24. This report seeks approval of a pilot grant funding programme to enable 36 schools and 16 care homes to install air filter units. Paragraphs 9 and 10 set out the total funding for the programme and the maximum individual allocations.
25. The decision to approve the report recommendation is one which is expressly reserved to the Cabinet Member under Part 3D of the council Constitution. The proposed grant award is consistent with the council's statutory duties and powers (notably the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010) and with relevant corporate policy.
26. The report notes that the proposed grant award will be regulated by appropriate funding conditions.

### Strategic Director of Finance and Governance REF: [28AS2021-22]

27. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the recommendation of the report to spend approximately £335,000 on the allocation of grants of up to £10,000 to enable the installation of air filters in 36 schools and 16 care homes. This amount does not include the costs of evaluating the scheme by an independent evaluation partner.
28. These grants shall be allocated as detailed in paragraphs 9 and 10.
29. The expectations and conditions of use of the grant funding will be set out in a grant funding agreement that the participating schools and care homes will be requested to sign as described in paragraph 12.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan (2017)	Environmental Protection Team, Environment and Leisure 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Jin Lim 020 7525 0281
<b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/environment/air-quality/what-we-re-doing/air-quality-strategies-plans-and-letters">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/environment/air-quality/what-we-re-doing/air-quality-strategies-plans-and-letters</a>		

Southwark's Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan	Public Health, Children's and Adults' Services 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	Jin Lim 020 7525 0281
<b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/southwark-outbreak-prevention-and-control-plan-opcp">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/southwark-outbreak-prevention-and-control-plan-opcp</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Kate Smith, Public Health Policy Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	14 November 2022	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here	N/A	N/A
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	14 November 2022	