



Issue 35 – 23 August 2023

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Guidance and good practice

COVID cases increasing in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland

The number of COVID-19 cases in the UK is rising again, including in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR).

Our care homes play a really valuable role in our local care system and we recognise that the recent rise in cases may be worrying. We would like to reinforce current guidance to support you in your response to the latest increase in cases, as we anticipate the possibility of spikes in cases over coming weeks. Care homes in Leicestershire are currently mitigating the risk of outbreaks effectively with appropriate measures, and there has not yet been an increase in outbreaks in care homes – thank you for your vigilance.

Additionally, the autumn COVID-19 and flu vaccinations for adults will start in October this year and we should start preparing for these campaigns to ensure our most vulnerable people are protected ahead of the winter months.

Discharge of patients with COVID-19 from hospital

IPC guidance relating to the discharge of patients from hospital to a care home can be found in the [COVID-19 supplement](#).

The hospital should still perform a PCR test 48 hours before discharge or a lateral flow test if the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

However, care homes can accept patients who are either awaiting the PCR swab result or are confirmed positive (via PCR or LFT) and are still within their isolation period if the home is able to isolate and safely care for the individual.

Please note if patients have tested COVID positive they are advised to isolate for a minimum of 5 days. After 5 days, the individual can return to normal activities if they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to do so.

COVID positive patients should avoid contact with those eligible for COVID-19 treatments for 10 days after a positive test (e.g. immunocompromised).

The isolation, PPE requirements and testing regimes when caring for COVID-19 positive individuals should be followed as per the COVID-19 supplement.

As always, please remain vigilant around residents and staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 and follow the advice [Staff and service users with symptoms of COVID-19](#).

If a member of staff or resident tests positive for COVID you should continue to follow the guidance [Staff or service users with a positive COVID-19 test](#).

We hope this information is helpful. In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact the relevant County or City IPC contact for your area:

- County and Rutland: infection@leics.gov.uk or 0116 305 5121
- City - Geraldine Angus: c19publichealth@leicester.gov.uk

Autumn and winter COVID-19 and flu vaccination campaign

NHS England has announced plans for this year's autumn and winter flu and COVID-19 campaign, which for adults begins in October. This will offer better protection ready for the coldest months of the winter, when viruses circulate more.

COVID-19 boosters and flu vaccines will be offered to eligible groups of people including the following:

- Residents in older adult care homes and their staff
- Adults aged 65 years and over
- People 6 months to 64 years in a clinical at-risk group
- Customer-facing health and social care workers
- Household contacts of immunosuppressed people ages 12 to 64 years
- Carers aged 16 to 64 years
- Pregnant people
- Working aged adults living in residential care homes and their staff

A single primary dose of the vaccine will also be offered to anyone in the above cohorts who has not had the vaccine previously.

Adult social care providers can [order printed materials](#) for the upcoming vaccination campaign. Digital versions of these campaign assets will be available for download in mid-September.

Leicestershire County Council updates

Hospital Discharge Grant for Carers

Leicestershire County Council is running a short-term scheme called Hospital Discharge Grant for Carers (HDGfC) which supports carers following the cared-for's hospital discharge.

If you are a carer aged 18+ and look after, help or support someone who wouldn't be able to manage everyday life without your help, and you're not employed to do it, then you are an unpaid carer.

- Does the cared for person live within Leicestershire County?
- Have they been discharged from hospital in the last 4 weeks?
- Have they needed your help and support to keep them safe and cared for?
- Have you incurred any additional costs, resulting from the discharge of the person you care for, from hospital? For example - cleaning, housework, short-term sitting service, carer's loss of income due to time off work

If yes, you may be entitled to some support from the Hospital Discharge Grant for Carers.

Please note this is a one-off grant for carers looking after residents in the Leicestershire County and is only applicable to discharges from 1 August 2023.

Carers can apply by:

- completing the [online application form](#)
- calling VASL on 01858 468543 or maureen@supportforcarers.org

VASL can complete the application form on your behalf. Alternatively, speak to your health and social care professional who can help complete the form on your behalf.

The closing date for applications is 31 March 2024.

Leicestershire County Council Provider Portal

Leicestershire County Council will shortly be changing the login process for the Provider Portal, so that it will be easier for you to reset your password. We will send registered provider portal users an invitation to sign up for this process over the next few months, with instructions on how to do this. The process for requesting new user access to the Portal remains the same: the manager can complete the [Provider Portal access request form](#). Once you have registered for this process, the option to call or email Leicestershire County Council will no longer be available.

Until you have registered for this new login process, please continue to request password resets through the existing form available at the above link.

If you have any questions about the Provider Portal or to tell us when an authorised user has left your organisation, please e-mail ascproviderportal@leics.gov.uk.

Please be aware that access to the Provider Portal will not be granted to personal email addresses such as Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo. This is to ensure the security of our data as these domains are at greater vulnerability of attack. We are working with information governance colleagues to find a solution for those providers who are unable to meet the conditions of use.

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG)

£6.8m grant funding is available to help the most inefficient and expensive-to-heat households in the county to reduce their energy bills.

The [Home Upgrade Grant](#) is administered by Leicestershire County Council's Warm Homes service together with YES Energy Solutions and can provide homeowners and private tenants with fully funded energy efficiency measures improving the warmth and comfort of homes, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty across the county.

The scheme supports households that do not have mains gas as a primary heating system such as those with electric, heating oil, LPG or solid fuel heating. Households that only use gas for cooking or secondary room heating can still apply.

Eligibility criteria includes households within priority neighbourhood areas and more widely, households with an income of £31,000 or less per year or in receipt of means tested benefits, with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D,E,F or G (D or E in private rental). It will prioritise the most energy inefficient households and runs to the end of March 2025.

For more information on the grants, including the full eligibility criteria, eligible postcode areas or to apply, visit the County Council's Green Living Leicestershire [Home Upgrade Grant webpage](#) or call project delivery partner YES Energy Solutions on 0330 912 6199, which can support residents with their applications.

Provider conference calls for 2024

At present, the regular Leicestershire County Council [provider conference calls](#) run at the following intervals:

- Home care: monthly, with an extended strategic session once a quarter
- Care homes: monthly, with an extended strategic session once a quarter
- Community life choices: monthly
- Supported living: every two months

We are currently considering the frequency for 2024 ahead of diarising the meetings. The sessions are an opportunity to speak directly to council managers and officers, and for the council to engage directly with you, seeking your views and passing on key information. It is not mandatory to attend every meeting.

We will provide a link to a survey in the next Provider News to enable you to have your say on the arrangements for next year.

Learning and development opportunities

Free IPC webinar series – September to December 2023

The County and Rutland Local Authority Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) team is continuing with its series of short webinars called 'IPC Basics'. These are short IPC refreshers aimed at staff working in adult social care who have an interest in IPC, such as IPC Champions and housekeeping staff.

All are welcome and you can attend as many sessions as you wish.

The following have been arranged:

- Wednesday 20 September 2023, 2:15 pm -3pm – IPC Basics 13 (Clostridioides difficile - C.diff). There has been a 25% increase in C.diff cases nationally in the past year. This webinar will look at the most recent guidance in managing this infection in adult social care settings.
- Wednesday 25 October 2023, 2:15 pm -3pm - IPC Basics 14 – Oral Hygiene and Infection. The importance of effective oral hygiene in reducing the risk of infection.
- Wednesday 22 November, 2:15 pm -3pm - IPC Basics 15 – Frailty and Infection. The impact of infection on those with frailty.
- Wednesday 13 December, 2:15 pm– 3pm – IPC Basics – 16 Respiratory Illnesses. Managing respiratory illness in adult social care settings.

To book onto a webinar email infection@leics.gov.uk or contact 0116 305 5121.

You will need to provide an email address in order that the link to the webinar can be sent to you 2 days prior to the event.

Data tracking

Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) – drop in session

The [Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set \(ASC-WDS\)](#) helps providers to manage their teams and provides crucial intelligence to key decision makers such as Government, DHSC, CQC and local authorities. ASC-WDS provides access to funding for training, safe and free management of staff and training records and the ability to benchmark your workplace against similar providers. Users will also gain special offers and discounts from Skills for Care and some endorsed training providers.

The video '[What is ASC-WDS](#)' introduces the data set and how the intelligence is used. It highlights the benefits of an account and gives user testimonials.

A [virtual drop-in session](#) is being held on Wednesday 30 August, 10:00–11:00. No booking is required.

Consultations and research

National survey of care workers

The Government has launched the first major national survey of all care workers in all care roles in adult social care in England, including personal assistants and those in regulated professional roles.

The [adult social care workforce survey](#), conducted by Skills for Care, Ipsos and the University of Kent on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care, is gathering information about conditions, organisational characteristics, and workplace culture, to understand how work-related quality of life and wellbeing.

[The survey](#) should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Awards

Nominate someone you know for a national award

If you know someone working or volunteering in social care who has gained the respect of their peers, displayed moral and physical courage, or showed real innovation and entrepreneurship and you feel they deserve national recognition for going the extra mile then find out how to nominate them via the national [honours and awards scheme](#).

In the first of a series of blogs from previous recipients, [Think Local Act Personal's](#) renowned champion of disability awareness, diversity and inclusion, [Clenton Farquharson CBE](#), explains how recognition has inspired him and others to keep making a difference.

Commemoration, celebration and awareness raising

Happy Leicester Pride!

[Leicester Pride](#) celebrates 15 years with its free event in Abbey Park on Saturday 2 September, noon until 9pm.

Industrial action

Consultants' strike 24–26 August

Consultants are due to strike from 7am on Thursday 24 August until 7am on Saturday 26 August, which will then be followed by what is expected to be a busy August bank holiday weekend for NHS services.

We know that you are already doing everything you can during this busy time to ensure good quality services and may have concerns about the impact of the upcoming industrial action.

In addition to the arrangements that have been put in place to make sure that care homes remain supported during this time, there are things that you too can check to ensure that only clinically essential referrals are made to 999 or 111 for the duration of the industrial action and proceeding 24 hours.

Please see below updated information, resources and services which will help support care homes and social care workers during the industrial action.

How you can help

At this time of potentially high demand on services, please review your business continuity plans to ensure that they cover:

Staffing

- The ability to update staff availability on an ongoing basis
- Mutual aid relationships with other providers and other branches within your own business
- Key local authority contacts contained within your plan

People who use your service

- Risk rating ('RAG' or red-amber-green rating) according to people's support needs – if you know someone is unwell or is more susceptible to illness which may require support from an ambulance
- Informal support available to each person – such as family, friends, and neighbours – remind them their assistance is vital so other people can continue to receive support
- Using alternatives to an ambulance. This could include the falls service where someone can come and assess a person and decide if an ambulance is needed
- Up to date GP details so this is your first port of call in the event of someone being unwell.

Alongside business continuity plans, please refer to the NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's guidance on keeping the emergency department clear by using alternative support services to help facilitate health concerns during this period.

Local system plans in place to support adult social care providers

Own GP for generally unwell patients		
Urgent / acute home visiting service	Via own GP first port of call or DHU Health Care Professional Line (HCP)	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672
Night Nursing Service	22.00 to 08.00	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672

Health Care Professional line	24/7 alternative to 111 to support into most appropriate local service	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672
Crisis Response Urgent Falls Response Service (accepting referrals from all nursing and care homes in LLR, plus referrals from other health and care staff in Leicestershire and Rutland locations only)	08.00-20.00	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672
ICRS Falls Response (Leicester city patients only not in a nursing or care home)	24/7	01162211515
Two-hour Crisis Response Service- Social care, Leicester City, Leicestershire County Council & Rutland Social Care (home care)	Agreement to refer directly into 24/7	City - 01162211515 County - 01163050495 Rutland - Duty line is 01572 758341 and out of hours is: 0116 2551606
Two-hour Crisis Response Service	Nursing & Therapy 08.00-22.00	0300 300 1000
Mental health Central Access Point (CAP)	24/7 Mental Health Triage	0808 800 3302

Next edition

The next edition of Provider News will be published during week commencing 4 September 2023. If you are interested in contributing by writing about a topic of your choice, perhaps something that is particularly important to you, please contact us at enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk.