

Leicestershire Adult Social Care Provider News



Issue 38 – 13 October 2023

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Guidance and good practice

Face masks

University Hospitals Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust have re-introduced the wearing face masks for their staff in clinical areas in response to a handful of outbreaks within their hospitals, along with an increase in staff absences after reporting respiratory symptoms. This decision is a local response based on UHL's risk assessment and other local NHS services may follow suit depending on their own risk assessments.

We are in regular communication with our colleagues at UKHSA and nationally. COVID-19 figures are not considered to be sufficiently concerning to warrant any change in national guidelines for adult social care settings. This means that there is currently no need for providers to reintroduce universal wearing of face masks at this time and providers should continue to follow the [national guidance](#).

However, care home providers should carry out their own risk assessment to consider whether universal masking is required in the event of, for example, an outbreak or increasing staff absences due to respiratory symptoms.

For further advice and support please contact infection@leics.gov.uk or 0116 305 5121.

Covid and flu vaccinations - reminder

Vaccines are important as an effective and safe way to help protect and reduce the risk of individuals from harmful diseases.

It is essential to protect yourself and others from both flu and COVID-19. It is particularly important to have the [COVID-19 vaccination](#) now that a new variant of Omicron (BA.2.86) has emerged and cases identified nationally. Previous COVID and flu vaccination programmes have been very successful in saving thousands of lives across the country and reducing pressures on the NHS.

Evidence has shown protection of the COVID-19 vaccine fades over time. Therefore, [further vaccine boosters](#) are offered to help people from becoming seriously unwell. Additionally, the seasonal [flu vaccine](#) is offered to eligible health care professionals through their employer.

It is an employer's responsibility to help protect their staff, and people in their care over the coming winter months. It is vital to provide a service which makes access to vaccines easy for all staff and people in their care. It is essential to encourage all eligible individuals to get vaccinated and monitor the delivery of the vaccination within their service. ID is not required to be shown when being vaccinated.

The COVID-19 and flu vaccination programmes have now commenced for those most at risk, including adult care home residents, people who are immunosuppressed, front-line workers and health and social care workers.

This allows your body to build up some extra protection before the winter season. It is also the best way to reduce the risk of respiratory illness and potential serious health complications.

It is strongly encouraged to get the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations in the same appointment wherever possible. If this is not possible, it is better to get each vaccine as soon as you can, rather than waiting to have them together. Frontline health and social care workers will continue to be able to book COVID-19 vaccine appointments by self-declaring through the [NHS National Booking Service](#).

[Local information is available](#) on both vaccinations.

[Easy-read resources for flu vaccination](#) are available and explain where to go for a flu vaccination, who is eligible, and what will happen at the appointment.

If you require further help or support, please contact the Health Protection Team healthprotection@leics.gov.uk Monday to Friday, 9.00-17.00 except bank holidays.

Vaccinations for home care staff

There is no set programme for mobile vaccination units to visit home care providers to support with the Autumn/Winter covid vaccinations in the same way as care homes. If as a home care provider you have cohorts of staff wanting to receive the vaccination and would like this carried out at your offices then please get in touch with the Health Protection Team on anuj.patel@leics.gov.uk who will be able to support you with this.

Digital switchover scamming

Criminals are exploiting the upcoming digital switchover and people are urged to be aware of potential scams.

Fraudsters are taking advantage of the analogue to digital switchover in the UK's telephone network to scam elderly and vulnerable people. The changeover will see most UK telephone providers move their customers from old analogue landlines to new, upgraded services which use the internet (also known as broadband), with the changes taking place up to 2025. If you already have an internet connection, then the new digital landline system will use this. If you don't, your provider will supply one specifically to support the new digital system, but you shouldn't pay extra for this if you don't move over to a broadband service.

People who use healthcare telephone-based devices such as lifelines or personal alarms are particularly at risk of being targeted by scammers, who trick victims into disclosing their personal and financial information over the phone by claiming the resident needs to hand over bank details as part of the switchover, or they will be disconnected. Around 1.8 million people use these devices across the country, and the advice is that councils and their home care alarm providers or contractors will never ask for personal or financial information over the phone. Please remember - the switchover is free of charge and will be straightforward for most people. Scam attempts are expected to increase as the switchover date nears, and in addition to phone calls, criminals may create phishing emails and fake websites to get your personal data.

[Detailed guidance, advice and case studies](#) are available.

Where appropriate, please raise awareness with people who you support and their families and friends.

Leicestershire County Council updates

Incident reporting

A provider must record all incidents which happen either in the service or during the delivery of care. These must be reviewed, and a decision made if they need to be reported to Leicestershire County Council. This must include consideration of the safeguarding thresholds. If you decide an incident does not meet the threshold to be reported, then you must record the reason. As a provider you have a responsibility to make your own defensible decisions. Recording of why you made the decision is part of this.

Incidents should be reported through the [online portal](#).

There is guidance on what you should be reporting. Scroll down the page and click on the button that says, 'I work in a care/nursing/residential home.' You will then see the options appropriate to your setting.

If you want to report an incident in a care home, you will be asked if this incident meets the safeguarding thresholds, so please follow the link to review the thresholds.

Example - 'P was found on the floor in their room' – look at page 8 of the threshold guidance

a) Is it a lower-level concern 'Fall occurs which may or may not result in injury, but where there has been no previous indication of falls risk, and appropriate steps are taken to reduce risk going forward'

b) Or does it meet the thresholds/require further enquiries because 'Fall occurs resulting in injury and there is evidence that existing falls care plan or risk assessments are not being followed appropriately'

Example – 'Resident A is pushed over by Resident B' – look at page 4 of the threshold guidance

a) Is it a lower-level concern 'Isolated incident involving physical contact without consent but not with sufficient force to cause a mark or bruise and the adult is not subsequently distressed.' (Care plans amended to address risk of reoccurrence)

b) Or does it meet the thresholds/require further enquiries because, 'Assault – whether or not injury is caused and particularly where there is on-going distress to the adult'

If the incident falls into the first column, then you will say 'no' to the safeguarding thresholds being met and you will be re-directed to the Incident Form Portal.

You should only report an incident in one of the following circumstances:

- A person who uses services has suffered a head injury
- A person who uses services has fallen 5 or more times within a month (with or without injury)
- A fall which resulted in injury
- Medication error – harm occurred

Please complete the form as fully as possible so that we can triage the information efficiently and take appropriate actions.

Six-month payment rule in home care

As advised in [Provider News 28](#) in May, from 1 November 2023 any home care hours submitted for payment that are over 6 months old will not automatically be paid. Instead, they will only be paid by exception, such as where payment has not been made due to an error by the Council.

This process ensures that payments and accounts are as timely as possible, and is as described within your contract in Schedule 5 Rates and Payments.

Learning and development

LSCDG survey

LSCDG is assessing the training it provides and would like providers' support in completing a [short survey](#).

The data collected will be used to help improve support and services.

Cyber-attacks webinar

A national session to be held on 17 October 2023 will cover typical cyber-attacks and how to reduce the risk of falling victim to them. It will also explore the impact on social care services and describe steps you can take to reduce the risk. [Book your place](#).

Opportunities

International Recruitment Grant

The East Midlands region has been awarded over £1.5 million by DHSC to continue to strengthen the adult social care workforce. The aim of the grant is to support both new and existing international workers, as well as you as the care provider.

Funding is available to support both care providers and their current and future workforce, where conditions are met. There are two different types of funding available:

- For care providers – Up to £2,500 can be claimed to support the administration costs involved in applying for your sponsor licence. To qualify, your licence must have been granted on, or after, 1 April 2023
- For international recruits – During the first round of funding, up to £250 per person can be claimed. This is to a maximum of 10% of an organisation's workforce, or 10 staff (whichever is lower)

Find out more on the [East Midlands Care website](#).

To gain access to the funding you will need to complete a [grant form](#) and meet the conditions.

Please contact info@eastmidscare.co.uk for more information.

LLR Digital Social Care Record funding

To support providers, NHS England have made funds available in the form of grants. There are a number of conditions, and applications close on 15 December 2023. Please see the more detailed information which will be sent to your organisation's nominated email address.

Curious about Care

The struggles of recruiting a good social care workforce are no secret. While care work is a values-based occupation, identifying whether people have the right values for the job can be very difficult. Curious about Care is a free resource designed to address this challenge by helping in-home care providers to embed values in their recruitment process.

Developed during research led by the University of York, Curious about Care is an evidence-based quiz which places applicants in the shoes of care workers and asks them how they might respond to different dilemmas. The quiz uses 'Situational Judgement Tests' which are a widely used technique for supporting recruitment to values-based professions. Coproduced alongside older people and their families, the quiz takes a person-centred approach with a scoring system set by those with lived experience.

Curious about Care uses an easy 3 step process:

1. Start by visiting the [Curious about Care website](#) to design your unique free quiz.
2. Send your unique link to candidates.
3. Review the results.

Recruiting managers can construct their tailored quiz from up to 11 fictionalised versions of real-life care worker scenarios. The unique link produced on registration can be used indefinitely with no need to register multiple times. Each time someone completes the quiz the registered manager receives a bespoke report including how each scenario was answered and a traffic light score on the candidate's suitability for care work. This report can then be used to inform an interview with the candidate or in identifying training needs.

The University of York is now looking for provider organisations to help with the next phase of research, including testing new scenarios, and looking at implementation. They can provide funding for your time engaging with them. Are you an innovating and 'curious' employer? If so, email curious-about-care@york.ac.uk

Data tracking

Mandatory capacity tracker completion - reminder

As advised in previous editions of Provider News, the Health and Care Act 2022 requires CQC-regulated adult social care providers to submit data via the capacity tracker at least once between the 8th and 14th day of every month. Adult social care providers who do not submit their data through the Capacity Tracker each month could be issued with a financial penalty. DHSC and Leicestershire County Council are extremely keen that providers do not face enforcement action, and you are therefore strongly encouraged to complete the tracker each month. The window for submissions for this month is currently open.

Health and wellbeing

Adult Social Care Workplace Wellbeing Survey

In collaboration with Skills for Care, Ipsos and The University of Kent, a national survey was recently launched to understand more about your role in adult social care and how it relates to quality of life, wellbeing, and other experiences of working in the sector. The findings will help the DHSC work more effectively with sector partners to improve workforce support.

Everyone working across all care roles and care settings should be encouraged to complete the survey. If you're responsible for the employment, management, supervision, or commissioning of staff, please share the survey with your colleagues. By contributing, you and your colleagues will be helping policy makers and funders to understand what working in the social care sector is like right now, what's positive about it, the challenges you face, and what support you need to make it better.

Please do take the time to share your experiences and insights by [completing the survey](#).

Commemoration, Celebration and Awareness Raising

Black History Month - October

October is [Black History Month](#). This year's theme is 'Saluting our Sisters' which pays homage to black women.

This year's celebrations coincide with the NHS 75th Birthday and 75 years since passengers from the Caribbean arrived on HMT Empire Windrush.

There are lots of [events taking place locally this month](#) - get involved and join the celebrations.

For advice with ensuring that cultural needs and wellbeing are met at work, and creating an open work environment where everyone feels comfortable to discuss any issues with management, please contact the Inspired to Care team at inspiredtocare@leics.gov.uk.

World Menopause Month - October

In support of World Menopause Month, a series of online Menopause support and training sessions for colleagues across health and social care have been organised, beginning on Monday 16 October.

Whether you seek support for yourself or want to learn how to best support your colleagues, those you support, friends or family, these sessions are for everyone.

The timetable of talks, which will be hosted on Teams, can be [viewed and booked on Eventbrite](#).

The sessions are open to all health and social care colleagues, and a '.nhs' or '.gov' email address is required to book on. For those without, email stephanie.taylor54@nhs.net to advise that you are a member of staff.

If you have any questions please contact stephanie.taylor54@nhs.net and follow on Twitter / X at [@nhsmenohealth](https://twitter.com/nhsmenohealth)

World Mental Health campaign – 7-13 October

From 7 to 13 October, 20 organisations in locations across LLR are hosting events to mark World Mental Health Day, which took place on 10 October.

This year, to mark the theme of mental health being a universal human right, the call is for people to have conversations with school friends, family and friends, to ask them how they are feeling with the 'RU OK?' campaign. ['Start a Conversation' resources](#) are available.

The events are being spearheaded by voluntary sector organisations who are working to deliver mental health support to their local communities, teaming up with partners from the NHS and local councils.

See a [full list of events](#) taking place locally.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week – 14– 21 October

[National Hate Crime Awareness Week](#) (National HCAW) has been marked since 2021 and evolved out of the vigils against hate crime held between 2009 and 2012. The campaign sets out to raise awareness of the work carried out by local authorities such as the police and councils, supported by key partners and communities daily to tackle local issues and encourage all forms of hate crime to be challenged. There are plenty of ways you can get involved with online events, webinars, putting up posters, supporting and sharing on social media and even starting conversations around reporting hate crime online and in-person.

All forms of hate crime are unacceptable in any circumstances. Hatred not only has the potential to cause serious physical and emotional harm, but it can also damage communities and cause division.

Hate crimes can be reported to Leicestershire Police on 101 or in an emergency please call 999. You can also report to your local council or anonymously via the [Stamp it Out](#) website. Further advice is available on the [Leicestershire County Council website](#).

There is information available online and a [guide for carers and those who work with people with disabilities](#).

There has never been a more crucial time for us to all work together to tackle hate crime.

UK Commission on Covid Commemoration final report

The UK Commission on Covid Commemoration was established to secure a broad consensus from across the whole of the United Kingdom on how we commemorate the COVID-19 pandemic and mark this distinctive period in our history at a national and community level. The [Commission's report](#) was published on 18 September and

An [easy read version](#) of the report is also available.

Next edition

The next edition of Provider News will be published during week commencing 23 October 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.