



**Issue 43 – 19 December 2023**

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## **Season's greetings**

Leicestershire County Council would like to wish you a very happy and peaceful festive season. We extend our sincerest appreciation to members of your teams who are working over the bank holidays.

We hope that you manage to find some time to relax, doing the things that are important to you.

A very happy new year to you all.

## **Guidance and good practice**

### **System pressures**

University Hospitals of Leicester and the wider health and social care system are currently experiencing pressures relating to hospital discharge. There is likely to be increased demand for discharges this week due to Junior Doctor strikes beginning on Wednesday.

Thank you for doing everything you can to offer support discharges and people who require support in a timely way at a time when your staff rotas can be challenging. The support that you may be asked to provide includes but is not limited to:

- discharge from hospital to short term home care whilst Leicestershire County Council reablement support becomes available
- providing home care for people at the end of their period of reablement
- discharge from hospital into care homes

We want to ensure that people are discharged to the right services to meet need in a timely manner.

There are several articles below, including in the 'Forthcoming industrial action' section of this newsletter, which provide information on delivering safe services and supporting the health and social care system during this time of pressure.

## **Discharges from UHL and Norovirus**

UHL is currently experiencing high volumes of people attending the Emergency Department and the pressure on beds is great. In addition to this, there is the normal seasonal increase in cases of Norovirus (Diarrhoea & Vomiting) circulating in the community at this time of year, which is also impacting on admissions and discharges at UHL.

Public Health, in both the County/Rutland and the City, along with UKHSA East Midlands have therefore agreed the following with UHL as a temporary measure.

Where a discharge to a care home is required, asymptomatic patients (i.e. those with no D&V symptoms evident), who come from a confirmed Norovirus outbreak area, can be discharged after 24 hours symptom free, rather the normal 48 hrs, so long as they complete the remaining 24 hrs of isolation at the care home.

This process will be subject to a daily review at the system wide discharge conference meeting and is not a permanent change.

However, if a care home thinks they cannot care for the individual safely, they can still insist on the 48hr symptom-free period prior to discharge.

If you require any IPC advice or support, please contact the Community Infection Prevention & Control Service on [infection@leics.gov.uk](mailto:infection@leics.gov.uk) or phone 0116 305 5121.

## **Specialist COVID and flu vaccination clinic for people with a learning disability**

A further specialist [COVID and flu vaccination clinic](#) for people with a learning disability will be held on Wednesday 3 January 2024, 10.00-16.00 at Oadby Racecourse, The Kube car park, Leicester, LE2 4AL.

Bookings can be made by telephone, 0116 497 5700, and select option 1, giving the person's name, age and details of any requirements or adaptations needed.

All appointments for the learning disability vaccination clinics need to be booked in advance to ensure the session can be managed to suit people's needs.

The telephone line is open Mondays to Fridays 8.00-20.00 and on Saturdays between 9.00-17.00.

## **Leicestershire County Council updates**

### **Proposed inflationary fee uplifts for 2024-25**

Leicestershire County Council is expecting to release its annual fee uplift levels for its main care and support contracts in early March.

We want to assure you that the process to arrive at the uplift is very carefully considered and with regard paid to feedback from providers through engagement of various types.

The local, regional and national factors which are being used in determining the inflationary uplift for 2024/25 are:

#### *Local*

- Engagement with local provider representative bodies
- Engagement with providers through the regular conference calls; letters and emails from individual organisations; feedback via the Quality and Contracts service within the Commissioning team
- Lessons learned from local provider instability or failure
- Local market risks
- Impact on people and consideration of equality implications through Equality Impact Assessment
- The Council's [financial position](#)

#### *Regional*

- Approaches taken by peer local authorities in the East Midlands
- Advice from East Midlands Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)

#### *National*

- The national context including inflationary pressures, as reflected in the basis for uplift given in the relevant contract, which depending on its content may include National Living Wage, Consumer Prices Index and Average Weekly Earnings
- Advice from Partners in Care and Health (formerly CHIP)
- Information from national provider representative organisations

Detailed calculations per contract type are being carried out by finance, commissioning and quality, and systems staff, and the recommendations are being considered prior to publication of the proposed fees for 2024/25.

We are targeting release of the uplift levels during week commencing 4 March 2024 and will further engage with providers on the January [conference calls](#). Rates for next financial year will be implemented on Monday 8 April 2023.

## **Data tracking**

### **CareFind website – training dates for care home providers**

The national Capacity Tracker team is developing a new tool to help members of the public to search for Care Home vacancies via a new public facing website, [CareFind](#). Capacity Tracker will provide this as a free service for care home providers, on an opt-out basis, with some conditions in place.

The concept of CareFind has been developed with the support of the DHSC and NHSE. CareFind aims to give benefits to both providers and people looking for care services, building on the information and resource of Capacity Tracker.

In the New Year the team will be running training sessions on how to create your public profile that will be visible on CareFind. To register for a session, please click on the appropriate link and register.

- [3 January 2024, 14.00-15.30](#)
- [10 January 2024, 11.00-12.30](#)

[Later dates](#) are also available.

While you are waiting to attend a training session it is recommended that you review and/or refresh your provider details. Please check the following details are up to date:

- Contact details (If not, please contact CQC and request they are changed at [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk))
- Extended room detail
- Accessibility information
- Care type
- Funding sources
- Short/long term services
- Languages
- Costs and vacancies (to be updated as and when things change)
- Out of hours placements

If you have any queries when updating your information, please contact the national Capacity Tracker Support Centre 0191 691 3729 or [necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net)

## **Health and wellbeing**

### **Keep warm and well this winter**

Leicestershire County Council's ['Keep warm and well this winter' booklet](#) has lots of information about keeping yourself warm and well, at home and out and about, as well as protecting your home and vehicle this winter.

The cold and damp weather, ice, snow and high winds can all aggravate any existing

health problems and make us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses, but there are lots of things you can do to stay well this winter including keeping your home warm.

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

People in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) are being reminded of the help that is in place for people to support their mental health and wellbeing over winter.

If you need [support for your mental health and wellbeing](#) in LLR there are many options:

### **Non-urgent: I need support for my mental health**

[Mental Health Wellbeing and Recovery Service](#) (MHWRSS) and the [Talking Therapy Service](#) are both services that can be contacted, without the need to get a referral from a GP or other professional. The MHWRSS offers support to people on a range of issues such as finances, home and daily living needs, engaging in the community, employment and developing self-help and coping strategies. VitaMinds provides a talking Therapy Service which can support people with a range of mental health needs.

### **Urgent: I need help with my mental health now**

The Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés are local support for people who need immediate help with their mental health. The cafes are drop-in centres for anyone to come and talk about their mental health and no appointment is needed. The cafes have supportive, trained staff who can listen and provide the practical support you need.

People can also call the Mental Health Central Access Point on 0808 800 3302, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone needing mental health support for themselves, or others can call this service. If there is an immediate threat to someone's life, please phone 999.

## **Forthcoming industrial action**

### **Delivering safe services during the festive period – including additional strike dates**

During the Christmas and New Year period health services are expected to be busier than normal and there may be changes to some opening times. In addition, this year the British Medical Association (BMA) has announced further Junior Doctors' strike dates, which fall either side of the festive period and will have a further impact on services at an already busy time. Please take note of the following guidance which will help you to get the right health care for your residents, as quickly as possible, during both the festive and strike periods.

## **Key dates**

- Junior doctors will strike for three days from 7am on 20 December to 7am on 23 December.
- Junior doctors will strike for six days from 7am on 3 January to 7am on 9 January.
- GP practices are not affected by the Junior Doctors' strikes and will be open as normal on strike days. GP practices' normal opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to 6:30pm, excluding bank holidays, which means they will be closed on Christmas Day (Monday 25 December), Boxing Day (Tuesday 26 December) and New Year's Day (Monday 1 January). Normal service will resume on Tuesday 2 January.

## **Impact on emergency and care services**

The industrial action and the festive period will affect emergency and care services, due to reduced staffing and services will be busier than normal. Christmas Day levels of cover will be in operation on strike days.

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 when services are already busy.

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	22.00-08.00	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	08.00-20.00	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672
Falls Response Service (Accepting referrals from all nursing and care homes in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, plus referrals from other health and care staff in Leicestershire and Rutland locations only)	08.00–20.00 Monday to Sunday	DHU HCP line 0300 323 0672
Two-hour Crisis Response Service- Social care, Leicester	Agreement to refer directly into 24/7	City- 01162211515 County- 01163050495



City, Leicestershire County Council & Rutland Social Care (home care)		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

## 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 etc).

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

For additional IPC support, please contact [infection@leics.gov.uk](mailto:infection@leics.gov.uk) or 0116 305 5121.

## Reminders

### Next edition

The next edition of Provider News will be published during week commencing 8 January 2024. 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](mailto:enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk).

### Useful links

- [Current and past editions of Provider News](#)
- [Provider conference calls](#)