



Issue 50 – 11 April 2024

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The future of adult social care

Digital social care - animated explainers

A series of animated explainers about digital social care has been developed nationally.

[The latest](#) outlines the benefits of using Digital Social Care Records, from adding notes and uploading photos as care staff go about their daily work, to helping activity coordinators prepare personalised sessions and cutting the time that teams spend writing up handover notes.

See more [animated explainers](#).

Digital landline switchover webinar – 24 April

The Digital Landline Switchover happening now across the UK will see the old (analog phone network) switched off and all landline phone services offered digitally, with most calls soon to be made over broadband.

Join techUK for a [webinar](#) on 24 April, 14.00–15.00, aimed at helping supported and older people’s housing and care home providers prepare for the switchover and hear what support is available for them to help them make the move.

Carers leave

In [Provider News 49](#) we explained that the Carers’ Leave Act had been agreed for implementation; it is now live.

A [Carers’ Leave Act Implementation Guide](#) has been produced by Carers UK which you may find useful.

Guidance and good practice

Spring 2024 COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

Preparations are now well underway for the spring 2024 COVID-19 vaccination programme, which is expected to start from 15 April and continue until 30 June. Resources, including details on eligible groups of people, vaccines to be used, and additional information, are available at [COVID-19 Vaccination Spring 2024 Campaign Resources](#)

Care home providers are asked to collate consent forms to ensure smooth and efficient vaccination visits. Template forms can be found at [COVID-19 vaccination: consent forms and letters for care home residents](#)

Eligibility can be found on the NHS web site at [COVID-19 Vaccination Spring 2024 Eligibility](#)

For any queries email: healthprotection@leics.gov.uk

Acute Respiratory Infection

It can be difficult to distinguish between COVID-19, flu and illness caused by other respiratory viruses by symptoms alone. This may be more difficult among those receiving care. The common symptoms of acute respiratory infection (ARI) are listed at [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#).

The best way to reduce the spread and mitigate the harm of ARIs is to combine [standard infection prevention and control precautions](#), with vaccinations, available medical treatments, and proportionate outbreak management.

Vaccination remains one of the most important defences against both COVID-19 and flu, helping to reduce the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation, and death. It is important that all those who are eligible for vaccination, including health and social care workers, take up their offers as soon as they become available to help protect themselves and those around them.

Identify people eligible for treatments

People who are at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 may be [eligible for COVID-19 treatments](#) if they become unwell.

The NHS will expand access to treatments to a [wider cohort](#), which includes people aged over 70 that are resident in a care home.

Those who are eligible for COVID-19 treatments should continue to access free COVID-19 LFD tests through the NHS, to ensure they can gain timely access to treatments. Care homes and other registered care settings should support eligible people with this.

If someone who may be eligible for COVID-19 treatments tests positive for COVID-19, providers should organise an assessment for treatments for them, either by contacting the GP or calling NHS 111 immediately. If you are unable to contact the GP and cannot speak to a clinician via 111, you can email covidbooking.llrpcl@nhs.net or call 0116 497 5700.

Routine asymptomatic testing on discharge to care homes

Routine asymptomatic COVID-19 testing on discharge from hospitals has now ended to align with the approach for other respiratory illnesses.

Testing for outbreak management

UKHSA Health Protection Teams will advise when outbreak testing is necessary and will arrange for PCR testing when needed.

Leicestershire County Council updates

Changes to health protection contact details

Following the update to [Acute Respiratory Infection guidance](#), the Leicestershire County Council Health Protection phone number will no longer be receiving calls. Instead, please contact the Infection Prevention and Control Service regarding any outbreaks (including COVID-19):

- infection@leics.gov.uk
- 0116 305 5121

NB As always you should notify any outbreaks to UKHSA on 0344 225 4524 option 1.

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 access to the Portal remains the same; the manager can complete [Provider Portal access request form](#). Once you have registered for this process, the option to call or email Leicestershire County Council to reset your passwords will no longer be available.

Unless 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 our information governance colleagues to find a solution for those providers who are unable to meet the conditions of use.

Notifying the council of changes within provider organisations

There have been a few occasions where providers have moved offices or had changes in managers and the council has not been made aware. This could mean important information may not be reaching you in a timely manner as distribution lists are not updated.

When there are changes to managers, office addresses, emails and contacts for providers please notify the provider enquiry line enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk so that our records can be updated.

Home care diversity

A recent exercise was undertaken to engage with people who use home care and workers in home care, and as a result of their feedback the Council has have set up a small working group to look at diversity and cultural related issues across home care. These include:

- Signs of deterioration presenting differently according to skin colour e.g. jaundice, measles
- Unconscious bias
- Cultural norms
- Use of language

The aim of the group is to co-produce some materials to empower and enable people (workers and users of the service) to speak up about diversity issues, including race and sexuality. Outputs may include training about certain areas, examples of starting a conversation about a person's heritage, and understanding acceptable words to use.

Currently on the group we have people who use the service, reablement team reps, a provider, a social worker and other Leicestershire County Council staff. The first meeting is on 22 April at 10.30 at County Hall if anyone would like to join the group – contact katie.joondan@leics.gov.uk if you would like to be involved.

The first meeting will plan the topics and aims, meeting location and venue.

Learning and development

Adult Social Care Training and Development Fund

DHSC is developing the Adult Social Care Training and Development Fund to provide funding for thousands of training places for the adult social care workforce in

England. Guidance on this new fund is now available here: [Adult Social Care Training and Development Fund: a guide for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-social-care-training-and-development-fund-a-guide-for-employers)

The fund includes over £50m to support up to 37,000 individuals onto the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification, in addition to funding for a range of other learning and development opportunities, reaffirming care work as a career and helping to promote recruitment and retain talent.

The fund will be administered through a new digital online claims service. This will go live in the summer of 2024, fulfilling a key commitment set out in the [People at the Heart of Care](#) white paper, which outlines the government's 10-year vision for adult social care. Further information on the total funding available will be confirmed later in the year, prior to the digital online claims service going live in summer 2024.

Data tracking

Capacity Tracker reporting window open until 15 April

The monthly Capacity Tracker reporting window is now open until 15 April.

The [Homecare Association](#) has published useful information, as well as details of [training for home care providers](#) on use of the capacity tracker.

Commemoration, celebration and awareness raising

Celebrating social care

Skills for Care is encouraging people to celebrate social care with its campaign this month! Find out how to [show your support, and get involved](#).

Reminders

Next edition

The next edition of Provider News will be published during week commencing 22 April 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.

Useful links

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