



Information

for adult social care providers



Issue 47 – 1 October 2020

Dear colleague

Please find a number of important COVID-19 related updates below - thank you, as always, for your continued work and support.

Care home visiting policy

Over the last few weeks, we have issued guidance and updates relating to care home visiting policy – please see bulletin 46 for the latest advice, including [a tailored message for the Oadby & Wigston and Blaby areas](#).

We would like to confirm that at present, for Oadby & Wigston and Blaby, care homes should not accept non-essential visitors, including visits taking place in gardens, at windows, or otherwise outside. The guidance given in bulletin 46 allows for essential visits, such as for end of life care.

Care home providers have raised with us the possibility of developing ‘pod’ visiting arrangements, with the resident and the visitor completely separated between glass and using walkie-talkies, phones or similar to communicate. Advice is being sought and we will communicate with you about this as soon as we are able. Please do not put such arrangements in place in the meantime.

Care home visiting guidance for health and social care professionals

Following recent [guidance](#) from central government released on 7 September 2020, Leicestershire County Council is providing updated advice and information for care homes in relation to visits from health and social care professionals.

Whilst the guidance relates primarily to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), it is relevant to other health and social care professionals where tests of capacity are required for a wide range of decisions. All health and social care professionals must consider the risk of spreading COVID-19 when deciding whether or not to visit people in care home settings.

The updated guidance from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) now advises:

“To carry out DoLS assessments and reviews, remote techniques can be considered, such as telephone or video calls where appropriate to do so, and the person’s communication needs should be taken into consideration. Views should also be sought from those who are concerned for the person’s welfare.

Face-to-face visits by professionals are an important part of the DoLS legal framework.

These visits should currently occur if needed, for example to meet the person’s specific communication needs, urgency or if there are concerns about the person’s human rights.

When deciding whether or not to visit in person, DoLS best interests assessors and mental health assessors should work closely with hospitals and care homes to decide if visiting in person is appropriate, and how to do this safely. Visiting professionals should understand and respect their local visiting policies. Visitors must follow important local infection control policies in the setting that they visit, which are based on national government guidance.

DoLS best interests assessors and mental health assessors should work collaboratively with hospital and care home staff. They should be mindful of their distinct, legal duties under DoLS.

Where appropriate and relevant, current assessments can be made by taking into account evidence taken from previous assessments of the person. The assessor undertaking the current assessment must make a judgement on whether the evidence from the prior assessment is still relevant and valid to inform their current assessment. If this information is used to support the current assessment or review, this should be noted and referenced. Alternatively, if the assessment was carried out within the last 12 months, this can be relied upon without the need for a further assessment.”

Advice on how to apply the updated guidance will follow in a future bulletin, including key considerations for health and social care professionals when deciding whether or not a face to face visit is required in a care home or hospital setting.

Flu vaccination programme

On average, flu kills over 11,000 people each year – some years this number is much higher – and it hospitalises many more. This is anything but a typical year due to the potential impact of flu and COVID-19 circulating at the same time. It’s now more important than ever that we act to protect ourselves, our teams, our families and service users from getting flu.

Frontline health and social care staff employed by a registered care home or registered home care provider will be entitled to a free flu vaccination.

Further information will sent to you in the next few days, and will also be included in bulletin 48.

Infection Control Fund

Leicestershire County Council reported to DHSC on spend against the first phase of the £6.7m Infection Control Fund (ICF) by the 30 September deadline. Thank you to the majority of care providers that submitted their Final Expenditure Return on time – we recognise that the timescales were very tight.

Providers that have not yet submitted their final report must do so as soon as possible to avoid compromising any future payment related to the second phase of the ICF, so if this applies to your business, please email your completed return straight away to finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk. If you have not received the Final Expenditure Return request, please contact Dave Pruden at dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk as soon as possible.

The phase 1 ICF grant was paid to residential, home care, extra care and supported living providers in Leicestershire, a valuable contribution to organisations experiencing higher costs and working in exceptional circumstances to provide care. In Leicestershire, providers spent:

- 36% on measures to isolate residents within care homes
- 23% on actions to restrict staff movement within care homes
- 7% paying staff full wages while isolating following a positive test
- 34% on additional staffing, onsite accommodation and travel for residential providers; and on measures to isolate service users, actions to restrict staff movement, travel, training and cleaning for all other providers.

Full details of the second phase of funding have not yet been received, but will be shared with providers when they are published. ICF will continue to be an important element of the support given to providers from national and local government.

Mental health support for social care professionals

We are aware that the continuing circumstances are having an impact on the mental health of everyone, but this can be particularly true for staff working on the front line of providing social care. Please find information below on mental health support for you and your colleagues as a result of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has partnered with the NHS to produce a comprehensive pack of wellbeing information and resources to help health and care managers to support the wellbeing of staff who may be working under exceptional pressure to do their jobs while at the same time dealing with their own personal situations and emotions. This guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Leicestershire County Council also commissions three providers in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver the Mental Health Wellbeing and Recovery Support Service. This is an open access service and does not require users to have assessed eligible needs.

The service provides information, advice and navigation and community recovery support to people experiencing issues with mental health. All providers have good

links to crisis services, other sources of support in the community and can provide support for health and social care staff who require support to manage their own mental health. Further information on the Mental Health Wellbeing and Recovery Support Service and other local services in Leicestershire can be found [here](#).

Care home clinical leads

As part of Primary Care Networks' proactive support to care homes, their residents and staff, and in line with the implementation of the Enhanced Health in Care Homes model, named Clinical Leads for each care home are now available. These will be emailed to you this week.

As always, thank you for your continuing hard work to support people in Leicestershire and to keep them safe.

Yours sincerely

Jon Wilson, Director of Adults and Communities

and

Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health