

Information for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS

PROTECT
YOURSELF
& OTHERS



Issue 48 – 8 October 2020

Dear colleague

I'm writing with a number of articles keeping you up to date on local and national COVID-19 matters, helping you to continue keeping people safe through the delivery of your services.

Infection Control Fund – Round 2 (ICF2)

The Department Health and Social Care (DHSC) have now confirmed the allocations and grant conditions for the recently-announced national £546m extension to the Infection Control Fund.

The grant allocated to Leicestershire is £6.1m. In ICF2 the DHSC has not only specified the sum to be paid to care homes, which is £3.4m in Leicestershire, but have also stated the amount payable to home care, extra care and supported living providers (referred to as community care providers), which is £1.5m. In addition to those earmarked sums there is £1.2m for other care settings and infection prevention and control measures, and the County Council has discretion in the allocation of that element of the grant.

Leicestershire County Council has now received the first instalment of the grant and has 20 working days to make payments to care homes, again based on registered beds, and community care providers. We will update the contracts we have in place with providers accordingly and review ICF guidance in light of the updated Local Authority Circular.

Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-infection-control-fund-round-2>

In the meantime, our thanks again to those organisations that have submitted their Final Expenditure Return. There are a number of providers that have not yet done so, and it is vitally important that they submit their return immediately. If you have any problem doing this, or have any questions about the Final Expenditure Return, please email finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk without delay.

Repayment of the ‘forward payment’ made in April

Thank you for the return of the proforma stating your organisation’s wishes in repaying the ‘forward payment’ made by Leicestershire County Council in April to assist cashflow at a time when providers were facing inflated PPE and cleaning costs. The majority of providers have now put their repayment arrangements in place. Please see the bulletin archive at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/working-with-you-during-coronavirus/e-bulletins-for-care-providers> (editions 14, 18, 34, 39, and 46) for a reminder of the information previously emailed to you.

The recovery period commences on 16 October 2020, and we have therefore extended the deadline for returning your preferred payment option to 18:00 on Friday 16 October – please email finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk.

Unfortunately, the financial position faced by the County Council is extremely serious and challenging as a result of COVID-19. In April, the authority received general funding from central government to help with the COVID-19 crisis across all relevant services, not solely adult social care. It was not a specific grant to support adult social care providers. A report to Cabinet on 18 September gave the latest estimate of net additional costs due to COVID-19 for the current financial year (2020/21) as £18m after government grant support. It is very unlikely that the County Council will be able to identify sufficient savings without a significant future impact on its services. It is therefore essential that the authority receives recovery of the April forward payment, which was made following guidance early in the emergency that a forward payment to adult social care providers would support them in their cashflow. Further information on the authority’s difficult financial circumstances can be viewed in the September Cabinet report at <http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s155524/MTFS%20Latest%20Position%20FINAL.pdf>.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, Leicestershire County Council has considered carefully the support required by the organisations providing care and support to people in Leicestershire. As well as the nationally-funded Infection Control Fund payments (where applicable), and monthly additional cost payments, which are not returnable, and consideration of exceptional cost payments, the authority arranged the forward payment to assist its contracted providers at the beginning of the emergency. The ICF has been extended to March 2021, and together with the free PPE scheme now address a significant proportion of the costs borne by providers to ensure that people are safe. We will continue to consider any additional financial support required throughout the months ahead.

Protect yourself, your family and the people we care for from flu this winter

This is anything but a typical year and we all want to protect ourselves, our families, friends and those we care for.

Due to the potential impact of influenza and COVID-19 it’s now more important than ever that we act to protect ourselves and those we care for from getting the flu. The flu virus spreads from person-to-person, even amongst those not showing any symptoms.

Frontline health and social care workers are at an increased risk of contracting flu and it's very easy to pass the virus on without knowing. Even if we're healthy, we can still get flu and spread it to the people we care for, our colleagues and to our family.

Getting a flu jab is simple, easy and free. All you need to do is ask your staff to book an appointment at their local pharmacy – when booking please let them know your staff are front line social care workers and make sure they take their staff ID badge along with them when they go to get their vaccination.

The flu vaccine is the best defence we have against the spread of flu so please strongly encourage your staff to get vaccinated and let's do all we can to get ourselves protected.

To help encourage your staff to have a vaccination there are a number of posters and leaflets available that we'd be grateful if you could print and put up on staff noticeboards:

[Care worker A4 poster](#)

[Care worker leaflet – why it's important to get your flu jab](#)

[Care worker A4 poster with space to write message](#)

Updated guidance on the use of Personal protective Equipment (PPE) for domiciliary care

Public Health England have produced updated guidance and resources for those working in domiciliary care on the use of PPE.

[COVID-19: how to work safely in domiciliary care in England](#)

Updated guidance for staff supporting adults with learning disabilities and autism

The Department of Health and Social Care have provided updated guidance for care staff who are supporting adults with learning disabilities and autism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance aims to help care staff keep people with learning disabilities and autistic people safe, to support them to understand the changes they need to make during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to protect their own wellbeing.

[COVID-19: supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults](#)

Update on care home testing

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have released an update on care home testing. Please see their update below.

It is critical that all adult care homes in England conduct weekly testing of all staff and test residents every 28 days. We are aware of some instances where care homes have been told to test staff less frequently than once a week. This is against national policy. Even with the recent delays in test results, it is really important that staff are tested weekly. Testing staff less often than weekly means that the infection could go undetected for longer and spread to many more people within the care home. For example, testing staff fortnightly could mean there is an additional week of spreading the infection within a care home before the infection is detected. Testing staff weekly is therefore essential in order to identify the infection quickly and take action to limit the spread, and is of increasing importance given the rise in prevalence in the community. To support care homes to take action quickly to reduce the spread, we are continuing to take action to provide quicker test results.

The only exceptions to weekly testing of staff are:

- In the case of a new outbreak in a care home your local health protection team will conduct rapid outbreak testing whereby the whole home will be tested, with follow up tests after 4-7 days for all those who had a negative test result
- **Where staff and residents have tested positively previously, completed their isolation period – those individuals should not re-join the regular asymptomatic testing for 90 days.** If they develop new COVID-19 symptoms in this time, they should isolate and be tested again as this could be a new infection. See full guidance in section 5 here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

As you prepare for winter, please encourage all of your staff to familiarise themselves again with the testing guidance by reading the guidance documents online and joining one of our weekly webinars.

A reminder of some of the key tips for testing:

- It is essential that you have a courier booked for the day that you are testing. You must book these couriers in advance at <https://www.testkitcollect.co.uk>. You can book your courier up to 6 days in advance and it must be booked before 7pm the day before testing. Couriers are available seven days a week. This is the only way that care homes can send test kits to the labs. When arranging your courier we now ask you to predict the number of kits you expect to send back. This is to help us with our logistics operations. You will not be able to change it after submitting, but please do not worry if you end up testing a different number – it is only there to help us plan volumes and does not need to be exact.
- If your courier doesn't arrive you should never discard your test kits. Call 119 the following morning and they will be able to arrange an emergency courier for you which will take the test kits straight to the lab to ensure these do not get voided. To get straight through to the care home team when you call 119, you should – after confirming your country, language and data preferences – select option 1 ‘calling about a test’ then option 3 ‘calling from a care setting’.

- All test kit registrations should be completed on the day of testing and not in advance. This is to reduce avoidable voids at the labs where it looks like the swab was taken earlier than it was. You can, however, prepare in advance by beginning to populate the record-keeping spreadsheet (available here: <https://organisations.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-organisation-tests>)
- All organisations are assigned an 8 digit unique organisation number (UON) which you must use to access all testing services; you can search for your UON using your CQC ID at <https://organisation-number-lookup.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk>
- All guidance and support documents for care home testing can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#care-home>

DHSC provide a series of care home testing webinars. These last 90 minutes and give detailed information about all aspects of care home testing, including: ordering tests, preparing for testing, test kit delivery, a test kit demonstration, testing certain care groups, registering test kits, booking your collection and results and what they mean for your home. The session also includes a live Q&A with representatives from the national care home testing team, who will be able to answer your questions and address any concerns in the session.

To sign up to attend a care home testing webinar click here:

https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1369434&tp_key=296e54cdc9

If you are not able to attend the webinars please sign up and a recording of the session will be made available to you afterwards.

Antibody home testing for social care staff

The Department of Health and Social Care will be contacting registered care providers to offer a free antibody finger prick test for paid adult social care staff via a national portal <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-antibody-test>.

The finger prick test checks for coronavirus antibodies, it does not tell you if you are protected from the virus or cannot spread the virus to other people.

This is a national programme and any queries can be raised by contacting the Antibody Testing Support team - antibodytesting@dhsc.gov.uk

Recruitment advertising

BBC Radio Leicester has launched their '**£2 Million of Work**' campaign to help people find work by promoting job vacancies live on air.

This is a great opportunity to get your vacancies promoted to the station's huge local audience. The adverts will also be promoted on the station's website.

Email your vacancies to radio.leicesternews@bbc.co.uk putting 'JOBS' in the subject. Remember to use the tips on the members' area of our Inspired to Care website to help write effective job adverts.

You can find out more about the campaign by going to
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p086t3lh>

As always, thank you at this time of ongoing uncertainty.

Yours sincerely

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