



# Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS  
**PROTECT  
YOURSELF  
& OTHERS**



## Issue 46 – 23 September 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.

### **Oadby and Wigston lockdown – changes to care home visiting policy**

On the 22 July 2020, the Government updated its guidance on policies for visiting arrangements in care homes. It states Directors of Public Health and care providers should ensure policies for visiting arrangements and decisions are based on a dynamic risk assessment and minimise risk wherever possible.

This includes consideration of the external COVID environment which includes the prevalence and incidence of infection in the local community which may increase the risk of infection risks from visitors coming into care homes.

As you may be aware, the Government has recently announced new restrictions for people living in the borough of **Oadby and Wigston** following a sharp rise in the local infection rate. The Government has also added the district of **Blaby** to its watchlist as an 'area of enhanced support' after cases rose there. Both districts now have infection rates significantly higher than the national and local average.

In light of the above, and acknowledging the vulnerability of care home residents, the Director of Public Health's revised position is as follows:

*Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health, Leicestershire County Council, message to care homes re visiting arrangements, 16 September 2020:*

***Oadby and Wigston Borough and Blaby District*** are now experiencing a high incidence of positive cases of COVID-19, therefore we ask that care homes in these areas implement the [policy statement guidance](#) and **do not accept visitors, except for essential visits e.g. end of life care**, until they are notified of a change in this situation.

*The emotional health and wellbeing as well as the physical health of care home residents, continues to be a concern in these challenging times; with this in mind, this statement will be regularly reviewed, at least every 28 days, to reflect changes in the local area.*

If you have any queries regarding this statement or the guidance please contact the Provider Communication Line on [enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk](mailto:enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk).

## **Adult Social Care COVID-19 Winter Plan 2020 to 2021**

The Department of Health and Social Care has published a [DHSC Coronavirus Social Care Update](#), featuring the COVID-19 Winter Plan 2020-2021 released on 18 September (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021>), Adult Social Care COVID-19 Taskforce report and a letter to the care sector and local authorities from the Minister for Care, Helen Whately.

The winter plan covers 4 themes:

- preventing and controlling the spread of infection in care settings
- collaboration across health and care services
- supporting people who receive social care, the workforce, and carers
- supporting the system

The plan applies to all settings and contexts in which people receive adult social care. This includes people's own homes, residential care homes and nursing homes, and other community settings.

Amongst the commitments from DHSC are:

- free PPE for COVID-19 needs in line with current guidance to care homes and domiciliary care providers, via the PPE portal, until the end of March 2021
- continuation of financial support to the sector, by providing over £500 million of additional funding to extend the Infection Control Fund (ICF) to March 2021

At the time of writing this bulletin, further detail was to be received about the free PPE scheme and the extension of the ICF.

In view of these new or extended means of financial support, the work to consider Leicestershire County Council-funded monthly additional cost payments beyond September will be paused pending further information being made available on the national schemes.

We will communicate to you via future bulletins when more detail is known about the national funding, and what local financial support will be available, including consideration of exceptional COVID-19 costs.

## **Infection Control Fund (ICF)**

Last week, ICF Final Expenditure Returns were emailed to all care homes for completion. Final Expenditure Returns were all issued to home care and supported living providers by Tuesday 22 September. The covering email contains instructions for the completion of the return, and guidance is also included in the Excel spreadsheet itself.

*Please ensure that the completed Excel document - both the Summary of Spend tab and the Declaration tab - are emailed back to [finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk](mailto:finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk) by Friday 25 September. If you have not received the Final Return request, please contact Dave Pruden at [dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk](mailto:dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk) as soon as possible.*

The ICF has been extended until March 2021; however local authorities are still required to report by 30 September on expenditure to date. It is therefore vitally important that your return is submitted by 25 September to enable us to do that, and to avoid compromising any future payment.

### **Return of the forward payment**

At the beginning of the pandemic, on advice from central government, forward payments were issued to temporarily support providers' cashflow. The majority of Leicestershire providers have already started to repay the forward payment, and whilst we are currently responding to any provider queries, there are providers that have not yet responded.

There is an option to pay over three months (October – December) as well as the option simply to return the payment in one instalment - either way it is important that providers commence this process by contacting us at [finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk](mailto:finopscovidpayments@leics.gov.uk).

### **Care homes testing tracker**

You will all shortly be sent an email with a link to an online tracker – this will enable you to submit testing data using an e-form. This will need to be completed weekly and will be instead of Quality and Contracts Team staff calling you for the testing results weekly.

You will need to submit the data each week - if you do not you will receive a telephone call to ask for this information.

The data is critical for the health and social care sector, along with public health colleagues, to monitor the care homes testing programme and ensure the people you support are kept safe and well at this time.

### **Coronavirus and car sharing**

Coronavirus spreads faster in enclosed spaces, including cars and other vehicles, than it does outdoors.

You should try not to share a vehicle with those outside your household or support bubble. If you need to do this, try to:

- share the transport with the same people each time
- keep to small groups of up to 6 people at any one time
- open windows for ventilation

- travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow
- face away from each other
- consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle
- clean your car between journeys using standard cleaning products - make sure you clean door handles and other areas that people may touch
- ask the driver and passengers to [wear a face covering](#)

Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles>

A useful poster with a reminder of the dos and don'ts of car sharing is available to [download and print for staff](#).

### **Personal responsibility of the workforce**

No doubt you have been working with your staff to understand the relationship of their social lives on their vital caring work. You might wish to use the pointers below to guide your communication in view of the recent increase in infections. Staff should:

- minimise their journeys away from their homes, including not leaving the local area if not essential
- minimise their physical contact and proximity with others
- only socialise with those in their 'bubble' and limit contact with other people
- social distance 2m from others when not at home, including not travelling on public transport where possible, not attending social gatherings and minimising shopping trips
- when it is necessary to come closer to others – such as when shopping and on necessary public transport trips – they need to wear a mouth and nose covering
- wash their hands regularly
- stay at home as much as possible
- stay up to date on any changing national or local advice for social contact and follow it in their personal lives

### **Flu vaccinations**

Communication materials for use across LLR are currently being developed for forthcoming flu vaccinations, and are designed for providers, their staff, community pharmacy, GPs, Personal Assistants, and direct payment recipients.

Staff will have access to free vaccinations via their identification badge.

Further information will be sent to you by email and referenced in a forthcoming bulletin.

**Future bulletins**

In the light of guidance within the new Winter Plan, future provider bulletins will be sent to you jointly in my name as Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and Mike Sandys as the Director of Public Health (DPH).

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

Yours sincerely

Jon Wilson

Director of Adults and Communities