



Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS
PROTECT
YOURSELF
& OTHERS

 Leicestershire
County Council

Bulletin 68 – 13 January 2021

Dear colleague

As the COVID-19 vaccination programme gathers pace across Leicestershire, I write with updates about the plans, and a number of other matters.

It's down to us to help stop the spread of coronavirus

Coronavirus cases remain very high across Leicestershire, including in care homes and amongst care staff.

Last week, as local infection rates rose above the national average, [senior council, health and police figures called on local residents to do the right thing so that the lockdown works](#) - and supports the efforts being made to roll-out the vaccine in the battle to defeat COVID-19.

Good infection prevention measures continue to play an important role in reducing the spread of coronavirus – to help remind staff of the simple but very important steps that can be taken, we have developed a [top tips poster](#). Please could you re-share this poster with staff and display it in staff areas as a reminder of how we can all help to keep each other safe.

The pressure on the NHS is at a tipping point with hospital admissions well above what was seen during the first peak in April 2020.

We all need to work together to help protect each other and bring down infection rates – now, more than ever, it is important to remember the basics of infection prevention and control to help stop the virus spreading.

Thank you for your continued support looking after our vulnerable service users during this difficult time.

COVID-19 vaccine programme update

The COVID-19 vaccine programme is now well under way locally and is being

administered first to people in the top priority groups: care home workers and residents, people aged 80 and over, and health and care staff.

On 30 December 2020, the first vaccinations were given in local care homes. Some care home residents have also been vaccinated by GP practices, where residents were able to be transported into the practice. The new ability to take the vaccine directly to the patients is a huge step forward in reaching some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

Care homes will be contacted by their local Primary Care Network (PCN) about resident vaccinations. The Government is aiming for all care home residents and staff to be vaccinated by mid-February. In some circumstances, Leicestershire County Council will contact care homes to offer care home workers vaccinations at a University Hospitals of Leicester site.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccination progress in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland visit: <https://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/news/ccg-news/covid-vaccination-progress-in-leicester-leicestershire-and-rutland/>

More information about the vaccine, including its safety and effectiveness and how it provides the best available protection from COVID-19 is on the [NHS website](#).

If you have not yet had your free flu vaccination it's not too late to have it – to book your vaccination call your local GP or pharmacy.

Encouraging staff to take up their COVID-19 vaccination

We reported last week in bulletin 66 that we are developing a toolkit to support managers in encouraging their workforce to take up their COVID-19 vaccination when it is offered. This will now include open calls for staff to join to have their questions answered first-hand by officers from the LLR vaccination programme. Further details will be available very soon.

Changes in offering the second COVID-19 vaccine dose

At the end of December 2020, new national medical advice was issued changing when the second dose of the vaccine could be given. The advice states that the vaccine remains effective if the second dose is given up to 12 weeks after the first dose, and should be given towards the end of this 12 week period to allow for more people to receive the vaccination and protection as quickly as possible.

Therefore some people who have had their first dose already will have their appointment for the second dose rearranged for a later date. Two doses of the vaccine are still needed to get the best protection from the virus and it is important that everyone attends their second appointment at the same location as the first.

You will be contacted directly if your second appointment does need to be rearranged.

Free COVID-19 PPE for care sector extended to June 2021

The Government has extended the provision of free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for COVID-19 needs to social care providers until the end of June 2021.

The scheme has been extended to better support this critical stage for vaccination and mass testing programmes.

CQC registered providers can continue to access free PPE through the PPE portal. Non CQC-registered providers can access free PPE through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). [Access the PPE portal here](#)

Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP)

AGPs include open suctioning of airways when caring for people with tracheostomies. AGP precautions are also required for people who are receiving ventilatory support such as Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP).

Accessing fit testing for FFP3 masks

Advice across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is that FFP3 masks should be worn when undertaking AGPs. These should be fit tested to ensure that staff are protected through making good contact with the wearer's skin and the face seal of the mask.

Fit testing should be repeated regularly according to organisational policy, when staff members experience facial feature changes (e.g. due to changes in weight or dental treatment) or there is a change in make or model of the FFP3 in use.

Many providers will have had staff fit tested last year. Unfortunately, the FFP3 masks that are now available through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) or national e-portal stock are different makes and models, and therefore we are inviting providers to book their staff onto a further fit testing session, to enable this continued free support.

The LRF can also support providers with fit testing solution and sample masks where they have their own fit testers.

If you wish to book your staff onto a fit testing slot please follow this link

<https://adultsandcommunities.simplybook.it/v2/>

Obtaining free FFP3 masks, gowns and visors

Until this week providers across LLR could only obtain FFP3 masks, gowns and visors in support of these procedures through the LRF.

On 11 January the national e-portal widened its offer and now any domiciliary or residential provider undertaking AGPs can obtain a weekly supply – currently 200 masks and 200 gowns per week, please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment>

Further information is available here on [COVID-19: Personal protective equipment use for aerosol generating procedures](#)

Infection Control Fund

Please ensure that your January expenditure report is submitted by 15 January. This will summarise all actual eligible expenditure for the period 1 October to 31 December.

Please also ensure that you report all eligible expenditure incurred, including any expenditure over and above the amount that we have paid to you for the ICF. We use this to assess the extent the overall grant has mitigated the total additional costs incurred. Following this we can better direct funding to where it is most needed. Follow [this link](#) to complete the online form.

Monthly reporting is one of the grant conditions. If you fail to report, or to comply with any of the grant conditions, you risk not receiving the second ICF2 payment and having to return the initial payment.

If you have any questions, please contact Dave Pruden at dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk

Lateral Flow Testing ‘Frequently Asked Questions’

We recognise that staff have queries about Lateral Flow Testing arrangements. Public Health is developing a leaflet answering the most frequently asked questions which will be published electronically next week.

Fortnightly provider conference calls

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency we have held fortnightly provider conference calls, which have been invaluable in engaging with providers, communicating the latest information, understanding your challenges, and forming joint approaches throughout this challenging time. These calls will continue to be vital in seeking your input, including into the emerging COVID-19 vaccination programme, and we encourage you to participate – call details until late March can be found at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/working-with-you-during-coronavirus/provider-teleconferences>

Yours sincerely

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Director of Adults and Communities

Mike Sandys
Director of Public Health

The archive of all previous COVID-19 provider bulletins released since March 2020 can be found at <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/working-with-you-during-coronavirus>