



Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS
PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS



Issue 66 – 6 January 2021

Dear colleague,

A very happy new year to you and your dedicated teams. 2021 brings with it the immediate and ongoing challenges relating to COVID-19, but also hope, through the accelerating vaccination programme.

An enormous thank you for supporting the social care and health system through its most challenging festive period to date, and on a continuing basis as we progress through winter pressures. Please extend our sincerest of thanks to all of your staff who supported people during the holidays.

Coronavirus vaccination roll-out

As you are aware, COVID-19 vaccinations started to be rolled out across Leicestershire in mid-December, initially through the Pfizer vaccine administered at Leicester General Hospital for care home workers from prioritised areas.

The Primary Care Network and Astra Zeneca vaccine programme has now begun, which will allow people to be vaccinated more locally, where possible. This will also entail in-home vaccinations for care home residents and a proportion of workers.

Care home providers may already have received invitations for workers, or residents, or both, either from Leicestershire County Council, a Primary Care Network, or a GP. Please do not be concerned if you have not yet received an invitation – the programme is progressing at speed and you can be sure that you will be invited imminently.

Regrettably, it is sometimes necessary to ask managers to consider vaccinations for workers at very short notice. Whilst we try hard to avoid this situation, please bear with us if you receive such a request – health and social care organisations are doing everything they can to ensure that prioritised groups are vaccinated as soon as possible and that the vaccine doses are not wasted.

Please be assured that if you are asked to respond very quickly to invitations to vaccination, it will not be your only opportunity to secure the jabs. Care homes' staff and residents are now able to access to the vaccination programme in specific, well contained outbreaks. If your home has an outbreak when you are offered vaccination

slots a risk assessment will be completed on an individual basis to confirm if some staff and residents can still be safely vaccinated.

People associated with extra care, supported living, home care and community life choices will receive invitations within the next few weeks, with prioritisation undertaken according to national frameworks and local circumstances.

Encouraging workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19

Although the COVID-19 vaccines are safe, we understand that workers may have queries about vaccination. A toolkit is being developed to support managers in encouraging their workforce to have the COVID-19 vaccination when they are invited, which we will publicise within the next few weeks via a bulletin.

In the meantime, you might find these resources useful:

- Information about the vaccine, how it is safe and effective, and provides the best protection against COVID-19: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>
- A useful video where social care workers put their questions to senior social care and NHS officials: <https://youtu.be/e6UHLCmC1vo>

Vaccination scam

Unfortunately, there are fraudsters who are willing to exploit the current situation to their own benefit, and we have been advised of scam vaccination invitations in circulation nationally. These could take many forms, such as calls and text messages.

In some cases, people are asked to press a number on their keypad or to send a text message to confirm they wish to receive the vaccine.

Doing so is likely to result in a charge being applied to their phone bill. In other cases, callers are offering the vaccine for a fee or asking for bank details.

Please warn your workforce and those who you support to be alert to such scams.

The NHS or Leicestershire County Council will:

- NEVER ask you to press a button on your keypad or send a text asking you to confirm you want the vaccine
- NEVER ask for payment for the vaccine or for bank details

If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft you should report this directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. Where the victim is vulnerable, report it to the police online or by calling 101.

Care home visits

Please see the national advice on care home visits under the new national lockdown, effective since 5 January 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#care-home-visits>

Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits are permitted in the event of an outbreak.

You should check the guidance on [visiting care homes during COVID-19](#) to find out how visits should be conducted. Residents cannot meet people indoors on a visit out (for example, to visit their relatives in the family home).

Please remember that care homes cannot have close contact indoor visits, regardless of negative lateral flow testing of visitors.

Exceptions for visiting can still be made in exceptional circumstances such as where someone is at end of life.

The LLR guidance for visitors to residential and nursing homes is available here: <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2020/11/24/Guidelines-for-visitors-to-residential-and-nursing-homes-in-Leicestershire-Leicester-City-and-Rutland.pdf>

Residential care - annual fee review

The residential care fees for homes in Leicestershire will be reviewed in April 2021. The uplift applied will be calculated according to increases in the Average Weekly Earnings and Consumer Price Index. The approach was determined by the substantial fee review undertaken in 2019. For more information please see the [Cabinet Report](#).

Providers will have sustained additional COVID-19 related costs that must also be taken into account when implementing the fee increase, for example, increases in insurance costs. So, to help us identify and quantify particular cost pressures in the market, please send any information and supporting evidence you wish to bring to our attention to feereview@leics.gov.uk by Wednesday 20 January.

Infection Control Fund

Please ensure that your January expenditure report, which will summarise all actual eligible expenditure for the period 1 October to 31 December is submitted by 15 January. Use [this link](#) to complete the online form. Additional guidance on the nature and types of expenditure that fit into each measure has been published by the DHSC, you can see that via [this link](#). 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.

Application can be made for support from the ICF Discretionary Fund. Community providers and care homes registered in Leicestershire should use the online form to make a grant application from the discretionary element of Leicestershire's Infection Control Fund. The funding must be used to support care providers to take additional steps to tackle the risk of COVID-19 infections and is allocated at the local authority's discretion. Funding allocated will be used to support the full range of social care providers, especially those that have not benefited from the mandatory element of the fund. The closing date for applications is 12 February 2021, but providers are advised to apply as soon as possible to enable quicker distribution of the fund. To make an application please use [this link](#).

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

Completion of the capacity tracker

Completion of the Tracker is an ICF grant condition. We have been advised this week that the level of information requiring input will be reduced, but please ensure that the questions relating to ICF2 in particular are answered. We highlight this because a number of providers appear to be missing this section.

Financial support for increased testing in care homes

The DHSC recently announced a funding of £149 million to support increased care home testing. Care homes across the country will benefit from additional rapid testing to help protect residents and workers from the virus. Staff will be asked to take rapid tests twice a week, in addition to the weekly PCR test they have already been receiving as part of government action to protect those most at risk. The money will pay for care home providers to set up safe testing areas, provide staff training and contribute towards staff time spent on administering and receiving the tests. For more information please see the [DHSC press release](#) - detailed guidance is expected later this month.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication to keeping people in Leicestershire safe.

Yours sincerely

Jon Wilson

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>