



Information for adult social care providers

Covid-19 and Flu

Bulletin 110 – 7 October 2021

Dear Colleague,

Significant health and social care system pressures

You will be aware that there is currently unprecedented demand on health and social care services across LLR. Thank you for your continued dedication to ensuring that people receive a care and support package in their own home or begin a care home placement in a timely way, which in turn allows the wider health and social care system to operate safely and effectively.

As we enter the winter months there are further challenges ahead of us in managing and responding to the demand for adult social care services. We thank home care businesses for doing everything that you can to accommodate requests for packages of support, including prompt responses to requests for care, early package start dates, and creative recruitment campaigns to build workforce capacity for future requests.

Mandatory vaccinations in care homes – the importance of a second dose

It is imperative that staff working in care homes receive their second dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine in time for the final deadline of 11 November when the new government legislation mandates double vaccination.

Workers should already have an appointment for their second dose of the vaccination booked. If they have had to cancel for any reason, please ensure that they reschedule.

Please stress the importance of the second dose to your workers to ensure they receive it before 11 November.

The Leicester City CCG website contains venue details and availability, as well as guidance on how to book the second dose of the vaccine:

<https://bit.ly/GetVaxxedLLR>

NHS COVID pass for medical exemptions

Those unable to receive COVID-19 vaccines on medical grounds can now apply for an NHS COVID Pass to prove their exemption status by calling 119, for which national guidance was published on 1 October: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-medical-exemptions-proving-you-are-unable-to-get-vaccinated>

Anyone applying for exemption should also complete a self-certification form, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/temporary-medical-exemptions-for-covid-19-vaccination-of-people-working-or-deployed-in-care-homes>. Self-certification will be recognised in this way until 23 December 2021, after which exemptions can only be verified using the NHS COVID Pass.

The [self-certification process for people vaccinated abroad](#) continues to be the only way exemptions can be demonstrated for this group.

Capacity Tracker update for care home staff regarding COVID exemption self-certification and those vaccinated abroad

DHSC has advised that from 11 October there will be changes to the Capacity Tracker to capture additional information for care home staff and agency staff regarding COVID-19 vaccination exemption self-certification, and those staff that have been vaccinated abroad.

Guidance on how to complete the vaccination information requested will be published shortly within the national Capacity Tracker Resource Centre.

COVID-19 boosters – more locations available

In [provider bulletin 108](#) we shared information on when and where you would be able to get your COVID-19 booster vaccine. In addition to hospital hubs, social care staff can now also receive booster vaccines at community pharmacies via the [National Booking Service](#), by accessing a walk-in services or by invitation from your local primary care service.

Moving into flu season

As we approach autumn, our focus continues to be around the COVID-19 recovery but also now the imminent flu season. You will notice we have revised the content of our newsletter to reflect this change of focus.

Extending free PPE to care sector beyond March 2022: consultation launched

A consultation on extending free PPE beyond March 2022 has launched, to run until 31 October 2021. Responses are invited from across the sector to help the government make a well-balanced and considered decision.

The consultation covers all health and care settings. This includes adult social care, NHS Trusts, community health and care services, dentists and orthodontists, general

practice, pharmacists, optometrists, mental health services, palliative and end of life care (including hospices).

The proposals and response survey are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extending-free-ppe-to-the-health-and-care-sector>. Alternatively, you can send your responses and any supporting evidence to PPE.strategy@dhsc.gov.uk

LLR Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub for health and social care staff

A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub has been set up to support the entire Health and Social Care workforce of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR).

With the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff working across health and social care is of paramount importance.

The aim of the hub is to ensure every member of our valued workforce has the support they need when they need it.

Staff can self-refer to the hub by contacting 0116 254 4388, and can view more details here: <https://www.llrstaffwellbeing.org/>

The hub is run by experienced clinicians, offering anonymous and confidential psychological support, counselling, and emotional advice, to staff that assess themselves to be, in any way personally or professionally affected by COVID-19.

Infection Control and Testing Fund (ICTF)

ICTF2 final report

We emailed providers on 1 October to request completion of the ICTF2 Final Return.

ICTF2 payments were issued to support care homes and community providers with eligible COVID-19 related expenditure for the period 1 July to 30 September 2021. For information about the fund please see [bulletin 97](#)

Please use this link to complete the online return by Monday 18 October 2021 detailing your Infection Control and Testing Fund eligible expenditure for 1 July to 30 September 2021: <https://surveys.leics.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=162029249296>

- Care homes must report all eligible infection control and testing expenditure by month for July, August, and September 2021
- Community providers must report all eligible infection control expenditure by month for July, August, and September 2021

By accepting payments from this fund your organisation accepts the grant conditions, which are detailed in the [ICTF2 pages of the DHSC website](#). Completion of this return is a condition of receipt of the funding for providers with services registered with the CQC in Leicestershire.

If you fail to report, or to comply with any of the grant conditions, you risk having to return payments made to your organisation.

ICTF3 announced

The [ICTF has been extended](#) with additional funding to enable providers to put in place key measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within and between care settings, including restricting staff movement between settings, and ensuring that staff are paid full wages when required to self-isolate.

Further detail is expected to be published imminently and a digest will be included in a future bulletin. The fund appears to be similar to ICTF2 but with additional emphasis on COVID-19 and flu vaccination support.

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

Improving care home staff flu vaccination rates

FluCare is a research study being run by the University of East Anglia and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group.

What is FluCare?

- FluCare is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)-funded project exploring whether offering staff flu vaccination clinics in the care home can improve flu vaccination rates. The project will take place this flu season and the 2022 flu season.

What is involved?

- The researchers want to see if offering flu vaccination clinics specifically for staff in the care home, along with financial incentives for homes, can increase uptake.
- They are looking for care homes to take part in a small-scale study this Autumn and a larger trial next year, again in the flu season.
- Some care homes will receive the flu vaccination clinics and others will not, but all homes will receive £500 for taking part in the study and providing monitoring information.
- The researchers will also want to interview some staff - staff who give up their time for interviews will also be paid.
- Within each care home, staff who complete a short online survey will be entered into a £100 voucher prize draw.

What types of care homes can get involved?

- The project is looking for residential or nursing care homes for people over the age of 65
- The care homes need to employ more than 10 staff
- The care homes need to be located in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland

When will the project start?

- This October – see below on how to sign up

What do I do to take part?

- Complete a FluCare expression of interest form by following this link:
<https://norwichcrtu.uea.ac.uk/redcap/surveys/?s=FYX344HTRC>

If you have any questions please contact: flu.care@uea.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

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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>