



Information for adult social care providers

Covid-19 and Flu

Bulletin 115 – 11 November 2021

Dear Colleague,

Now live: full vaccination for care home workers is mandatory

The deadline for care home staff to be fully vaccinated is here.

Care home staff, and those entering care homes to work (including agency staff) or volunteer must now have received both doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine, as new government legislation has come into force today. Previous bulletins have set out the requirements – the national guidance is available [here](#).

Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council have supported the development of the Verifyplus app by EMCARE to assist with the recording and management of people entering the care home as fully vaccinated or exempt. All care homes within Leicestershire have been given 6 months free access to the Verifyplus app, from 11 November 2021 – see [bulletin 114](#) and <https://www.verifyplus.co.uk/> for further details.

Mandatory vaccination for the wider adult social care workforce

Following the close of a recent national [consultation](#), the Government intends to legislate to make COVID vaccination a condition of deployment in health and the wider social care sector. CQC registered providers of health and care services will need to ensure that workers that have direct contact with patients and people using adult social care services are vaccinated against COVID-19 in order for them to be deployed. The only exception to this is care provided under shared lives agreements which, because of their unique circumstances, will be exempt from the requirement. Subject to the parliamentary process, the expectation is that the regulations will come into force from 1 April.

The requirement will not apply to the seasonal flu vaccine. However, the Government says that this will be reviewed after winter.

We will provide further details through future bulletins when information is available.

The [Get Vaxxed](#) website contains up to date venue details and availability for COVID-19 first and second vaccine doses, and [booster doses](#).

Proxy access for ordering medications: support for care homes

Many authorised care home staff can quickly, safely and securely order their residents' medications online. This saves the care home, pharmacy and GP practice staff time. It also makes the dispensing of individual medications easier for care home staff and creates an automatic audit trail.

Proxy access is when an individual is authorised to access another person's GP online services account and given an individual login and password to do this. It also enables GPs to share aspects of a patient record should they wish to, including documents and letters, consultation notes and the summary care record. However, it is important that before GP practices can grant proxy access, the care home must have a secure email system such as NHS Mail.

iPad devices received by care homes through NHSX's national offer have been set up to enable proxy access.

Benefits include fewer risks and issues associated with ordering, issuing, collecting and dispensing repeat medications, easier and faster access as care home staff can order at any time of day or night, and a robust audit trail and improved data security. It also facilitates better communication between care homes and GP practices and reduces medication waste.

There is a range of support available at regional and national level to help care homes to implement proxy access, as well develop wider digital skills and confidence. As part of the package of support, NHSX has partnered with Barclays which has a digital support offer called Digital Eagles. It includes series of bi-weekly 1-hour webinars on Tuesdays and Thursdays (15.30 – 16.30) until Thursday 16 December. The webinars take colleagues through the proxy access setup process from the very beginning, including the current GP IT systems which allow proxy access.

Please contact the proxy access lead for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, : Lesley Gant, Senior Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist (lesley.gant@nhs.net) for joining instructions in the first instance. If there are any issues colleagues can contact Hema Kotak (hema.kotak@nhs.net).

National Cold Weather Plan

The [National Cold Weather Plan](#) details how cold weather can have an adverse effect on people's health and well-being and that these are both predictable and mostly preventable. Keeping warm and well is key in reducing the risk of health problems that occur more in the cold, such as chest infections, heart attacks and stroke.

The cold weather plan is accompanied by the [Cold Weather Alert Service](#), commissioned by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and operated by the Met Office. The authority will continue to issue climbing alert levels to support services and inform their response. The current alert level is Level 1 - Winter Preparedness and Action which was issued on 1 November and stipulates that temperatures and weather conditions are not expected to exceed the cold weather alert threshold criteria in any region until further notice.

That said, services should still be reviewing their business continuity plans, raising awareness amongst staff teams and identifying those people that they support who are most at risk, considering how best to support and protect them. Unsurprisingly, risk factors linked with the worst outcomes from COVID-19 are also risks from cold-related harms.

Virtual 'Lead, Connect and Care' Festival, 13-19 November 2021

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Health and Wellbeing team is pleased to invite you to its virtual 'Lead, Connect and Care' Festival this November, bringing together professionals from the health, social care, emergency services workforce and the charity sector to celebrate and explore the very best in leadership development, quality improvement and health and wellbeing.

The week-long, virtual event opens on World Kindness Day on the 13 November. The event will include sessions from expert speakers, world-café style meetings showcasing improvement initiatives from across LLR, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire and wellbeing sessions designed to improve both physical and mental health.

For further details of the event and its sessions, and to register, please see <https://llracademy.org/event-dashboard/>

LLR Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub – Celebration Event, 19 November

You are invited to the final Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) event for this year, on 19 November, for staff across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland as we continue through the COVID-19 pandemic, winter pressures and beyond. On the day, we would like to hear your thoughts and ideas about how we take forward the evolving staff mental health and wellbeing hub support offer to all health, social care, and emergency services organisations.

When the COVID pandemic made its first real impact in March NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) and Skills for Care rapidly developed a comprehensive, national offer to support all our NHS and Social Care staff and complement local support.

In addition to this they commissioned a number of pilot sites nationally to develop a mental health and wellbeing hub, our system was identified as one of the pilot sites. The LLR MHWB Hub provides proactive outreach and assessment services, giving staff rapid access to specialist mental health and wellbeing support, for staff who need it.

Key elements of our [Hub offer](#) include:

- Links to several market-leading apps to improve mental health and wellbeing of our staff (e.g. Headspace, Unmind, Sleepio)
- Dedicated, confidential staff telephone helpline
- Structured debrief and support mechanisms

- Support packages aimed at staff and line managers including links to a range of online resources, guides, and training
- Free coaching, mentoring and support to staff, including a specific offer to health and social care
- The development of tailored offers for BAME staff and under representative groups, recognising the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from diverse backgrounds

Join our celebration workshop on Friday 19 November, 11.00– 13.00. To register please [click here](#). The closing date for free tickets is Wednesday 17 November at midnight.

If you require further information regarding the event, please contact the MHWB team on mhwb.hub@nhs.net.

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>