



Information

for adult social care providers

CORONAVIRUS
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YOURSELF
& OTHERS**



Bulletin 109 – 30 September 2021

Dear Colleague,

We are writing with this week's updates for your teams.

Pregnancy and COVID-19: why vaccination is so important

Although pregnancy is listed as a temporary exemption for those working or deployed in care homes, health and pregnancy experts in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) continue to strongly recommend getting the vaccine in order to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.

Recent data has shown that 98% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with COVID-19 had not been vaccinated. In response to this data, a short video was filmed which answers the most frequently asked questions about pregnancy and vaccines. The video highlights the need for all pregnant women, new mums and those hoping to become pregnant to get vaccinated.

In the video, the LLR local experts share useful facts and information about the importance of getting vaccinated and the benefits that doing so have for both mum and baby. The video also addresses common misconceptions about the vaccines. The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/jH5YRaJSYLU>

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy and fertility, please visit: www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-fertility/

Temporary medical exemption from vaccination – workers entering care homes

DHSC has confirmed that the temporary medical exemption from vaccination provision introduced in [bulletin 107](#) is for all staff who could visit care homes as part of their work, and not just those who are directly employed by care homes.

Mandatory care home vaccinations - TASL

TASL (Thames Ambulance Service Ltd) are the current non-emergency patient transport service. TASL has stated that all operational staff needing to enter care homes will be fully vaccinated by the deadline of 11 November, in order to support patient transport back into care homes from healthcare settings.

COVID-19 boosters

We gave detail about the COVID-19 booster programme in the [last bulletin](#), including how to book.

The National Booking Service is now open for frontline care colleagues to book their COVID-19 booster vaccines, providing it has been six months since they received their second dose.

They can book their booster appointment through the [National Booking Service online](#), by ringing 119, or by visiting their nearest walk-in centre.

Changes to outbreak management in care homes

The national guidance '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing for adult social care settings](#)' was updated on 24 September 2021.

The update is reflected in the guidance flowchart document: [COVID-19 testing available for adult social care in England: a summary](#) in the flowchart titled Care homes: Outbreak testing for resident and staff (England).

To summarise, care homes are guided to complete 7 days of LFTs, as previous guidance. If no further positive tests are found within the 7 days, or from the confirmatory PCR (for the initial positive LFT) is negative then the care home may stop daily LFT and return to the regular staff testing regime of weekly PCR and twice weekly LFT testing.

During the initial 7 days of LFT testing, if further positives are found, care homes must carry out, for staff and residents: PCR and LFT on Day 1, and then between Day 4 and Day 7 an LFT for each resident. Each staff member must carry out daily LFTs until 5 days of no positive results.

If the positive cases were identified through the rapid response LFT and the first and second rounds of outbreak PCR testing do not detect any further cases, in either staff or residents, then the outbreak control restrictions may be lifted following a risk assessment by PHE, but it is dependent on the risk assessment by PHE.

At present the guidance remains in place - the end of outbreak testing is PCR, 14 days after the last positive test result (or COVID-19 like symptoms showed), and 28 days for a Variant of Concern (VOC).

Reminder - consultation on mandatory vaccination of health and social care staff

In bulletin 106 we advised that the government has launched a consultation on extending mandatory vaccination to frontline health and wider social care staff in England. Staff may be required to have COVID-19 and flu vaccinations under the proposals.

Just a reminder that the consultation closes at 23.45 on Friday 22 October 2021. The consultation document and survey are available [here](#).

Infection Control and Testing Fund (ICTF)

ICTF1

An ICTF1 testing overspend payment has been activated for care homes reporting expenditure in excess of the 'direct' payment they received. This is expected to reach provider bank accounts next week.

ICTF2 - discretionary fund

The discretionary fund requests have been assessed and responses sent to all care homes and community providers. Several care homes and community providers requested support in relation to costs that are covered by the main ICTF2 measures. The rationale offered is that the direct payment made doesn't cover all the costs incurred. Rather than supporting such applications our approach is to use unallocated discretionary fund to make an 'overspend' payment, based on reported expenditure which will be requested in October, that will benefit more providers across the county.

ICTF2 – 'direct' payments

Funds allocated to some care homes and community providers have not been issued because they have not submitted their ICTF1 final return or have not paid invoices raised in relation to the Infection Control Fund. In order to receive those ICTF2 payments, those providers must submit their ICTF1 final report and settle any invoices that are outstanding, by 30 September.

If you have any questions relating to ICTF, please contact dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk

Voiding of expired COVID-19 tests

Expired test kits which are received by labs are not valid and will be voided.

Please use the following steps to find the expiry date of a kit:

1. Check the box that the tests were delivered in. The expiry date will be printed on a label attached to the larger cardboard box that your tests are sent in
2. Check the exterior plastic bag in each test kit. An expiry date may be printed on one of the plastic bags. Look out for the egg-timer symbol
3. Check the vial. Expiry dates are added to some of the vials but not all. Look out for the egg-time symbol

If you think you have been sent kits that have already expired please send an email with a photo attached of the expiry dates on the box, the packet and the vial to carehometesting@dhsc.gov.uk.

PPE portal update

The 'PPE portal: how to order COVID-19 personal protective equipment' guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-covid-19-personal-protective->

[equipment](#) now shows updated order limits for home care providers and residential care homes. 'Nitrile' has been removed from gloves for all providers.

Infection Prevention and Control contact details

The contact telephone number for the Leicestershire County Council Infection Prevention and Control team has been updated to:

0116 305 1521

Please update your records accordingly, as any previous phone numbers for the team are no longer active.

This phone number is covered Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00. If calls are made outside of these hours, please leave a message, including your contact details. This message will be picked up by our team on the next working day.

Alternatively, you can continue to contact the team via email infection@leics.gov.uk

Workforce Development Fund workshops

The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) is funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) disseminated by Skills for Care. It supports the provision of high-quality care and the continuing professional development (CPD) of staff across the adult social care sector by providing a contribution towards the costs of vocational learning. The fund allows you to claim back money towards the costs of workers completing a broad range of adult social care qualifications and learning programmes.

You can claim funding towards the cost of qualifications and learning programmes completed between 1 January 2021 and the 31 March 2022. This includes money towards the cost of course fees (or employer contributions) and associated costs.

Together with Skills for Care, and Inspired To Care, LSCDG have organised workshops to support you through this process. The workshops will be via a live webinar using Microsoft Teams on

4 October 2021 - 10:30 to 11:30

4 November 2021 - 14:30 to 15:30

To book a place please email lscdg@leics.gov.uk with your name, provider name and contact email address.

Supporting care home nurses

The University of East Anglia are seeking registered nurses for workshops to develop care-home specific strategies for wellbeing.

If you are a qualified nurse working in a nursing home or care home for older people, you can participate in the study. There will be two workshops about how best to help care home nurses' wellbeing.

The workshops will be online and each will take approximately 2 hours. They are able to reimburse you for your time at £55 for each workshop.

In the last six months they have interviewed 18 care home nurses, who have told them a lot about what life has been like for them during COVID, the hard bits and the positive things. In the next stage, they want to involve care home nurses in workshops, to find out how best to support you going forward. Further details can be found on the [THRIVE website](#).

If you are interested, please contact either of the following from the University of East Anglia:

Dr Linda Birt (linda.birt@uea.ac.uk; 01603 593298)

Dr Kathleen Lane (kathleen.lane@uea.ac.uk; 01603 597218)

If phoning either Linda or Kathleen, please leave a message on the answer phone and they will ring you back.

They are recruiting for this study until 30 November 2021.

Fuel supply

Leicestershire County Council is involved in local response work relating to the current national fuel supply issues. Please review your business continuity plans. You and your workers should work together to identify petrol stations where fuel is available and share this information across the team.

If you are at risk of not being able to deliver services please contact enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk. Please note this email address is covered during office working hours.

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>