



# Information for adult social care providers

## Covid-19 and Flu

### Bulletin 123 – 14 January 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Your resilience and that of your workers at this time of enormous pressure is incredible. We would like to add our thanks to that expressed to you by colleagues, and during provider forums, for your amazing efforts.

Whenever possible we avoid sending update emails on single matters to providers. Recognising the fast moving national and local position, this is a lengthy bulletin – however, please be assured that we have kept it as concise as possible to make the best use of your scarce time.

### **Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for the wider workforce**

As you know, individuals undertaking CQC regulated activities in England must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 no later than 1 April 2022, and need to have had their first vaccination by 3 February 2022. The implementation guidance is awaited.

In late 2021 Leicestershire County Council sent a survey to all providers who are registered with CQC under the regulated activity of personal care, which includes home care, supported living and extra care providers. This was to gather important information on the vaccination status of your staff, to understand how you and your staff can be best supported with vaccine confidence, and what risks are presented by levels of take up within your workforce.

We ask for your co-operation in completing the survey to enable us to gain an understanding of the current situation and implement initiatives which may support in the recruitment and retention of staff.

Please complete the survey by close of business on 19 January. If you have any questions or queries please contact [enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk](mailto:enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk)

### **COVID-19 booster vaccinations: reassurance for your workers**

COVID-19 vaccinations are safe, effective and the best way to protect you, your colleagues and those you care for from infection. Having your COVID-19 booster is essential to provide the most effective protection, in tandem with tight infection prevention and control measures.

Video clips featuring [Deborah Sturdy](#), Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care and GP [Dr Nikki Kanani MBE](#) provide further reassurance about [why the booster jabs are so important](#) including where, when and how to get you and your colleagues vaccinated.

Please continue to spread winter vaccination messages among your colleagues. [Free campaign resources remain available for download.](#)

### **Specialist COVID-19 vaccination clinics for people with a learning disability and/or autism**

Further specialist COVID-19 vaccination clinics for people with learning disabilities and/or autism have been scheduled to enable people to get their boosters and vaccines in a calm and friendly environment that meets their needs:

- Thursday 27 January: Loughborough Hospital
- Wednesday 23 February: the Peepul Centre
- Thursday 31 March: Loughborough Hospital

All clinics will run from 10am to 6pm and need to be booked in advance. The vaccine used will be Pfizer.

The sessions are open to anyone with a learning disability and/or autism in LLR, aged 12 or over, who is due for a first, second or booster COVID-19 vaccination. They are designed for people who need a more supportive environment than an ordinary clinic can provide. The clinics will offer a calm atmosphere, longer appointment times and be staffed by vaccinators specialising in learning disability support and care.

To book, please use the following links. Please specify in the additional comments box if you need for us to make any specialist adaptations, such as needing a private or quiet space.

- [To book an appointment at either of the learning disability clinics at Loughborough Hospital, on Hospital Way, LE11 5JY](#)
- [To book an appointment at the learning disability clinic at the Peepul Centre, on Orchardson Avenue in Leicester, LE4 6DP](#)

More information about booster vaccines in an easy read format can be found [here](#).

[This video](#) from the Misfits Theatre company from Bristol, in partnership with NHS England, gives a message encouraging people with learning disabilities to get their COVID-19 booster vaccination.

### **Rapid access to COVID-19 PCR testing for frontline workers**

In light of the current difficulties being experienced in the access of timely PCR testing, LLR CCGs have mobilised the following service.

### *What is being made available?*

A daily PCR testing clinic operating by bookable appointment only between 13.00-16.00.

### *Where is the service located?*

The clinic is based at Thurmaston Health Centre, 573A Melton Rd, Thurmaston, Leicester LE4 8EA

### *Who is the service for?*

- Initially, this service has been established to support front line workers, for operational resilience and service delivery across partner organisations
- Partner organisations able to access this service: DHU, LPT, LLR Primary Care, PCL Team, adult social care staff from HART, Crisis and CRS, AMHPs, Community Pharmacists, Optometry, Dental, TASL, Care Homes and Home Care, Independent Hospitals
- At the present time the service has capacity to support staff only from these organisations
- This does not include household contacts of staff members

### *How do I access the service?*

- The service is via booked appointment only. Walk-ins will not be accepted
- Where a PCR test is required, staff members must in the first instance attempt to access the National PCR testing portal <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>
- Where a staff member has been unable to successfully secure a test through the national portal, the following number can be accessed between 09.00 and 13.00 daily: 07707 268999. Outside of the stated times this number will not be monitored
- This will connect to a DHU Health Care representative who will (subject to availability) book a PCR test appointment either on the day, or for the next day

### *What information will I be asked to provide when booking?*

- Staff members will be asked to confirm which partner organisation they are employed by. They will also be asked for symptom and demographic information necessary to process the request
- This will include a mobile phone number in order to manage the result contact

### *Special instructions for your journey to your PCR appointment*

- Do not go to a PCR test site without an appointment – you will not be able to get a test
- Avoid contact with other people as much as possible when going to your test appointment
- Wear a mask / face covering at all times, unless exempt

- Do not drive to a test site if you do not feel well enough – ask someone you live with to drive you if you can
- Do not use public transport or taxis
- Do not make any unnecessary stops when going to or from a test site

#### *What to do on arrival?*

- When you arrive at the test site, follow the signs, park in the designated bays
- Stay in your vehicle during the test
- A DHU representative will come to you
- After you have done the test, drive straight home and self-isolate

#### *When will I get the result?*

- Results will be communicated via text message
- We aim to provide the results within 24-48 hours
- Should a result not have been received by day 3, please re-contact the booking line 07707 268999
- Staff answering this number do not have direct access to your result but will be able to pass your query on to relevant colleagues

### **Changes to testing protocols and self-isolation**

Changes have been made to the [COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-management-of-staff-and-exposed-patients-or-residents-in-health-and-social-care-settings) guidance to help support workforce capacity.

#### *Changes in section 2.2*

- The likelihood of a positive LFD test in the absence of a high temperature after 10 days is low. If the staff member's LFD test result is positive on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, they should continue to take daily LFD tests, and can return to work after a single negative LFD test result.
- The likelihood of a positive LFD test after 14 days is considerably lower. If the staff member's LFD test result is still positive on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, they can stop testing and return to work on day 15. If the staff member works with patients or residents who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 (as determined by the organisation), a risk assessment should be undertaken, and consideration given to redeployment.
- Managers can undertake a risk assessment of staff who test positive between 10 and 14 days and who do not have a high temperature, with a view to them returning to work depending on the work environment.
- Confirmatory PCR - Following a positive LFD, there will be no need for a confirmatory PCR apart from in specific circumstances. To clarify – anyone who has symptoms should continue to take a PCR test and self-isolate during this period
- Self-isolation period – Clarity that the self-isolation period if you test positive begins from symptoms onset or from a positive result, whether that is from a PCR or LFD

#### *Change in section 4*

- Testing within 90 days – Individuals who have received a positive PCR or LFD result should be exempt from routine PCR testing within 90 days apart from in certain circumstances. Therefore, they should continue with routine asymptomatic LFD testing during this 90-day period. Advice is also provided on how to handle positive cases within this period

#### **Management of COVID-19 outbreaks in care homes**

In [bulletin 122](#) we explained that changes have been made to the management of outbreaks in care homes.

An easy-reference guide is being produced for LLR which explains the requirements. It will be available next week.

#### **Request for expressions of interest in relation to care home designated settings**

LLR care home COVID-positive designated settings were stepped down in spring 2021 but are sought again to support COVID-positive people discharged from hospital. Care homes that are able to provide a designated setting that meets the [CQC IPC protocol](#) will need to have a CQC IPC inspection to confirm them as a designated setting. More detailed information is available on the [GOV.UK website](#). Indemnity cover will be provided by the DHSC, which mitigates risk, and an enhanced fee is payable per week.

Please contact Dave Pruden at [dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk](mailto:dave.pruden@leics.gov.uk) for more information. The deadline for expressions of interest is 19 January.

#### **Extension of free COVID-19 PPE**

The government is extending the central, free provision of all items of COVID-19 PPE to the health and care sector by up to one year to March 2023, or until the IPC guidance on PPE usage for COVID-19 is either withdrawn or significantly amended (whichever is sooner).

The press release announcing the decision to extend is available here: [Free PPE for frontline extended for another year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The government has also published its response to the public consultation. The formal response is available on GOV.UK [Extending free PPE to the health and care sector - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

An improved PPE Portal for the ordering of COVID-19 PPE is currently being designed and tested. We will keep you updated as this work progresses.

## IPC training

Free on-line IPC training and resources including the donning and doffing of PPE are available to providers via the following websites:

- [www.lscdg.org](http://www.lscdg.org)
- [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)
- [www.e-lfH.org.uk](http://www.e-lfH.org.uk)

## Management of infected linen

The IPC team have produced [a video](#) to show the correct process for double-bagging infected linen.

For advice and support, the IPC team can be contacted Monday to Friday, 9.00-17.00 on 0116 305 5121 or [infection@leics.gov.uk](mailto:infection@leics.gov.uk)

## VerifyPlus app

All care homes in LLR have free access to Verifyplus for 6 months from 11 November 2021. To start your free period of access for your care home in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland, please follow these simple steps:

1. Visit [www.verifyplus.co.uk](http://www.verifyplus.co.uk)
2. Click on 'Register Now'.
3. Enter your details and click 'Save and Continue'. This will autogenerate your password to your email address. Please ensure you enter the email address that you wish to access the admin portal, in most instances this will be the manager's email address, which will become the manager's username.

You can stop here, and you do not need to enter any payment details.

You will be granted free access to the app within 1 working day.

Please note this needs to be done for each Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland care home.

Demonstrations are available as follows:

Zoom Meeting

Every Tuesday @ 15:00

<https://zoom.us/j/98877968848?pwd=U0I0MGJtVjl2Y24zbHFPUURCbEZHZz09>

Meeting ID: 988 7796 8848

Passcode: 005905

Join Zoom Meeting

Every Wednesday @ 13:00

<https://zoom.us/j/98275673442?pwd=YlVtdTJZOUZkSGVTUUFU25qdWxEZz09>

Meeting ID: 982 7567 3442

Passcode: 378479

## **Launch of Providing Care website webinar**

The launch webinar for the [ProvidingCare.net](https://www.providingcare.net) as announced in bulletin 122 has been postponed. We will update you when a new date is advised. The website itself is available and full of useful information.

## **Finance Update**

### *Infection Control and Testing Fund 2 (ICTF2)*

Following submission of the final return to DHSC, there are two tasks to complete:

1. a final overspend payment will be issued to those providers that reported an overspend
2. invoices will be issued to those providers that either reported an underspend or did not report by the due date.

### *Infection Control and Testing Fund 3 (ICTF3)*

The initial 60% payments were issued in December to providers.

- Care homes will have received payments, for infection control (£161 per bed), testing (£115 per bed) and vaccination (£12 per bed), a total of £288 per bed
- Home care providers received payments in relation to infection control (£53 per client) and vaccination (£11 per client), a total of £64 per client, as listed on the home care tracker 22 Sep 2021

Payments have not been made to providers with outstanding invoices in relation to the original Infection Control Fund or the original Rapid Testing Fund. Providers that have not submitted an expenditure return for reporting point 1 must do so at reporting point 2 in February (date to be confirmed) to receive a payment.

Applications will be invited to the ICTF3 Discretionary Fund in February. Community Life Choices providers and organisations in sectors that have not received a direct payment will be prioritised. Also, testing cost applications from home care providers will be prioritised as there was no direct payment for those.

The Council will submit its first ICTF3 return to DHSC by 14 January and the DHSC will then release the second 40% payment to the council. Upon receipt, the council will make the second direct payment due to providers, who have reported and have no outstanding underspend invoices.

### *Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund (WRF1)*

Providers were required to submit a return by 4 January which detailed actual incurred costs for the period 21 October to 30 November 2021, estimated costs for the period 1 December 2021 to 31 March 2022, and details of any initiatives they wish to fund. These returns will be used to calculate and issue the first WRF1 payment. Payments will not be made to providers that have not submitted a return,

but there will be an opportunity for those providers to obtain funding when the initial WRF1 payments have been made to those providers that did submit a return.

### *Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund 2 (WRF2)*

An extension to WRF1 was announced recently - it is similar in form to WRF1. The main purpose is to support local authorities to urgently address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter, in order to:

- support timely and safe discharge from hospital to where ongoing care and support is needed
- support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care
- support providers to prevent admission to hospital
- enable timely new care provision in the community
- support and boost retention of staff within social care

This allocation of the grant must only be used to deliver measures that address local workforce capacity pressures in adult social care between 10 December 2021 and 31 March 2022 through recruitment and retention activity.

The WRF2 allocation to Leicestershire is £3.0m, though there are objectives to support hospital discharge and prevent hospital admissions, the fund can also be used to support recruitment and retention in the same way that WRF1 does and therefore bolsters the funds available to providers.

For more information, see the [WRF2 section of the Gov.UK website](#).

### *Omicron Support Fund*

The government has announced it is providing an additional £60 million to local authorities to support the adult social care response to COVID-19 in January. The purpose of this fund is to support the adult social care sector with measures already covered by the infection prevention and control (IPC) allocation of the Infection Control and Testing Fund (round 3) to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within and between care settings.

Additionally, this funding may also be used to increase ventilation in care homes, and to enhance local authorities' current direct payment offer particularly when the only way a person's care needs can be met is by a friend or family member, or to enhance support for carers.

It may also be used to pay for temporary staffing to cover increased staff absence caused by COVID-19 and maintain staffing levels and workforce capacity.

For more information, see the [Omicron Support Fund section of the Gov.UK website](#).

### *Worker retention package*

On 15 December, LLR announced a retention package for adult social care workers in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in recognition of their efforts over a challenging winter to come. The funding has been allocated from the NHS and the DHSC to support the adult social care workforce and is in two parts:

#### *Winter loyalty bonus*

Face-to-face support workers and ancillary staff of CQC registered providers will be entitled to a one-off payment in March 2022 where they have been employed continuously by their CQC registered provider employer between 13 December 2021 and 28 February 2022.

The value of the one-off payment is:

- £500 for an employee working 20 hours or more per week
- £250 for an employee working under 20 hours per week

Where a worker's hours vary, or extra hours are taken on, the average hours will be calculated to determine the correct value to be paid. The appropriate funding will be transferred to providers in time for the Mar 2022 worker pay run.

Please note that registered managers who were originally not entitled to receive a payment will now be included.

#### *Early payment of enhanced National Living Wage*

Each of the three local authorities is seeking to channel additional funds to identified providers from January which would enable them to pay enhanced National Living Wage rates earlier than the nationally mandated date of April 2022.

Relevant checks will be undertaken to ensure that these additional payments are passed on to employees.

Later in January providers that wish to take part in the incentive will be asked to do so by completing and returning a template.

#### *Fee increase for April 2022*

Following the publication of the White Paper in relation to Adult Social Care reform, further guidance has been issued regarding the policy objective to reduce the gap between fees paid by self-funders and those paid by LAs. It requires local authorities to undertake and submit to the Department of Health and Social Care:

1. a cost of care exercise – produced by surveying local providers for 65+ residential and nursing care and 18+ homecare to determine a sustainable fee rate for different care settings. Exercises will need to accurately reflect local costs such as staff pay and travel time, and provide for an appropriate return on capital or return on operations. Local authorities will be expected to publish the exercises

2. a provisional market sustainability plan setting out local strategy for the next 3 years (2022 to 2025) – using the cost of care exercise as a key input, this provisional plan will demonstrate the pace at which local authorities intend to move towards a sustainable fee rate. DHSC will also expect to see strategic planning for changes in types of provision in response to local need with other local areas, taking into consideration the role of new models of care.
3. spend report – this will detail how money has been allocated in line with our expectations in order to achieve a more sustainable local market.

Work is underway with the residential care fee increase for April 2022 and that work will be extended to incorporate the requirements set out above. For home care, extensive analysis was undertaken last year to determine the cost of care and that work will be integrated into the requirements.

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>