

Provider Update 10/06/20 - Admissions and Outbreak Process

Dear Provider

We are writing to you to update you on a number of areas. Firstly and most importantly, the Strategic Commissioning Team would like to thank you and your whole staff team for the care and dedication that you have shown during this difficult period. These continue to be challenging times set against a landscape of ever changing guidance, please be assured that we are working very hard to ensure that we keep the lines of communication open between our organisations and hope that you feel that you have been appropriately supported so far by the Council during the Covid19 crisis.

Outbreaks

During Covid19, on advice from our Public Health colleagues we are considering an outbreak to be **one case** either in a Resident or a member of staff. The Outbreak Control team work to the following principles:

- If a person has symptoms or is awaiting test results the outbreak will be suspected
- The outbreak will be confirmed upon receipt of a positive result. An outbreak may also be considered to be present even if there is a negative test result if there is more than one person who is symptomatic.
- We know that in some cases it may not be possible to carry out a test. In these situations we will work with you alongside the Infection Prevention Control Team to understand the date that we count from.
- For staff who are symptomatic it is important that we understand the last date that they were in the Home.

An outbreak will be considered over when:

- ✓ There have been 14 clear days following the last confirmed positive test
- ✓ there are no other symptomatic Residents awaiting test results
- ✓ any staff that are or have been symptomatic or Covid positive have been isolated from the Home for 14 days since the start of their symptoms or positive test

The IPC team will then work with the Home to take steps to close the outbreak (by completing the actions detailed in the attached document) and then admissions for Covid negative people can recommence subject to your agreement.

Admissions to Care Homes

In order to provide you with assurance that we are doing the best to protect the citizens of Cumbria the Council has developed some principles for admissions to care homes.

1. **Care Home sites where there is no current outbreak:**

A "prevent and protect" model will be in place. Care home staff and residents should be tested and supported with robust PPE precautions and high standards of infection, prevention and control. Strict measures should be implemented on social distancing, self-isolation and visits. **In these circumstances the council would not make referrals of individuals that are Covid positive.**

2. **Care Home sites where there is a known outbreak - one or more resident.:**

A "protect, contain and support" model will be in place. Staff and residents should be tested and supported with robust PPE precautions and high standards of infection, prevention and control. Isolation wings or sections should be introduced, where possible, within the care home. For these homes the admission of Covid positive individuals would be considered if a number of criteria have been met (more details on this will follow)

The Council or other placing organisations cannot compel a provider to take or prohibit admissions, as the responsibility and liability for the home sits with the CQC Registered Manager, but, we would hope you will continue to work together with us to support this approach and not accept placements until the Home has completed the process following an outbreak. (Please see attached Process and Actions document for your information)

The County Council has set up an Admission to Care Homes Oversight Group that will be approving ALL funded placements into care homes regardless of who the funding body is. We would strongly recommend the Homes do not accept any private placements whilst there is a confirmed or suspected outbreak

Prior to an admission being confirmed you will be contacted by the Council or the NHS Discharge Team to confirm the COVID status of your home.

To ensure the safety of your existing residents and staff you must ensure that the appropriate checks and tests have been carried out before taking a new admission.

Further Information for Admissions

Below is an extract from the social care action plan regarding admissions and recommended isolation periods.

1.33 For people discharged asymptomatic into a care home – these individuals will have been tested prior to admission (as per paragraph 1.30). Where these tests are negative, we still recommend isolation for 14 days. This will normally be in a care home that is able to meet that requirement, or it could be under alternative local authority made arrangements assisted by appropriate NHS primary and community-based care. The NHS Discharge Requirements will continue to apply.

1.34 For individuals coming from the community, we will move to these residents being tested prior to admission. The majority will have come from isolation in their own homes given social distancing and shielding policies. After discussion with the new resident and family, the care home may wish to isolate the new resident for a 14-day period following admission.

1.35 Any individual being taken on by a domiciliary care or a supported living care provider should continue to be cared for as possibly COVID-positive until the 14-day period has passed, within their home, following the relevant guidance for PPE.

1.36 It is important that we keep people who need care services and the people who care for them as safe as possible. These measures, along with our PPE strategy, will minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus in social care, while also ensuring safe and timely discharge from NHS beds. We will keep this policy under continuous review during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan/covid-19-our-action-plan-for-adult-social-care>

Testing

There are various routes to testing, both local (pillar 1) and national (pillar 2). The latest information for Cumbria is found on the following webpage:

<https://northcumbriaccq.nhs.uk/covidtesting>

We would encourage Care Homes to contact the IPC team on IPC@cumbria.gov.uk if they have residents **that are symptomatic** as we can often organise testing and receive results back quicker locally. This also enables us to complete further testing within the Home upon a positive result to minimise transmission as much as possible.

PPE

Having access to the correct PPE remains a vital part of reducing the risk of transmission of Covid-19 within care homes. This government link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes> provides details of the national guidance on the use of PPE including the essential correct doffing and donning of PPE.

Providers are expected to source PPE through their regular channels as best they can although we do recognise this can be challenging. “Small” care homes in Cumbria (care homes with 24 beds or fewer) should now have access to a new PPE portal that is being rolled out by government.

How providers register:

- Providers will receive an invitation email from DHSC to register on the portal.
- Providers should use the link within the email to access the portal and complete the registration process.
- After registering, providers will receive email confirmation. Providers are asked to check their junk mailbox if the email is not received.

Once registered you will be able to place an order once a week. There are currently limits on quantities placed through this system which are containing 100 IIR masks, 400 aprons and 800 gloves (400 pairs), per week or up to this amount of separate items, these limits may change over time.

Cumbria County Council will continue to provide an emergency PPE response where it is needed to ensure care homes continue to have the PPE they need to deliver care safely, through its MAST team. The MAST team can be contacted on 0800 783 1967, this is only intended as a short term emergency supply. Level of support through the MAST system is informed through the information you provide the Council through the daily calls, it is essential we continue to gather that information in order to be able to provide an effective service.

End of Life Training.

The CCGs are developing a training resource on End of Life Care. This will be accompanied by information on how to access further training and resources which can be targeted to specific staff groups. It is hoped that the training will provide an overview of the principles of end of life care and also some information specific to the support of residents with the Covid 19 virus and their carers and relatives.

Claiming back sick pay

HMRC have published details of how employers can claim back the first two weeks payments of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for employees who have been absent due to COVID-19. More information about how this can be done can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Website

There is a Cumbria County Council website with information for care providers:
<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/careproviders.asp>

You will also find information here relating to financial support for providers and the £600m IPC Grant issued by central Government

Care Provider Emergency Response Line

If you are experiencing **significant immediate challenges** which are critical to your safe delivery of support within the next 24 hours, please contact us on the Covid-19 provider emergency response line - 0300 3030 715. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This line should not be used for general queries, or issues which will not immediately affect your ability to continue to provide support

General Enquiries

Please contact us on strategic.commissioning@cumbria.gov.uk with any questions you have.