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30 March 2020

Dear Provider

**Care Homes within Staffordshire  
Emergency Measures to Provide Financial Stability and Support**

Following on from my previous letter published on the County Council's website on 17th March I wanted to thank you as a sector for continuing to provide essential care for the most vulnerable people in our communities in these extraordinary times. I know that your priority is to ensure that you have sufficient capacity to carry on providing care as demand increases and staff absences rise as a result of sickness and the Government's control measures.

Staffordshire County Council wants to assist by providing immediate financial stability and support as well as flexibility to enable you to focus resources on those most at risk. We have taken urgent action under the Council's Constitution in order to implement a series of changes to contracts, which are set out below. The offer below is available to care homes within Staffordshire that contract with the Council.

We are also looking to recruit, train and deploy a range of volunteers to bolster the care workforce.

In return we expect that care homes will be able to continue to provide essential care for current residents and that you continue to accept new residents to enable hospital discharges and support the NHS during what will be a very difficult time. We need care homes' schemes to work with us to accept new clients in a timely manner to keep the hospitals open.



The Council will make the changes set out below for an initial period of 12 weeks from 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

1. We will reduce the period between a placement being made and care homes being paid by reducing the internal validation processes to ensure that all placements are in payment within 14 days.
2. To reflect the need for care homes to undertake deep cleaning and additional room preparations we will adjust payment terms to increase the current 3 day notice period to 7 days in the event of:
  - a) The death of a service user
  - b) Transfer to another residence
3. We recognise that that care homes are unable to reclaim payments for SSP from Government, except for some temporary arrangements announced in the Spring Budget, which will only be available to organisations with 250 or fewer employees. We will fund these extra costs for essential workers who deliver care in your home through a lump sum. We are currently looking to develop a process to calculate this that will be minimally bureaucratic. Our proposal is for a calculation based on the number of care staff in a home and an assumed average sickness rate of 20% (this is the % that care homes have told us they are assuming). We will be issuing you with a declaration to complete in relation to your ability to reclaim SSP.
4. We recognise that care homes will need to be able to hire new care staff quickly and will face increased costs from higher use of agency staff. We will fund these extra costs through a lump sum. We are currently looking to develop a process to calculate this that will be minimally bureaucratic.
5. We want to encourage mutual co-operation and collaboration between providers, the voluntary sector, individuals and other organisations to ensure that people are safe and appropriately cared for. We do not require that prior approval is sought from the Council for any sub-contracting or mutual aid arrangements.
6. Reporting of Key Performance Indicators and Individual Service Fund monitoring will be relaxed.

Changes will be reviewed and amended as required as the national situation develops. We need you to look at how you can support your workforce, using the additional funds that we are making available to you to ensure capacity and retention, which will be critical over the coming weeks. These provisions only apply to care homes which are located in Staffordshire and come under the market oversight of Staffordshire County Council.





If your organisation is still experiencing difficulties please email [ascincidentmanagement@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ascincidentmanagement@staffordshire.gov.uk) .

I hope this provides you with the reassurance that we will do everything in our power to support you during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr Harling".

**Dr Richard Harling**  
**Director of Health & Care**

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