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Date: 24 March 2020

Dear Provider

Home Care – 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.

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

In return we expect that home care companies will be able to continue to provide essential care for current clients and that you continue to accept new clients to enable hospital discharges and support the NHS during what will be a very difficult time. We will not be able to accept any hand back requests during this period and we need home care companies 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 29th March 2020.

1. We will pay home care companies for total commissioned hours for each package of care provided.
 - a) For contracted companies there will no longer be a requirement to use the CM2000 Electronic Monitoring System to claim payment. We ask that you continue to monitor and manage the volume and quality of care provided by your staff using your own systems.
 - b) Non contracted companies will need to continue to invoice the Council as they do now. If, for whatever reason you are unable to submit your invoices please notify us and we will make a calculation in order to make an emergency payment, thus supporting your cash flow.
2. We will enable home care companies to decrease or increase a care package by up to 25% using their professional judgement, without prior authorisation from the Council. Providers are required to record any decisions they have taken, with evidence of the rationale used and will be required to share these records with the Council if requested.
 - a) There will be no financial penalty or reduction in payment for any decrease of care. This tolerance is with the absolute requirement that all services users who are commissioned by the Council are safe and appropriately cared for.
 - b) We will fund up to 25% additional contact time for a care package, this is dependent upon the company having completed and submitted to the Council a RAG rated list of all people they support on behalf of the council.
3. Payments will continue to be made gross of any client contributions and will be made weekly to home care companies. Companies who are not contracted on either the primary or secondary framework, will continue to submit invoices and these will be paid within 7 days, rather than the current 28 days.
4. In order to claim an increase in funding relating to point 2b home care companies will need to submit a simple return (to be issued via the Home Care Contract Management Team) on a 4 weekly basis.
5. If it becomes necessary to decrease or increase a care package by more than 25% then home care companies should contact the Council for a discussion about the potential for further flexibilities.



6. We will adjust payment terms for home care companies to fund 7 days as a holding period in the event of:
 - a) A person being admitted to hospital.
 - b) The death of a service user.
7. In circumstances detailed in point 6a the home care company is expected to restart care for the person if they return home within 7 days. A company is not expected to ensure that care workers are unchanged at the point of restart. For people who refuse care there is no expectation that packages are held.
8. We want to encourage mutual co-operation and collaboration between home care companies, 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.
9. Reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 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.

If your organisation is still experiencing difficulties please email 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



Dr Richard Harling
Director of Health & Care

