

## Coronavirus Covid-19 and adult social care in Staffordshire

**Message from Dr Richard Harling, Director for Health and Care (04 May 2020)**



It has been another extremely busy and challenging week in adult social care.

There continues to be much media attention about the impact the pandemic is having on care homes in particular, which I understand will be upsetting for staff, residents and relatives. The reality is that homes are working very hard under very difficult circumstances to continue to provide care for very vulnerable people and over the coming weeks we will be looking to continue to promote this in the media, on social media and within our local communities.

National PPE guidance has changed again with staff recommended to wear masks, gloves and aprons for all personal care, regardless of whether the individual is symptomatic. 'Sessional' masks can be used. We have updated the guidance on the Council's website and tried to produce a simple summary. We will be holding further webinars to clarify the guidance and also support good PPE technique on our [PPE webpage](#).

We are continuing to contact all care providers to offer advice and support and we are maintaining our dedicated telephone (0300 111 8050) or email [ascincidentmanagement@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ascincidentmanagement@staffordshire.gov.uk) helpline. Where care homes have cases of COVID-19 we will be offering additional support, bringing in help from a multidisciplinary team including infection prevention and control professionals where appropriate.

We will soon be reaching a point where the NHS restarts some 'normal' work. This will see a rise in the number of people discharged and needing care and support. Home care providers have been doing an incredible job so far at picking up new packages. It would be helpful to know whether there are any significant risks to sustaining this as demand increases.

The government continues to roll out testing, including to care workers and care home residents. Arrangements for testing are growing daily and not necessarily in a co-ordinated way. We will provide more updates on this as we get more information. Please keep visiting our [Staff testing and infection control](#) webpage over the coming days.

In addition:

- Friday 1 May marked the first ever virtual celebration of **Staffordshire Day** with scores of events and activities happening online. This year we **dedicated the day to all our frontline carers and keyworkers** with a special edition of Robbie Williams' anthem Angels. More than 150 people and groups sent in their version and you can see the final take [here](#)
- In the week ending 26 April, the Council distributed just over 110,000 individual items of PPE to providers in the adult social care sector, of which not far off on third of all items required included face masks.
- On 23 April, the DHSC launched a [Covid-19 Adult social care recruitment campaign](#) entitled '**Care for others. Make a difference**' which aims to attract thousands more people into the social care sector. We will communicate the key campaign messages with you shortly and our Care Market Development Team will also be sharing details of how we are working locally to support people to find jobs in the adult social care market in Staffordshire.
- We have been informed of NHS Transport volunteers who are able to offer the following support to adult social care:
  - Support to care homes requiring shopping or pharmacy collections, or other supplies and equipment and transport of residents to homes, for example, for residents deemed to be medically fit following hospital discharge.
  - Community-based support, involving collecting essential supplies and medication or 'Check in and Chat', for the self-isolating and those deemed at risk of isolation.

Referrals for support from these volunteers can be made through [GoodSam](#) website or by phoning 0801 963646.

- Public Health England guidance last week concluded that chest compressions and defibrillation techniques are not associated with a significantly increased risk of transmission of acute respiratory infection. As such, the advice is that PPE used for these procedures should continue to follow national [Guidance on the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) for non-aerosol generating procedures \(APGs\)](#).
- On our Information for Providers webpages last week, we also provided links to a range of really useful resources for [providers supporting people with a learning disability and / or autism](#) and updated our [information, advice and guidance for individual employers on their use of PPE](#).

I would like to continue to thank all care providers and their staff for the continued dedication and selfless support they offer every day to many of the most vulnerable individuals in Staffordshire. Please share your success stories if you would like me to share them in future updates by sending further details to our Health and Care Engagement mailbox: [healthandcare@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:healthandcare@staffordshire.gov.uk).

Dr Richard Harling, Director of Health & Care