

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



### Message from Dr Richard Harling, Director for Health and Care 15 May 2020

Infection and death rates are falling in England and we are observing a gradual and tentative easing of lockdown measures. While this is good news, these remain difficult times: we will need to maintain high standards of infection control and remain vigilant to new cases.

Public Health England (West Midlands) with support from the Council, delivered a webinar training session on 4 May. This covered basic facts about COVID-19; how to apply standard infection control precautions and use personal protective equipment; how to prepare and deal with a single case of COVID-19; how to manage an outbreak of COVID-19 in a care home; how to facilitate safe transfers in and out of care homes during COVID-19; and how to access local support. We have uploaded the webinar and its associated slide pack to our section entitled '**Covid-19 seminar for staff working in nursing, residential, supported living and domiciliary care settings**' on our [Staff testing and infection control](#) web page. Please use the webinar to cascade this information to your staff. We are very grateful to Public Health England for leading this webinar.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The last week has seen minor changes to national PPE guidance, including guidance on the use of potential alternatives to a FFP3 respirator and PPE donning and doffing posters for home care have been added to the .Gov.UK [How to work safely in domiciliary care](#) landing page.

PPE is now subject to temporary tax relief, as detailed on this .Gov.UK [tax information and impact note](#) link.

National supply chains remain challenged. The Council continues to maintain emergency supplies of PPE for care providers who are unable to source supplies elsewhere. To date we have delivered more than 700,000 items of emergency PPE.

Details of how to access emergency PPE is on the [PPE](#) web page under the title '**Accessing PPE**'. Home care providers based outside of Staffordshire providing support to Staffordshire residents can access emergency PPE for Staffordshire residents.

We have shared a notification letter from DHSC regarding removal from supply chain of Tiger Eye protective goggles and frames. If you have not seen this before now, please refer to the section entitled '**Tiger Eye Protector - Removal from the supply chain**' posted on 11 May on our [PPE](#) webpage.

We have ordered red soluble laundry bags to our list of emergency PPE supplies on offer and will update providers on our [PPE](#) web page when these are available.

## Reporting deaths

We have updated information on '**Reporting deaths in a care home setting**' on our [Information for care homes](#) webpage. To support the use of video link reporting, providers are encouraged to be making the most of access to Microsoft Teams through registering for the temporary '**Fast Track access to NHSmail**' as detailed on our [Enhancing care provider communications during the Covid-19 outbreak](#) webpage. If you have had received notification of an unsuccessful registration attempt or you have not received an email response within 7 days of submitting your NHSmail registration form, please use the resources on our webpage to resolve any errors that may have been made and if they can't be resolved, to access the NHSmail helpdesk.

## Testing

Testing for symptomatic care workers is available through the CCG at Stoke City Football Club and Burton Albion Football Club. Tests can be booked through the CCGs via this email: [covid19workforce@northstaffs.nhs.uk](mailto:covid19workforce@northstaffs.nhs.uk). We have asked government to add these facilities to the national online booking system and are waiting for the outcome of this. Testing is also available through the national online booking system, although it may mean people being sent to regional testing centres outside the county as well as mobile testing units within the county. Our preference is that requests for testing are through local rather than national testing arrangements.

Care homes should continue to notify Public Health England of suspected cases. Public Health England will provide advice on testing, which will be carried out through Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust.

A new national portal has been established through which care homes can request tests for all residents with and without symptoms and staff without symptoms. This service provided by the Department of Health and Social Care will be rolled out to all care homes in a phased approach. It is currently available for care homes whose primary clients are older people or those with dementia. We would be very grateful if you could let us know whether you have already requested tests and also keep us up to date when you receive them, when they are collected, when you receive the results and what the results are. Please notify this information to [COVID19testresults@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19testresults@staffordshire.gov.uk). This will enable us to manage and keep track of which care homes are being tested and support care homes in the event of positive cases. The government has also asked that local authorities and the NHS prioritise care homes for testing, based on a range of factors including size. Our preference is that future requests for testing are registered through a local process (detail to be communicated separately) rather than individual care homes registering on the portal directly. We recommend care homes not included in the first phase of the DHSC testing portal carry on requesting tests for symptomatic residents as previously advised on our [Staff testing and infection control](#) webpage.

## **Staff well-being**

The wellbeing of front-line staff and of the businesses that employ them is essential. Well-being support for care workers and guidance for businesses is available on our new [Other help to providers](#) web page.

The Skills for Care Facebook group for all registered and frontline social care managers is helping to share information and provide crucial practical support and reassurance to staff with nearly 1500 members supporting one another in this way nationally.

## **Resident wellbeing**

Care homes may also be interested to visit [The not forgotten](#) website to enable their residents to see uplifting messages of hope and share golden oldies songs delivered by a number of well-known faces in its 'Best seat in the house' You Tube entertainment videos.

## **Hidden Heroes**

We are focusing on care workers this week as part of our ***Hidden Heroes campaign*** – so thanks to everyone who has nominated a colleague. Not surprisingly, we have been inundated with nominations. See more about our heroes on our [Hidden Heroes Spotlight On Staffordshire's Amazing Care Workers](#) webpage. Please send us 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).

Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks to care providers and their staff for the dedication they continue to show in the care they provide to vulnerable people in Staffordshire.

Dr Richard Harling, Director of Health & Care