



Provider Bulletin

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Any comments you have about these Bulletins (good or bad!) are welcome. Please contact:

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Tel: 01609 797042

[Message from Richard Webb, Corporate Director, Health and Adult Services, North Yorkshire County Council](#)

Dear Colleagues

Thank you to everyone who is working hard across the care sector to support people as we all respond, and adapt to COVID-19.

- As per the current advice, the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.
- Additional guidance has been released for guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-for-households-with-possible-covid-19-infection>
- The symptoms are: a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back and a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly.
- The major action we can all take is to **step up our personal hygiene**: primarily through hand-washing and other sensible, preventative actions <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>;
- Re-visit and test out your **business continuity plans**; All services will have business continuity plans covering issues such as loss of staff and premises, and dealing with disease outbreaks such as influenza. We would advise services to review and familiarise themselves with these plans in the context of the national coronavirus action plan, for example the potential scenario that up to one-fifth of employees may be absent from work during peak weeks.
- There are a number of proposed actions for providers, which we would expect a robust business plan to contain including:
- Ensure people in receipt of Council-commissioned home care is up-to-date and establish levels of informal support available to individuals from family;
- Map all care and support plans commissioned by the Council with a single framework: high; medium; low
- Map as above those packages that are privately funded.
- **Ask for help and advice from the County Council as and when you need it**: we have a team of Public Health, care sector and provider experts who can work with you to provide guidance and practical support
- I wanted to continue to thank providers for managing this situation and it is pleasing to note that providers are continuing to accept placements in what is continuing to be a difficult situation.

Best wishes, *Richard*

Venue Based Day Activities – Non-Regulated Services

We will be making individual contact with all Providers of Non-Regulated venue based activities (Day Activities) to discuss with you, your current contingencies and whether you are looking to make changes to service delivery to manage the current risk. If you are considering making significant changes to services then please contact the Quality & Market Improvement Team as soon as possible, however, we will be making individual contact with Providers from Monday 23rd March 2020. Part of this conversation will involve what services you may be able to offer the Council rather than a venue based services to ensure that vulnerable people remain safe during the current climate.

At this time, we are encouraging providers to be as flexible as possible and to develop new ways of operating their service, with support from the Quality & Market Improvement and Service Development Teams. The main focus will be telephone contact, helping to set up peer friendship groups so people call each other.

For Providers of older peoples' services, we are asking them to suspend any part of their service which is a venue based day activity and to consider alternative provision to ensure that people remain safe. This will initially be until the end of April. We are aware that by suspending your usual group day activities may put considerable additional pressure on families/carers, such as older carers. As a result, when we make contact with you from Monday 23rd March, we will commence discussions regarding the potential impact arising from the suspension of your services for those people with high level or complex care needs and also the impact on their carers/families.

We will continue to fund your existing contracts to enable you to retain your valuable staff resource and to redeploy your teams to continue to meet the needs of individuals whilst adhering to the government guidance. We will do this initially until the end of April, at which point we will review the situation.

Completion of a Risk Notification Return Document for COVID-19

To enable the Council to respond to COVID-19 we are asking Care Providers to submit a Risk Notification Return, if you have a member of staff or a supporting and individual who is self-isolating or is a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The Risk Notification Return must contain the first part of the post code for the person or staff member, the date they started to self-isolate or were confirmed as a case of COVID-19.

Responding To COVID-19: The Ethical Framework For Adult Social Care

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ethical-framework-for-adult-social-care/responding-to-covid-19-the-ethical-framework-for-adult-social-care>

COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements

This document (link below) was issued on 19th March which sets out specific requirements around the discharge requirements for health and social care. The Council is currently reviewing the guidance and formulating a response to the requirements. We will share the Council's response to the document as soon as possible, however, in the interim we are asking Care Providers to undertake the following actions as a matter of urgency:

- Adopt and use the NHS's Capacity Tracker, which the Council uses when commissioning care home placements.
- Implement NHS Mail, which the NHS has identified is safe and secure for sharing patient identifiable information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-discharge-service-requirements>

Closure Of Educational Settings: Information For Parents And Carers

Current guidance from the closures of schools can be found below. We are still waiting for the confirmed definition of what constitutes a critical worker, however, we do envisage that this will include people working in Social Care.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

How The County Council Is Organising Its Response

Our priority is the safety and well-being of the population and to ensure continuity of essential public services, whether we provide them directly or whether partner organisations provide them on our behalf.

Across the Council, we are working to support schools, voluntary sector organisations and to maintain essential road and transport services, as well as our public health and social care responsibilities.

We are working as part of the statutory North Yorkshire and York Local Resilience Forum to take this work forward, alongside the Police, NHS, Fire Service and other government agencies.

Within adult social care, we are organising our response through 5 key aspects and have people seconded full-time to support this work these work streams are:

- Communication
- Move between business as usual to business contingency
- Business Impact
- Supply Chain
- Policy & Protocols Briefing Changes

Where to Obtain Advice

As the situation develops and new guidance is issued we will share this with the care market. Please see the links below to trusted sources of information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/urgent-next-steps-on-nhs-response-to-covid-19-letter-simon-stevens.pdf>

Find below other useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/stories/how-were-responding-outbreak-coronavirus>

<https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus#the-intention-of-early-containment>

<https://www.careprovideralliance.org.uk/business-continuity-infection-control-flu.html>

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-councils/social-care-provider-resilience-during-covid-19-guidance-commissioners>

<https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/ataglance/helping-to-prevent-infection.asp>

<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2019-21/coronavirus.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do/what-the-coronavirus-bill-will-do>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

Previous NYCC Provider Bulletins set out this and other advice:

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/providerbulletin>

County Council Webinars

The first webinar was held on Thursday 19th March, with over 75 Care Providers joining and participating in the discussions. We had presentations from subject matter experts from Emergency Planning, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and Public Health. The presentations will be made available and the webinar was recorded to share with the whole care market and as soon as the recording is available this will be shared. Thank you to those providers who participated and we will hopefully be able to have future webinars. If Providers have specific topics for future discussion, then please contact the team.

Who Can You Contact for Help?

The Quality and Market Improvement Team at County Hall is your first point of contact for all help, advice and support in relation to COVID-19. They will bring in additional help from Public Health and Communications experts, as well as the County Council's social care and provider services.

You can contact us via e-mail at socialservices.contractingunit@northyorks.gov.uk or telephone on 01609 797042 (Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 17:00, Friday 08:30 - 16:30)

For out of office enquiries contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01609 780780

Contact Details

We are asking all Care Providers to ensure that the Quality & Market Improvement Team have up to date contact details including phone number and email addresses, we are also asking care providers to provide the Quality & Market Improvement Team with an out of hours contact number that the Council can use in emergencies only. Please contact us with this information at your earliest convenience and for any Provider that does not contact us we will look to make individual contact with you next week.

Personal Protective Equipment

The updated guidance for social care providers contains information on the use of PPE required for Staff when delivering Personal Care to confirmed cases of COVID-19 or to those people who are self-isolating and symptomatic. This includes the use of fluid repellent surgical masks.

The Department of Health & Social Care issued an open letter to Care Providers (which we distributed on Wednesday 18th March) covering the Free distribution of fluid repellent facemasks from the pandemic flu stock which started on Wednesday 18th March, with every care home and home care provider receiving at least 300 facemasks. It is anticipated that the distribution will be complete by next Tuesday 24th March 2020.

Whilst you are waiting for your delivery of free fluid repellent facemasks and if you are actively delivering care to an individual who displays symptoms you can continue to contact the Quality & Market Improvement Team who will be able to advise you on how you can collect a limited supply of face masks from the Council.

To access a supply of the masks on a weekend, providers will be required to call the NYCC Customer Service Centre on 01609 780780, who again will confirm with you whether you are actively delivering care to an individual who displays symptoms and you have a relevant risk assessment in place that aligns to the Public Health England Guidance. The Customer Service Centre will then provide you with details of a nominated Council building where you can collect a supply of Face Masks from.

We would request that providers continue to order their own PPE as necessary and seek advice from us where you need it.

From Monday 23rd March the Quality & Market Improvement Team will be contacting care providers to discuss their current stock levels of PPE.

Frequently Asked Questions

Self-Isolation in Care Homes and in Community Settings

National guidance is available on who needs to self-isolate. If in doubt you can use the NHS 111 online service for advice (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>). If a case is identified in a care home or any other setting, Public Health England will be in direct contact to give appropriate advice on how to manage the risk of spread, including around people for whom traditional isolation procedures may be difficult.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Further discussions are on-going in relation to the impact of self-isolation on people in receipt of care, however, in the first instance we would advise that you seek legal advice when considering the legal implications for quarantining individuals.

If a person still meets DoLS criteria:

1. They are unable to consent to their residence to receive care and treatment;
2. They are under continuous supervision and control;
3. And not free to leave.

A DoL'S authorisation would still need to be applied for as usual.

Following ongoing advice from the Government around the containment of individuals suspected to have the COVID-19 Virus, we would advise, in the first instance that you seek legal advice from your organisation when considering the legal implications for isolating individuals upon receiving medical advice.

For those that need to be isolated urgently due to suspected COVID-19 there are provisions laid out in The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 and Article 5 (e) of the Human Rights Act 1998 to respond to these situations, again I would advise that you seek legal advice on how these provisions may affect your organisation.

Any authorised decision to isolate a person (as detailed in the Coronavirus legislation) must continue to take into account, what would be in the person's best interests and what is the least restrictive option.

I advise that you read the Government guidance for care homes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision>

Supported Living:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-supported-living-provision>

Fulfilling Contractual Responsibilities

Any Provider that is unable to meet its contractual responsibilities as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak should review their business continuity plans as a matter of course and in the first instance contact the Quality & Market Improvement Team to discuss this.

Difference between Coronavirus Strains & COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and animals. Some types of coronavirus cause less severe disease, such as the common cold. However, others can cause more severe disease such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus that first appeared in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

Visitors to Care Homes

The new advice from the Government is that all "unnecessary" visits to friends and relatives in care homes should cease. We are requesting that you make contact with us as soon as possible so a discussion can be held on how these restrictions on visitors will be managed and how people living in the care home will continue to maintain their family links.

We are requesting that you ensure essential visitors, such as local Health and Social Care staff are still able to visit and undertake their roles and ensure continuity of care for people. This would also include any Advocacy Services and Relevant Person's Representatives (RPR).

Do I need to wait for available staff to have enhanced DBS checks before they can start work?

A new member of staff may start work under supervision with a clear DBS Adults First Check while waiting for their full DBS check results. The Council's Pre Purchase Agreement states that an appropriately qualified and experienced member of Staff is appointed to supervise the new member of Staff; and the new member of Staff is accompanied at all times by another member of Staff, preferably the appointed supervisor, whilst providing services under this Pre-Purchase Agreement"

If I was considering suspending services what measures could be put in place to prevent social isolation?

Many local voluntary organisations, charities and community groups provide valuable services and activities for people across the county. We would encourage you to consider whether there are other things that your organisation or its volunteers can do to help reduce the risk of loneliness and social isolation of your members and others in your community such as:

- Ask volunteers to regularly ring people to check they are ok and to have a chat
- Encourage your members to contact each other by asking for permission to share contact details
- If people need help with things such as shopping or caring for pets during periods of self-isolation encourage them to ask family, friends and neighbours first, if they still need help this may be something your volunteers can help with
- Community First Yorkshire are posting regular updates on their website to support voluntary sector groups - <https://communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-updates/>
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations are also keeping their website regularly updated with ideas and advice - <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

If you know of anybody in your community who you think needs support and where they don't have anyone locally who can help, please encourage them to contact North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Centre on 01609 780780.

What financial support is available from NYCC to support providers?

As part of our commitment to our local suppliers, we are taking dynamic action to help our small and medium-sized businesses. In recognition of the value we place on our local suppliers and the difficult times they are facing, we will be fast-tracking payments for invoices – which means they will receive payment from us more quickly. We hope that this will be of some assistance during this difficult time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Finally:

Remember - prevention is always better than cure. As with the flu virus, the most effective way to protect yourself from Covid-19, Coronavirus is to adopt good respiratory and hand hygiene to prevent the risk of infection and a 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach to coughs and sneezes.

The best way to protect yourself and others is:

- wash your hands with soap and water, or use a sanitiser gel, regularly throughout the day;
- catch your cough or sneeze in a tissue, throw away the used tissue, bin it, and wash your hands;
- if you don't have a tissue, use your sleeve;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; and
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell.