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Our ref:

Date:

LCC Covid 19 Update 19 March 2020

Dear Providers

I am writing to thank you for your continued work with Service Users in the community in Lancashire especially during these unprecedented times dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have been contacted several times with providers raising concerns relating to issues relating to Covid-19 and this letter will hopefully give you some information on our current position. We are following national advice and guidance on a daily basis and we will share information as soon as we can.

We continue to work within our statutory frameworks but are prioritising our work on a daily basis to those most in need of support. We will have to make some visits to fulfil our statutory functions however, where possible we will have telephone or email contact rather than visiting provider's unnecessarily and we are working with the governments advice regarding speeding up assessment requirements.

We are here to offer support and we have increased the resource in our duty services to assist with the increase in demand and we are working on new Local Authority guidance as it comes out.

As the situation is changing rapidly we are updating our website portal on a daily basis to ensure we can give you the most up to date position. Going forwards we will use the portal as the place where we will provide updates for you and where you can contact us and provide information to us. This will reduce the reliance on using emails which you will appreciate is now becoming sizeable and difficult for us to monitor and respond to. The portal can be found at the following link: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/health-and-social-care/care-service-provider-engagement/> there you can find frequently asked questions and other guidance and information which we regularly update which you may find helpful.

Many questions relate to the providers supply of PPE equipment and finance and therefore I respond to this directly.

PPE

We are aware of the recently published guidance for social care providers and that the Authority will be in a position to issue free PPE to support Adult Social Care Providers. The current position is that the Department of Health and Social Care are leading on the distribution of this. Each care home and home care provider should have a delivery of 300 water resistant surgical masks by the middle of next week. Providers do not need to take action, these will be automatically distributed. We believe that there may be a further delivery of additional PPE and we will keep providers updated with the details as we receive this.

Providers are reminded to ensure appropriate use of PPE and not to use it unnecessarily. If neither the care worker nor the individual receiving care and support is symptomatic, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond normal good hygiene practices, and providers should have adequate supplies for this. This is, as I am sure you are aware, an ongoing situation which is unlikely to improve for the foreseeable future, and we need to ensure sustainability throughout this period. All staff must be trained in the correct donning and doffing procedures for PPE.

Finance / Payment

We are aware that as providers you are extremely concerned of the potential financial impact on your service due to the anticipated disruption to actual levels of service delivery. The Authority is committed to ensuring that our social care providers do not suffer/experience a substantial loss of income, or disrupted cash flow during these unprecedented times.

We are satisfied and want to assure our providers that we have the staffing capacities, and the technical capabilities to ensure there will be no delay to payments owed to providers.

We want to assure providers that we are supportive of the guidance issued by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, and that in order to mitigate this pressure we, as an Authority, are prepared to pay 'on plan', as whilst we recognise that the actual delivery of support may be, on average, less than plan, we also acknowledge that care providers may be delivering additional care at short notice.

Whilst the mechanics of this is yet to be agreed, we want to assure you that we are looking to establish a solution that is least onerous for yourselves as providers.

As you will be aware Lancashire County Council are following Government guidance and the latest guidance can be found at the below link relating to supported accommodation residential care and also home care services if you haven't received it previously <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19>

COVID-19 presents us with the greatest challenge in a generation. Our Social Care staff are skilled, dedicated, flexible and resilient. Please accept our sincere thanks for your leadership, and that of your staff, in what is going to be a highly challenging period. This is the time where we all need to pull together and this is going to be a fast moving situation where we need to respond quickly. We will offer as much support and guidance as we can during this time.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Slack', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Lisa Slack

Head of Service,
Quality, Contracts and Safeguarding Adults
Lancashire County Council