



Provider briefing: Health System pressures and current admissions to your homes

As a Health and Social Care system, we all have our part to play during these unprecedented times in managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Care providers more than ever will be crucial in the national priority of freeing up acute bed capacity and help meet the demand which COVID-19 is placing upon us all and will help us get through this crisis.

We acknowledge and appreciate that you care for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and we want to continue to support you to keep people within your services, both residents and staff safe.

As you will have seen, the government has introduced extremely stringent measures to limit contact between people as part of the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have so far followed national advice and will continue to do so.

Right now our critical services are our sole focus. All of our efforts must be concentrated on those most vital services that support our most vulnerable residents. We want as many of you as possible to be working, but this must be in a way that is safe for you and our residents.

The LCC guidance is very clear, you should operate your care home or service in line with national guidance, unless you have been specifically advised otherwise in relation to a specific case by Public Health England.

A number of homes have been in contact concerned regarding new admissions and discharges of your residents with regards to assessments and potential exposure to COVID-19. We appreciate that you and your staff teams may also be apprehensive in supporting someone under these circumstances.

Key messages

- In line with current national guidance, people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, including those being discharged from hospital, are not being routinely tested. In these circumstances, there is an expectation that you would accept a new admission or readmission to the home.
- There is an expectation for homes to accept a 'Trusted Assessor' assessment, the plan of care must be kept under continuous review by the home, updating assessments and care plans as needed, in the normal way. If you have any issues with your 'Trusted Assessor' agreement, this should be discussed with your local CCG, with a view to resolving the problems experienced.

- If a resident is symptomatic / positive tested for COVID-19 then they should remain in isolation for 7 days from the onset of symptoms – if they are discharged during this time then the 7 days is a continuum from the day of onset.
- Residents who have been in contact with a confirmed case who are medically fit for discharge are required to isolate for 14 days. The 14 days starts from when the symptomatic contact became ill. If someone has already been isolated in hospital for 7 days, then they would only be required to isolate for a further 7 days in a care home as long as they remain without symptoms themselves. If they get symptoms then they would need to be isolated for 7 days from the onset of symptoms.
- Staff should be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 i.e. a new continuous cough or a temperature of 37.8 degrees or more and national guidance should be followed where these are present.
- Good infection control practice is essential to limit the spread of COVID-19, there is a lot of useful information on the LCC IPC website through the link below. To break the chain of infection, Care Providers should adhere to the following:

Hand Hygiene

- Ensuring adequate supplies
- Ongoing training
- Supporting residents

Respiratory Hygiene

- Supporting residents
- Supplies and disposal of tissues
- Pedal bins

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Ensuring adequate supplies of all PPE including face masks and eye protection
- Understanding what is required – see latest guidance
- Training
- Addressing appropriate/inappropriate use
- Safe donning and doffing

Waste disposal

- Items double bagged
- Kept separate from other waste for at least 72 hours before being disposed of as normal

Environmental Cleaning

- Increased frequency. Especially high touch points
- Disposable items

It is recognised that there is a need for more swabbing for both symptomatic residents and staff, unfortunately following national guidance it is not available at this time but has been escalated through NHS England.

The national concern around supply of PPE has also been escalated to NHS England. Please note there is guidance on when PPE should and should not be worn within the Public Health England national guidance.

Please keep an eye out for further NHS England briefings for further information and updates as they get published.

LCC continues to work with colleagues in the NHS and Public Health England to do everything we can to delay the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the people of Lancashire are protected. The Provider Portal will be a central communication point for Care Providers with any updates and responses to queries, including a Frequently Asked Questions document.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/>

We also recognise that there is some work to do with health colleagues to develop a tool that will communicate cases where the risk of positive/contact/low risk of COVID-19 has been identified.

The regulated care sector is a critical service in ensuring the country's health & social care resilience and safety. Tools available to ensure a safe service during this time

- Capacity tracker – as part of the Government Discharge Guidance, all providers are being asked to ensure that they update their capacity daily on the EMS system, there are some additional questions to be completed which will provide an overview and current challenges in order that these can be addressed.
- NHS mail accounts - all providers will be able to access their NHS mail accounts and have received instructions on accessibility. This will allow for secure exchanges of information between agencies.
- Utilise Skype and other tools for secure virtual conference calls, to ensure advice from GPs, acute care staff, and community health staff can be given.

We would be interested to hear from care providers who have devised systems which enable them to continue accepting admissions, we will continue to review all our services and we will provide a further updates via the provider portal.

References and further information

Public Health England COVID-19: Guidance on residential care provision

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

Care Quality Commission: Guidance on Trusted Assessor Agreements

https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180625_900805_Guidance_on_Trusted_Assessors_agreements_v2.pdf

NHS England: COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-hospital-discharge-service-requirements/>

LCC: Guidance on PPE, hand hygiene and PowerPoint presentation

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/health-and-social-care/infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-coronavirus/>

This briefing has been produced using the current guidance available; we acknowledge that this may be amended or updated as the pandemic progresses.