

Coronavirus COVID-19 care provider information

Frequently Asked Questions

Lancashire County Council is following national guidance from the government and Public Health England and will update these frequently asked questions as required.

Included in this version are questions and answers relating to:

- Infection Control
- PPE
- Death Management
- Travel and Parking
- Social Distancing and Non-compliance
- Employer and Business Guidance
- Support for Unpaid and Informal Carers
- Capacity Tracking
- Recruitment
- Testing
- Communications

Infection Control

Question 1: What can care homes do to stop the spread of Covid-19?

Public Health England (PHE) has advised care homes to stop all visits to residents from friends and family. Medical staff and delivery couriers can still visit, but homes have been asked to leave a hand sanitiser by the entrance and ask them to wash their hands as soon as they enter the building.

For people living and working in care settings, infections can be serious and, in some cases, life-threatening. They can also make existing medical conditions worse. Regular contact with staff, other residents, family and friends and the shared living space all mean infection can easily be passed around. It is therefore vital to take the steps that can help prevent infection occurring.

- hand washing and hand hygiene
- respiratory and cough hygiene
- personal protective equipment (PPE)
- laundry management
- best practice management of people at high risk or with symptoms of COVID-19.

Question 2: A member of staff thinks they may have Covid-19, what should they do?

Care workers who are concerned that they have coronavirus, should follow [NHS advice](#). If advised to self-isolate at home, follow the [Stay at home guidance](#). Anyone advised to self-isolate should not visit or care for individuals until it is safe to do so. Essential workers are asked to contact the dedicated email address for the [Lancashire County Council Testing Hub](#) to request a test.

Question 3: Do staff need to go home and isolate if they have contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19?

Care workers who come into contact with a COVID-19 service user or resident, whether they were wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or not, can remain at work. This is because in most instances this will be a short-lived exposure, unlike exposure in a household setting that is ongoing.

However, if a care worker develops a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste they should stay at home in accordance with the Stay at Home guidance (detailed above). If they develop these symptoms while at work, they need to self-isolate and immediately inform their line manager.

Question 4: A staff member has tested positive for coronavirus but they have no symptoms, what should they do now?

They will need to self-isolate for 7 days from the date of the test. As long as they are feeling better by day 8 they may return to work.

Question 5: A member of staff has recently tested positive for COVID-19, they are now back in work but have new symptoms, what should they do?

If they have recently tested positive for COVID-19, isolated for 7 days and recovered from symptoms, but now have new symptoms of cough and/or fever it is very unlikely that these symptoms are due to a new infection of COVID-19 coronavirus. If they feel too unwell to work please contact the Lancashire County Council Testing Hub on 01772 532123, however they will not be required to self-isolate as a possible coronavirus case.

Personal Protective Equipment

Question 6: What is the guidance around use of PPE for social care?

The government has published a range of guidance to help care providers reduce the spread of infection. As a reminder, the most up-to-date guidance is:

- the [action plan for adult social care](#)
- [table 4](#) of the infection control guidance
- the [PPE plan](#)

The guidance sets out advice for those affected on how to minimise risks of transmission, through good infection control practices, and set out some of the steps that local authorities and the NHS should take to support care providers through the pandemic.

Question 7: We do not have enough PPE. What can we do?

Most providers will have longstanding arrangements for securing PPE for their staff, but since the Pandemic, demand and supply have become significantly out of kilter locally, nationally and internationally. Providers should continue to do their utmost to source supplies when and where they can.

Extra costs due to higher volumes needed and the higher unit prices charged can be funded through Lancashire County Council's Financial Assistance Programme. However it is accepted that the scale and complexity of the procurement challenge will be too great for some or many Lancashire adult social care providers. The County Council will therefore continue to do its utmost with other statutory partners to source PPE and offer it to providers free of charge to keep their staff working safely in care settings.

To request supplies, please call the **PPE Contact Number on 0300 123 6786 (the line is open 08.00-19.00hrs, 7 days a week)** giving as much information as possible regarding your request.

Direct Payments recipients can request supplies through Lancashire Independent Living Service by calling **01772 558 863** or emailing **lils@disability-equality.org.uk**

Question 8: Could I please have some clarity on the PPE tables (2 and 4) in the Government guidance updated on 17th April 2020?

The information below is an attempt to clarify this:

PPE guidance for staff in the community

Table 2 and table 4 cover some specific scenarios and the relevant PPE that is needed for staff working in the community. Public Health England have confirmed that where there is a discrepancy between the two tables then table 4 should be followed as we are now in sustained transmission stage.

Where direct care is being provided, table 4 sets out the PPE required for staff in the community.

Table 2 also explains the PPE required where a visit is taking place to a person who is in the shielded group.

PPE guidance for staff in care homes

The guidance for those working in care homes provides information on how to work safely during this period of sustained transmission of COVID-19. It is also relevant to those providing supported living. The guidance includes:

- a flowchart for care workers providing care to residents to identify whether there is a need for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- PPE recommendations for care home staff
- frequently asked questions on the use of PPE in care homes
- examples which help to identify the correct use of PPE when undertaking activities that require physical contact or activities which do not require physical contact but are carried out in close proximity to residents

This should be read in conjunction with infection prevention and control (IPC) and PPE guidance which was released yesterday which covers sessional use and sustained COVID19 transmission.

Question 9: What is the advice on the sessional use of PPE?

Please see the latest PPE guidelines GOV.UK - [COVID-19 personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

The guidelines introduce sessional use of masks and face protection which can be worn continually over a period of time rather than for a single patient/episode of care. For more information download: [Additional considerations, in addition to standard infection prevention and control precautions, where there is sustained transmission of COVID-19, taking into account individual risk assessment for this new and emerging pathogen, NHS and independent sector poster.](#)

Masks should not be worn continually if damaged, soiled, damp, uncomfortable and difficult to breathe. The manufacturers' guidance should be followed in regard to the maximum duration of use.

Death Management

Question 10: What is the guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

Public Health England have issued guidance ([link](#)) on this subject, which provides advice on:

- how to treat the deceased in a way that maintains respect for the dignity of the individual in different settings, whilst protecting against the risk of transmission (using PPE)
- shielding vulnerable people from contact with deceased individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- maintaining social distancing at funerals

It is strongly advised that mourners do not come into close contact with deceased individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, including through rituals or other practices.

Question 11: How do I verify a death in a care home?

You do not need a qualification or formal training to be able to verify death (confirm that someone has died). This role could be carried out by senior carers in residential care homes.

Undertakers will move a deceased person to a funeral parlour, without medical practitioner verification, as long as there are no suspicious circumstances, and the death did not directly result from; trauma, surgery, violence, medications, drugs, self-harm, neglect or exposure to a toxic substance.

Travel and Parking

Question 12: is the Council offering free car parking to all social care staff and NHS workers during the coronavirus outbreak?

Yes, due to the current climate it was agreed that enforcement would take into account the parking issues carers and NHS staff would face due to the amount of extra vehicles being parked up around residential areas with the isolation restrictions being in place. Providers should produce a notice (on company letter head) which explains to the police the reason why the carer requires to be out and about, it would not be advisable to place anything referring to dispensation on the notice. The Community Enforcement Officers have been instructed to leave vehicles alone in any on street parking area, that have such notices displayed on the dashboard. Some care providers are asking their staff to also display a photocopy of their ID badge, redacting any personal information.

Question 13: What if a member of staff forgets to place the letter/ID and receives a penalty charge notice?

They should send a letter/email of appeal using the info on the penalty charge notice accompanied by the letter headed notice to state they were on care duties at the time, this will then be looked into and the PCN cancelled if the carer was indeed on duty.

Please note that PCNs received prior to the government isolation instructions had been announced will be dealt with in the usual manner. Please be assured the CEOs are out to ensure care staff can park safely and close to the client/patients residence to carry out their work without hindrance and if seen will advise accordingly. Carers should be informed that they should still park their vehicles safely without obstructing pathways and roads.

Social Distancing and Non-Compliance

Question 14: How do we support people who refuse to comply with the self-isolation and social distancing guidelines?

We are receiving an exceptionally high number of reports from social care providers and staff around people not following the Government's 'stay at home' and social distancing guidance, which was introduced to stop the spread of Coronavirus. Clearly the consequences of a person going into the community, as they ordinarily would, are

- that they are at risk of contracting COVID-19;
- that they may infect others, if they have the virus; and
- that they may be in breach of the new Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations which have come into effect.

We strongly encourage everyone to follow the Regulations, however we recognise that some of the people you support are finding it incredibly difficult. As providers you will already have many strategies and approaches in place to manage behaviour. You are the experts in caring for the people you support and therefore are able to identify the best approach and plans in order to support individuals to comply with the government Regulations.

It goes without saying that under such unprecedented circumstances, people receiving support who have developed successful coping strategies for day to day life, may now be experiencing difficulties with tasks and decisions that would previously not have troubled them. As such, we would urge you to ensure that the support you provide to

those individuals is person centred, empathetic and patient, now more than ever. We encourage you to undertake risk assessments and then seek to mitigate the risks as best as possible, on an individual basis. This could include reviewing care plans; being creative with activities within the person's home; utilising distraction techniques and making decisions about the best time of the day for permitted exercise.

The Police have been given powers to enforce stay at home guidance. In situations where all attempts to persuade a person to comply with this guidance have failed, Lancashire Constabulary are able to advise. The Police have adopted a four-phase approach:

1. **Engage** – officers will initially encourage voluntary compliance.
2. **Explain** – officers will stress the risks to public health and to the NHS and educate people about the risks and the wider social factors.
3. **Encourage** – officers will encourage compliance and emphasise the benefits to the NHS by staying at home, how this can save lives and reduce risk for more vulnerable people in society.
4. **Enforce** – if faced with non-compliance, officers will, if necessary and proportionate:
 - direct those without a reasonable excuse to go home, using reasonable force if needed; and/or
 - issue a penalty notice for disorder (PND) of £60, to discourage further non-compliance.

Police have been given powers to enforce stay at home guidance. In situations where all attempts by the provider to persuade a person to comply with this guidance have failed, there is a new Covid-19 online reporting form introduced by Lancashire Constabulary. <https://doitonline.lancashire.police.uk/covid19/Create>. The new form should be used to report COVID-19 related breaches of the government rules that state people should stay at home and all retailers selling non-essential goods and other non-essential premises should close to help fight COVID-19. If your incident is not suitable to report online, and not an emergency, you can call 101.

Question 15: Where a person does not (or may not) have capacity to make decisions about social contact in the circumstances of COVID-19, what should I do?

There are challenges for providers to ensure compliance with social distancing and self-isolation in the light of the new Government Regulations. The Court of Protection team at Essex Chambers have been asked to advise on a number of occasions on the legal position where a person lives in the community and declines to practice social distancing in circumstances where they do not (or may not) have capacity to make decisions about social contact, or around their care and support. The guidance note below from Essex Street Chambers provides a general overview and discussion:

[Mental Capacity Guidance Note](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care has now issued guidance on the application of DoLS: [DHSC Guidance: The Mental Capacity Act \(2005\) \(MCA\) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards \(DoLS\) During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)

This guidance sets out different circumstances when a DOLS authorisation or COP application may be required in relation to COVID-19 impact. If in doubt, seek further advice.

For further guidance on MCA during COVID-19 please see Social Care Provider Services MCA, DOLS and COP Guidance during Covid-19 Crisis Version 2 on the Provider Portal.

Employer and Business Guidance

Question 16: What support/guidance is out there for personal assistants and individuals who manage a direct payment (DP)?

The [COVID-19 guidance for Personal Assistants, PA employers and Direct Payments recipients](#) contains the most common questions we have been asked and some important information when employing personal assistants.

If the person has had no contact with the Council and needs advice, they should contact Lancashire Independent Living Service on **01772 558 863** or email: lils@disability-equality.org.uk

Question 17: Will the Council intervene to ensure providers, who have private contractual arrangements with DP recipients, continue to be paid when the service has been temporarily suspended, due to Covid-19?

LCC are encouraging DP recipients to continue to pay their care provider, even if the person is using their direct payment for alternative care and support during the pandemic. DP recipients can claim for additional emergency payments to continue to pay any bills from their usual provider.

As the contractual relationship is made between the DP recipient and the provider, LCC is unable to intervene. The decision to continue payments, when no service is being delivered, is therefore based on:

- The terms and conditions of the contract; and/or
- The DP recipient's agreement to continue with payments.

If there is a break in an arrangement with the provider, LCC will not cover the loss of income. However if that means that your organisation will face severe financial difficulties you must get in touch with LCC via the Contracts Team at contractmgmt.care@lancashire.gov.uk

Question 18: Is there any business support to assist me with the impact of Covid-19?

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the impact it is having on businesses, Boost - Lancashire's Business Growth Hub, is refocussing all its efforts from growth support to business resilience support. They have a dedicated #AskForHelp team ready to assist businesses impacted by the coronavirus. They can offer resilience tips as well as

connect you to specialist advisers who can help you manage today's unique challenges. Call **0800 488 0057**.

Question 19: When invoking my Business Continuity Plan, can I introduce flexibility around call durations and call frequency?

Yes, we actively encourage you to review all support plans, identify which elements of support are critical to that person's well-being, prioritise those critical care and support elements and amend call planning as necessary. You can do this without recourse to the Council, but you must ensure you inform and agree with service users any changes to normal arrangements. Under these circumstances we will not be enforcing tolerances around start and finish times of calls. We do hope this allows you greater flexibility to meet the needs of current services users and potentially increase your capacity to support more services users as the situation changes.

Question 20: If I want to expand capacity in my care home, do I have to notify the CQC?

Please see the useful advice and guidance below from the CQC to care homes who want to increase their bed capacity as part of the COVID-19 response. If providers are making an application to increase their capacity and help meet DHSC or CCG COVID-19 contingency plans, it's important they tell the CQC in their covering email and clearly mark it 'COVID- 19 application'. The CQC are prioritising these applications. More information can be found here: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/registration/covid-19-registrations#socialcare-registered>

Question 21: Will the CQC continue to carry out inspections?

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced that it stopped routine inspections from Monday 16 March. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CQC's primary objective will be to support providers to keep people safe during a period of unprecedented pressure on the health and care system. The CQC have posted the following press release: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/releases/cqc-stop-routine-inspections-focus-supporting-providers-deliversafe-care-during-cov-0>

Question 22: Will the Council continue to carry out quality monitoring visits?

The Council has decided to stop quality monitoring visits unless we receive intelligence that service users are at risk of harm.

Support for Unpaid and Informal Carers

Question 23: What support/guidance is out there for unpaid and informal carers?

The Lancashire Carers Service is open for business as usual. At this time, they are not carrying out home visits unless absolutely unavoidable. A full range of services are, however, being provided through telephone contact with carers and the service is conducting Carers Assessments and Carer Assessment Reviews through telephone contact. Online support is also being provided through the Carers Digital platform. Please continue to send referrals through to the Lancashire Carers Service in the usual way through the Liquidlogic Adults' Social Care System (LAS) or by email to: enquiries@lancscarers.co.uk

More information is also available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family>

and

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19>

Question 24: Are unpaid carers eligible for free PPE and how do they get it?

Unpaid carers do have access to urgent supplies of the required PPE through the dedicated PPE Contact Number: 0300 123 6786 (08.00-19.00hrs). The costs of this PPE are met by Lancashire County Council.

Question 25: Can unpaid carers use the LLC priority route to receive a test?

Unpaid carers are essential workers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#essential-workers>) and are therefore eligible for a priority test, if:

- They have coronavirus symptoms – a new continuous cough or high temperature and are following government guidelines on self-isolating; or
- A member of their household has coronavirus symptoms meaning they are self-isolating in line with government guidelines.

A test can only be arranged within the first five days of symptoms, ideally within the first three days. Individuals who are not showing symptoms will not be tested.

Carers are asked to contact LCC Testing Hub at:

COVID19-TESTING@lancashire.gov.uk or telephone: 01772 532123

Capacity Tracking

Question 26: I am being asked to update my bed/service capacity on multiple Capacity Trackers used by different organisations, what should I do?

All care homes and care providers are required to complete or submit data for one tracker only, which is the LCC COVID-19 tracker. This tracker has been re-designed to ensure it meets providers' statutory obligations to the CQC, PHE and NHS England.

Any data that is required to be submitted to any of these agencies will be made available to them via LCC Commissioning Team.

A named contact from Lancashire County Council will ring you between 08.00-12.00 daily to check on your staff welfare, ensure your workplace remains stable and to take the data from you, including PPE figures. In relation to COVID-19, you do not have to submit any other data returns and can carry on with your main priority; the care of your service users.

Please note the statutory obligations upon care providers for exception reporting to the CQC and PHE (adverse incidents, outbreaks, deaths etc.) will remain in place.

Recruitment

Question 27: Is there any change to how DBS checks are being done because of COVID-19?

The Government has introduced a free-of-charge DBS applications and fast-track barred list check service for certain keyworker groups, including social care staff. Please see the further guidance and referral form on the following website:
<https://www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/criminal-record-disclosure>

Please note there is no change to the requirement for all employees and volunteers to have a DBS check and for employers to carry out a full risk assessment process for any positive DBS check employees or volunteers, before they can be deployed in the care and support of vulnerable people. Only if the following conditions are satisfied should an employee or volunteer provide care and support without a valid DBS check:

1. The DBS application must have been submitted prior to start of work.
2. The employee or volunteer must be directly supervised and remain in the company of a DBS checked employee at all times.

Question 28: Do you have any HR guidance for us, as social care employers?

ACAS has issued [advice for employers based on government guidance](#)

Question 29: Is the council looking at how it can support the deployment of staff to support provider services?

Providers will have their own 'bank', 'agency' or 'locum' staff to fill workforce gaps in ordinary times and situations. It is anticipated that during the present Pandemic the size of these workforce gaps may be unusually and suddenly larger than ever encountered in normal operating conditions. It is equally expected that there may be a shortage of available agency staff to call upon. The County Council has therefore been establishing its own Auxiliary Workforce to provide urgent and immediate staffing into independent sector services that are unable to fill their own rotas to safe levels.

This auxiliary workforce will be employed by the council itself and in the event that it is deployed in a service it will be provided free of charge to the provider for the duration. If you require additional staff support, please raise your request during the daily capacity tracker welfare call. Your nominated Contracts Management Representative will then discuss the situation and work through potential issues, before completing a referral form.

The learning and development team are drawing up at a county-wide recruitment campaign to supply staff to carry out non-personal care tasks. We are in the process of confirming the legal employment part i.e. where staff may be on unpaid leave from another job. We will also co-ordinate process and provide online training as well as staff support. We are also looking at ways to support the recruitment of permanent staff.

Testing

Question 30: What are the local staff testing arrangements for Covid-19?

Anyone over the age of 5, with symptoms of coronavirus, can [ask for a test through the NHS website](#).

Essential workers, with symptoms, can apply for priority testing through the LCC Testing Hub at: COVID19-TESTING@lancashire.gov.uk or telephone: 01772 532123. These tests for essential workers are prioritised over the tests available for the wider public. A test can only be arranged within the first five days of symptoms, ideally within the first three days. Individuals who are not showing symptoms will not be tested.

Tests are being rolled out to care workers and residents in care homes that look after older people or people with dementia (with or without symptoms), as part of a rolling programme to test all care homes.

This means anyone in one of these groups can find out whether they have the virus.

Question 31: How are the tests carried out?

The test will take place at either our Regional Test Site at Preston College, St Vincent's Road, Fulwood (usually open 10am – 4pm) or one of the mobile testing units operating throughout the County. The Preston College site operates a drive-through model, meaning you or a member of your household must drive to the site. They are unable to test people who arrive on foot, take public transport or a taxi. People will also need access to a smartphone, in order to scan your test kits barcode in order to receive your results.

This [helpful video](#) shows you what to expect at a drive-through test site.

You will receive your results by text or email within 48 hours of taking the test.

Question 32: I have members of staff who are unable to drive, how can they receive a test?

The military has begun operating mobile coronavirus testing units which will travel to care homes, football stadiums, police stations and prisons across the UK. The new units will test essential workers and vulnerable people in areas where there is significant demand.

You can also select a home test kit using the online self-referral service. Home test kit availability will initially be limited but more will become available. The user guide explains how to use the online self-referral service - [link](#)

Question 33: How will the residents in my care home be tested?

The LCC Testing Hub is offering whole home testing kits for all care homes that support older people or people with dementia.

Swabs can either be taken by care home staff or the local Swabbing Team. Initial feedback from the labs is that the swabs taken by care home staff have been taken well, with only a very small number of spoiled samples. A video and instructions on how to

take swab samples for COVID-19 testing are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-taking-swab-samples>

If a care home suspects a resident has coronavirus symptoms, they should contact the PHE Cumbria and Lancashire Health Protection Team who will advise and offer support, call 0344 225 0562, option 2.

The PHE lab in Manchester is processing the swabs and has good capacity (10,000 per day).

Testing will now also be provided to all those who are to be discharged from hospital to a care home, before they are discharged. The aim is for this to provide reassurance and peace of mind to providers, residents and their families where they can be sure a new resident doesn't have coronavirus. If the person tests positive, providers will be able to take appropriate action to ensure that social care workers and other residents are safe - including implementing isolation procedures for those who test positive. The [guidance on admission and care of people in care homes](#) explains more.

Question 34: Is whole home testing mandatory in care homes for older people and those with dementia, when no one has symptoms?

No, however, the scientific evidence shows significant asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 in care homes via both residents and staff, similar to the transmission seen in the wider community. By the time a single symptomatic case is identified in a home, the virus is likely already to be circulating amongst residents and staff. Whole home testing is therefore highly recommended.

Question 35: Will whole home testing be rolled out to other accommodation based settings, such as supported living, extra care and the refugees?

At this current time, whole home test kits are only available to those care homes that look after older people or people with dementia. Individual tests are available for symptomatic residents and staff in all other group home settings, as outlined in question 30.

Communications

Question 36: Am I eligible for an NHS email address and how do I get one?

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, secure communication between health and social care services is more important than ever. To support this, we are offering to fast-track the roll out of NHSmail to the care sector (including hospices). NHS mail accounts also offer access to Office 365 and Microsoft Teams and access to these systems will enhance the ability of improved connectivity for your residents to their families and allow staff to access professional support remotely.

For guidance and support around applying for NHSmail, please visit the [Digital Social Care webpage](#).

Please note: The fast-track registration route will provide one shared mailbox and two user accounts for each organisation, however if you need additional user accounts these can be added following the initial registration.

All care home and home care providers can now apply using the following application form:

- [Social Care Provider NHSmail Form](#) (DOCX 1 MB)

Please send your completed forms to: care.registration@nhs.net

Question 37: How do I ask the Council a question about my business during Covid-19?

If you are a provider with a general query relating to COVID-19 and adult social care, please use this form to direct your enquiry to the

Council: <https://lccsecure.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/questionnaires/runQuestionnaire.asp?qid=815886>. We will respond to the issues raised as soon as we can.

Question 38: Information for providers is changing quickly, how do I keep in touch?

We hold a provider webinar, via Zoom webcast, every Friday afternoon at 1pm. This is open to all social care providers, who operate in Lancashire.

For a link to join and instructions, please email:

CommissioningAgeWell@lancashire.gov.uk

Please send in your suggestions for topics to be covered to:

Ellen.Smith@lancashire.gov.uk