



15 January 2021

Dear Provider,

Request for your continued support for visiting health and social care professionals to your premises

First of all, we want to pass on our thanks and appreciation to you and your staff for your continued hard work, care and resilience in these very challenging times.

We know that the new variant of the COVID-19 virus and other factors such as increased social mixing over the holiday period are resulting in increasing infection rates and sadly deaths amongst the wider population and also amongst your staff and the residents you care for.

We will endeavour to continue to provide you with as much support as we can including but not limited to additional staff, support to access PPE, access to IPC training, support with testing and visiting and of course the roll out of the vaccination programme, which we all very much hope will bring in the not too distant future some relief to the ongoing challenges. As always, if you do need support, please use your usual contacts either in the local authority or through your local NHS services.

We know that the continuing burdens on you as providers of care to our most vulnerable citizens is resulting in an ongoing strain in many areas of your work and we want to give you our assurance and seek your assistance with one issue in particular that has recently been raised with us by a number of providers.

We share, understand and respect your desire to maintain a safe and healthy living and working environment for your staff and residents. We appreciate your diligence and continued efforts to maintain high levels of infection prevention through the use of PPE, social distancing, safe visiting (where allowed) and ongoing testing regimes.

We want to give you assurance through this letter that all of our local authority and NHS staff who may be visiting your premises are following and adhering to the strict measures and working practices as set out in local and national guidance and advice. This includes taking part in regular testing, using appropriate PPE and infection control measures and following social distancing rules unless giving necessary hands on care and support.

A number of providers have raised with us their reluctance to admit to their premises some visiting professionals on the basis that they are not able to provide evidence of a recent negative test result. This is understandable, however we want to explain and reassure you that regular testing is being done in accordance with national procedures, however not all visiting professionals will be able to give you evidence on the day due to the reporting and recording systems that are in place.

We are concerned that any reluctance or refusal to admit visiting professionals might result in some of your residents not receiving the care and support that they need and are indeed entitled to.

We would therefore ask that any decisions are based on a full risk assessment, and if you are still of the firm view and have the evidence as part of that risk assessment process that for whatever reason you are unable to safely admit the visiting professional please ensure that all necessary mitigating actions are taken immediately to keep the resident safe and well. Of course, if you require advice and guidance as part of the risk assessment process then please contact your usual local authority or NHS service to seek assistance.

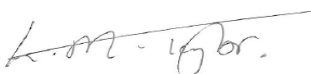
Any member of staff who has received a positive COVID test result will have isolated for the required period of time and will not be at work. All staff will be wearing the appropriate PPE on the day of a visit, will follow all of the appropriate infection control measures and will adhere to social distancing rules unless they are required to provide hands on care and support services to one of your residents. As mentioned above, all visiting professionals will be taking part in the national twice weekly testing programme.

There should be no reason why a visiting professional is not allowed to enter your premises to provide care and support to a resident who is in need of treatment or an assessment unless as part of the risk assessment referenced above you have firm evidence to suggest otherwise. If you have such evidence then we would of course expect you to contact your local authority or NHS services immediately so that the issues can be resolved as soon as possible.

We hope that you take this letter in the spirit that it is written – one based on mutual respect and understanding of the pressures that you continue to face, however we do wish to emphasise our view that it is imperative that health and social care professionals are admitted to your establishment to undertake their vital work.

We all agree that people in our care must be appropriately safeguarded and protected from any further deterioration of their health and wellbeing, and that we must work together to provide them with the appropriate care and support that they need, deserve and have a right to expect.

Kind Regards and once again many thanks.



**Louise Taylor**  
**Chair, LRF Adult Social Care Cell and**  
**Executive Director of Adult Services**  
**and Health & Wellbeing**  
**Lancashire County Council**



**Jerry Hawker**  
**Chief Officer, Morecambe Bay CCG**  
**(on behalf of ICS Out of Hospital Cell)**