

Kent Adult Social Care Provider Bulletin



Friday 10 July 2020

Social Distancing and PPE

Please be aware that social distancing should be practised in your care homes when staff are not attending to residents. We are seeing cases of staff that have contracted COVID and have potentially exposed a number of co-workers because they did not social distance at break-times, handovers or when travelling to work. This has the potential to result in a substantial number of staff being told to self-isolate and cause difficulties with your staffing rotas. This can be avoided if staff ensure they are social distancing when interacting with other staff members.

This is in addition to employing good infection control procedures and the correct use of PPE. You can [review the guidance here](#).

Government Infection Control Grant

To support Care Homes in utilising the Infection Control Grant, KCC has created a guide to clarify what is deemed as acceptable and unacceptable use for the funds based on the [‘Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund Ring-Fenced Grant 2020’ circular](#), as listed in the table below. More information is also available via the [Infection Control Fund Question and Answer](#) document.

Please see the document attached to the newsletter email for the full guidance of how money from the Infection Control Grant can be spent.

KCC would like to remind Care Homes that, in line with the Grant Circular, the funds are to be spent in their entirety by 23 September on legitimate infection control expenditure. Any unspent or non-legitimate spend will need to be repaid.

Testing Update

From 6 July the Government has rolled out weekly testing of staff and testing of residents every 28 days, in all care homes without a current outbreak. **Care homes will need to re-register on the care home portal to apply for regular testing.**

Applications for regular testing are now open for care homes caring for the over-65s and those with dementia.

[Register for regular testing.](#)

[Find out more about regular testing.](#)

✓ Regular retesting rolled out for care home staff and residents

→ Care home staff will be tested weekly

→ Residents will be tested every 28 days

STAY ALERT › CONTROL THE VIRUS › SAVE LIVES

Outbreaks and Outbreak Testing

There is a new outbreak management process for care homes that will begin on 13 July 2020. Once a case has been identified in your care setting, either through a lab confirmed case, or when there is a clinically suspected case, the care home should inform the health protection team (HPT) at Public Health England (PHE) as soon as possible. The HPT will perform a risk assessment to determine next steps and if an outbreak is suspected, the HPT will order testing for the whole care home. This will be repeated after 4-7 days and again at 28 days.

Please note that this testing is for outbreaks only, which means 2 or more cases that are linked to your home.

PPE Mutual Aid

Throughout the pandemic, the council has been supporting the Kent Resilience Forum to provide mutual aid to organisations across Kent needing emergency supplies of PPE that they were unable to source PPE to protect their staff and customers. As supplies of PPE are returning to the market, providers have been asked to return to ordering from PPE suppliers, rather than rely on the mutual aid portal.

It is proposed that the portal for free, emergency PPE will close on 24th July.

Whilst small providers will continue to be eligible for emergency supplies weekly from DHSC/Clipper, all providers are asked to act now to establish their own supply lines of PPE to be ready for the change. Suppliers are unlikely to be able to fulfil orders within the same short turnaround times as the Kent mutual aid portal, so orders should be placed in plenty of time for the portal closure. We recommend that providers place orders over several different suppliers, to ensure a robust supply. KCC can offer help and support to providers wishing to place bulk orders – contact your locality officer or contract manager if you are interested in this.

The council will be writing formally to all providers shortly to advise of the change, but in the meantime, it is critical that providers prepare, making sure they have resilience in their PPE supply, and cascade this information to staff responsible for sourcing and ordering PPE.

Kent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Service

DOLS Assessments

The number of DOLS applications and re-applications in Kent have increased significantly compared to the same period last year. Best Interests Assessors (BIAs) have worked collaboratively with care homes to arrange and assess, as many DOLS applications as possible, using remote technology. This requires careful planning with the homes to facilitate the DOLS assessments, at a time that is suitable for the Person and using appropriate digital platforms. So far, this has been a smooth transition, and now it is timely to review what we are doing, so it is likely that care homes will be contacted by the DOLS team to assess the ongoing effectiveness of these new mediums. Where some homes are experiencing technical issues with connectivity, KCC is working with them individually to offer free KARA devices. If you would like to find out more about this offer, please contact karaservice@kent.gov.uk.

DOLS re-applications

DOLS is a statutory responsibility so it is important that we work together to ensure people's rights continue to be safeguarded. To ensure settings meet their statutory obligations, care homes need to submit DOLS re-applications (Form 2) 5 weeks in advance of the DOLS authorisation expiry dates.

Recovery plans are now vital, so we need to focus on those clients where a DOLS is applicable, whilst we await further direction from the government on the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards.

Resources and Tools

The CCG has shared a number of guidance documents to support care home managers on a range of issues including managing DOLS, supporting social distancing and supporting staff following deaths in care homes. Please see the guidance documents attached to this email.

Sharing Your Excellence

We are always pleased to hear your good news stories, and to hear that the resources being put in place are useful and making a difference to you and your staff. If you've received or delivered any little acts of kindness or have any good news stories, [please let us know](#).