

Kent Adult Social Care Provider Bulletin



Friday 21 August 2020

Care Quality Commission COVID-19 Update – Testing for CQC Inspectors

We take our role in infection prevention and control (IPC) very seriously and have been considering the precautions our inspection teams should take as we increase our on-site activity.

We have consulted with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) about accessing COVID-19 tests for inspectors.

DHSC have considered the matter carefully and have assessed that CQC inspectors do not meet the criteria for weekly asymptomatic testing, as inspectors are not required to undertake 'hands on' closer personal contact with people.

This decision also applies to other colleagues undertaking inspection visits, such as specialist advisors and experts by experience.

This approach is in line with what has been agreed with other professionals, and DHSC will continually review their policies in line with emerging evidence. If the evidence means the criteria needs to change, they will advise us accordingly and we will update you.

Our priority is to ensure the safety of people using services, your staff and our colleagues. We are therefore taking the following measures:

- Thorough risk assessments ahead of all inspection and registration visits
- Provision of PPE for colleagues undertaking on-site activity, and training in how to don and doff correctly
- Training in infection prevention and control

We know that some providers are concerned that CQC colleagues will not be having a COVID-19 test before their visits, however we want to assure you that we have considered this carefully and are acting in accordance with advice from DHSC as well as implementing our own IPC measures.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for CQC inspectors

When we first resumed on-site activity, we supplied our inspectors with a pack of PPE which included a surgical face mask, gloves, apron and eye protection wear. This decision was based on the risks at the time and in the interests of protecting our colleagues, your staff, and people using services.

Public Health England (PHE) has since published new guidance detailing what PPE should be worn in different circumstances in adult social care.

We will therefore follow PHE guidance and use this to inform our decisions of what PPE is appropriate for the different circumstances. However, in some cases, our inspectors may choose to wear a higher level of PPE due to their own personal circumstances, such as if they are in higher risk category.

Inspectors signing disclaimers against insurance claims

Some adult social care providers have asked whether they can require CQC inspectors to sign a disclaimer before or during an inspection visit to a service, to confirm that they will not make any insurance claim on the provider in relation to consequences from a COVID-19 acquired infection caught whilst on the premises.

We have considered this and have advised our inspectors that they should not sign any such disclaimers when visiting services as part of our regulatory role.

Under section 62 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008, inspectors may enter any premises which are, or which the inspector reasonably believes to be, regulated premises. The inspector can enter using their power under s62 or they may enter with the consent of the provider at those regulated premises. In both instances it would be inappropriate for an inspector to sign a disclaimer in relation to any illness, injury or other harmful event that might occur to them while at those premises.

Bemix's Debut Single 'Isolation Maybe' – Raising Funds for Inclusive Mental Health Support

Musicians from across bemix, a group who support and advocate for people with learning disabilities and/ or autism, have come together to form a musical collective called 'bemixers'. They have written and recorded a song during lockdown and are excited to have released ["Isolation Maybe" as a single on Friday 7th August](#).

The song "Isolation Maybe" sends a powerful message of resilience and hope through difficult times. It aims to raise awareness of the effect that COVID-19 will have on the mental health and wellbeing of a group of people who are already particularly susceptible to experiencing mental health problems.

The money raised from song sales will go towards providing ongoing accessible and inclusive mental health support for people with learning difficulties and/or autism. [They want more people to hear what they have created](#), and the song is available for streaming and as digital download from all usual digital music download stores. Sustainability lifestyle blog, Moral Fibres, recommend buying digital music from 7Digital as an ethical alternative to buying music online from iTunes or Amazon.

Avenues Lockdown Experience

Working with people's families is essential to giving them the best support, and despite lockdown, shielding, and visiting restrictions, Avenues staff have been determined to find innovative ways to maintain these relationships and connections with lasting positive results...

Mandy and Nigel Mullett are regular visitors to the flats of their daughters Tori and Emily who are both supported by Avenues in Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Their support is fundamental to making sure 'the girls' are living their best lives. So when Covid-19 struck and visiting was restricted Avenues staff and family were understandably concerned how everyone would cope. Avenues support staff were involved in risk assessments for the family, contingency plans and managing support activities remotely.

[Read more about how Avenues supported the family and friends and of the people they support throughout COVID-19.](#)

Resources and Tools

The ['Admission and care of residents in a care home during COVID-19'](#) guidance has now been updated with Annex K. This annex sets out a service model for testing people moving from the community into a care home.

Kent County Council's Public Health team have [created a video to support adult care home staff in completing oral health assessments with their residents.](#)

Free Webinar – The Future of Care in Kent

Recognising the considerable challenges faced by our sector over the past 6 months and over the past decade, this webinar will seek to start a meaningful conversation with providers across the county and commissioners.

National Care Association is working with KCC to open up a dialogue with the Council to look at the needs of the frail and vulnerable members of our communities and how we as commissioners and providers can deliver the services in a consistent way.

KCC's Head of Commissioning Clare Maynard is keen to start a dialogue to inform the strategic direction which will ensure a sustainable future for Social Care in Kent and will be a part of this webinar. The Webinar will be hosted by National Care Association's Executive Chairman Nadra Ahmed OBE and NCA Board member Eddie Coombes, a provider in Kent and the south east.

Date: Thursday 10th September

Time: 2:00pm

[Register for the webinar here.](#)

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](#).