

Kent Adult Social Care Provider Bulletin



Friday 1 May 2020

Introduction from Sharon Dene and Mel Anthony, Senior Commissioning Managers, KCC



During these challenging times, everybody continues to pull together to support vulnerable people in Kent and our thanks go to everybody that is playing their part in making this happen. Everybody is working incredibly hard in unprecedented circumstances and it is important that we recognise the contribution of all and take time to support each other. This newsletter gives us an opportunity not only to share information but to share good news stories and experiences and we hope that you are finding it useful.

We have taken inspiration this week from Captain Tom as he celebrates his 100th birthday and demonstrates his dedication to his personal challenge, and what an amazing job he has done. So in the words of Captain Tom we will leave you with his quote:- 'For all those people who are finding it difficult at the moment: the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away'. And this will happen because of all the work we are doing together.



Update from Ann Taylor, Chairperson of Kent Integrated Care Alliance

From the start of the pandemic, KICA have identified a 'COVID committee' within its Board of elected Directors to help with advice and to support the whole sector during this challenging period. KICA are working collaboratively with other provider representative bodies and KCC and Medway council, the NHS and CQC to ensure services within our County are fully supported and informed of both local and national guidelines and process, as we progress through this peak period of pandemic and beyond.



It is of the utmost importance that everyone is kept up to date, for example, with how to access PPE, testing and financial support from our Local Authority. It is also important that we share experiences, challenges and emotional strain at this time, so

that we as a collective get through this together. We are proud to be leading this group as we have already achieved so much by sharing and supporting our colleagues. We are also proud to be part of a whole social care system that will make it through this pandemic. There are many things we may be struggling with individually but once shared are very much achievable.

Personal Protective Equipment Update

Kent County Council is continuing to work closely with its partner Kent Commercial Services (KCS) to support the coordination of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to its providers and other partners organisations across Kent. We have received positive feedback from our provider partners on the processes that have been put in place to manage PPE and the service provided in collaboration with KCS.

Between 3 April and close of business on 23 April, KCC supplied over 1.4m pieces of PPE in over 700 deliveries. During that period, we delivered on every day except Easter Sunday, and operated an out of hours service to cover the Easter weekend.

By working closely with our partners in the Kent Resilience Forum we have strengthened our supply chain and managed demand of various products alongside evolving guidance from Public Health England. We are continuing to manage a scarcity of some items such as Respirator Masks, but we now have more substantial stocks of some key items which were in short supply a few weeks ago.

Demand for equipment and deliveries from KCC continues to rise and is exacerbated by the evolving guidance on the correct use of PPE. This makes forecasting demand challenging, but we will continue to work closely with you in the coming weeks to understand your requirements and ensure PPE is targeted where it is most needed.

The safety of our residents and care sector workforce is our priority. We are aware that some providers have been sold PPE that does not meet the specifications to keep you and your residents safe. We've teamed up with Trading Standards who will investigate all reports of substandard PPE. Providers can send their reports to trading.standards@kent.gov.uk with "PPE Query" in the subject box. Providers who are sourcing PPE can also [check the specification of safe PPE](#) before they place orders.

COVID-19 Testing Update

Following the announcement about expanding testing eligibility, KCC have been in contact with the testing sites across Kent. We have been advised that CQC are leading on the expansion of testing for care homes nationally and have begun a programme of communication with the homes.

The current local processes that have been communicated are only for symptomatic care home staff/ household members. As soon as we have more information regarding testing asymptomatic workers and service users we will share this.

This remains a separate process to the national testing offering, discussed by Matt

Hancock. Individuals who have been stated as eligible, but do not currently have access to a local process can [book to attend the Regional Testing Site](#) at Ebbsfleet.

Eligibility for testing

Either a symptomatic member of staff within a care home or their symptomatic household member(s) are eligible. In either case the symptomatic person needs to be tested within day 3 to 5 of symptoms. However, you can book a test from 24hrs from the onset of symptoms to be tested on day 3 to 5.

The testing process **is not** for people who have no symptoms. Asymptomatic people who book a test will not be tested.

The symptoms which will qualify people for testing include all or any of the below:

- A fever above 37.8°C
- New onset persistent cough (with or without sputum), hoarseness, nasal discharge or congestion, shortness of breath, sore throat, wheezing, sneezing
- New onset anosmia with or without headache.

All other essential workers can [find out more information from gov.uk](#). Regulated providers who are not a care/ nursing home should visit the CQC testing sites.

Transport for staff unable to get to test centres

We have been working with our colleagues in Public Transport who have offered help with getting essential staff and their household members who are COVID-19 symptomatic to test centres in Kent. Staff and their household members must meet the requirements for testing.

If you have a member of staff who is an essential worker and requires assistance with transport please contact Philip.Lightowler@kent.gov.uk. The local test sites in Kent are currently open to care home staff and their household members who are COVID-19 symptomatic. Transport is free for providers.

COVID-19 Return and Business Continuity Form

We have had a good response to our automated online form which helps you to inform us quickly and simply if any element of your service is believed to be at risk, and we'd like to thank you for taking time to do this when needed.

The alert form asks some basic questions to help us identify you and your service, and brief details about disruption and its impact on service delivery in order that we can help you. Once submitted, the form will automatically alert relevant officers in the Council, such as Locality Officer or Contract Manager who will be your point of liaison.

- [Report issues in relation to COVID-19](#) (deaths, confirmed and suspected cases, staffing issues, risk rating)
- [Report other disruptions to your business continuity](#) using the Business Contingency Alert Form (BCAF).

Please note that the above forms are submitted in case of disruptions or emergencies and are not required on daily basis. Please update us if something changes. [Get in touch](#) if you have questions about business continuity.

Local Government Association Wellbeing Resources

We know that in addition to the operational impact of COVID-19, there will be a significant impact on emotional wellbeing for many of you and your staff. The impact of the pandemic on social care staff is well-recognised, and those working in care homes and domiciliary care are particularly likely to be affected as they support residents through the impacts of illness, grief and isolation.

We are all coping with a situation none of us have experienced before and no one is expected to have all the answers. Whilst we cannot solve many of these problems in the short term, as employers there are things we can do to support the psychological wellbeing of our colleagues and to ensure our critical services continue to run.

To help you and your staff in these unprecedented times, the LGA and NHS England and Improvement have worked to produce a comprehensive pack of information, which is **included as attachments to this update**. This includes a wellbeing information pack for care staff, further advice for managers and staff, a guide for social workers and a poster to display in your workplace.

If you have any questions on the content of this guide or if there are any areas you would welcome support in [please let us know](#).

Verification of Deaths in the Community

It is important that in Kent we are consistent in the way that deaths are recorded in the community. Please take the time to [review the guidance](#) from the London Coroner's Society which the Kent Coroners (via DMPG) have already endorsed.

Please note in particular the difference between:

- Verifying Life Extinct can be done by a trained qualified Health care professional – nurse, doctor or paramedic
- Medical Certification of Cause of Death MCCD can only be done by a doctor.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

KCC's DoLS team are now working through the detail of the [recent guidance from Central Government](#). Homes will be familiar with being contacted by Best Interest Assessors (BIAs) in relation to our statutory duty to assess service users for whom they have submitted a DoLS application. Following government guidance, assessments will be undertaken virtually where possible, but the DoLS office will continue to assess and risk manage on a case by case basis. Further information will be provided in future updates.

Further Tools and Resources

Pilgrims Hospice launched the [Stepping Stones Bereavement support service](#) on Monday 27 April for all **bereaved people in East Kent**. Please feel free to share this information with your colleagues and bereaved relatives

The QNI has launched [a new listening service, TalkToUs](#), to offer emotional support by phone to nurses working in the community during the COVID-19 outbreak.

NHS Health Education England have put together a [COVID-19 resilience hub](#) with tips for managers, advice on supporting colleagues and managing stress.

Good News Stories

One of our care in the home providers got in touch to let us know that a local business delivered a small donation of PPE alongside a chocolate cake and large tray of donuts for staff.

Another provider contacted us with some feedback: “We have used the PPE portal and our delivery arrived so quickly and without any fuss... I can’t quite believe how well this system works! I’m so reassured that we have access to a service like this, thank you. I just wanted to express how supported we feel by Kent County Council, Skills for care, CQC and the NHS for all of the guidance, resources, access to PPE, various webinars and support given to us to weather this storm.”

It is wonderful to hear that the resources being put in place are being used 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](#).