

# Weekly Q&A with Care Homes

Wednesday 18th November

## **Staff working across different home**

**Question:** The majority of people who work in care have to have two jobs so that they can afford to live. What are providers meant to do when staff have two jobs and they are actually contracted for both jobs (so they aren't on bank, on zero hour or working for an agency)? Are staff expected to decide which job they will have to resign from (as no employer will 'hold' a job for anyone) to be able to carry on working in our homes? And if they are expected to resign how are providers then meant to fill these vacancies other than by using agency staff? Particularly an issue for people who do waking night shifts, as they tend to do one or two night shifts with a home, therefore the home is their secondary job and they are more likely to remain with their primary job.

**Answer:**

- We recognise this is a difficult topic. Please think about exploring the following options:
  - Try and work with the provider where the employee has a second job to discuss options for stopping sharing staff by increasing one person's hours and decreasing another person's hours to keep staff in one home.
  - Utilise the ICF money to increase individual employee's hours / top up wages.
- Please see the Central Government's open consultation "[Stopping movement of staff between care settings](#)". The Government is consulting on regulation which would include: "The requirement would apply to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered residential and nursing care home providers in England. These providers would be required not to use staff to provide nursing or personal care who are carrying on, or who have carried on within the previous 14 days, a regulated activity in another setting and/or for another health or social care provider subject to certain exceptions."
- To clarify if the policy is made into regulation, the above statement would have to be followed by all staff (even if currently staff working at two places).
- The rule only applies to individuals providing care. For example, it would not apply to people working at the housing association or for meals on wheels. We are happy to discuss individual cases with you to confirm if an individual's second job is covered under "individuals providing care".
- You have until midday Monday 23rd September to respond to the consultation. It is mainly a tick box exercise with one catch all a box for comments. Please [respond here](#). We will be submitting a response as LBS feeding back your concerns over availability of staff.

- To prepare for the policy potentially becoming regulation we advise you complete a workforce analysis to determine which of your staff are at high risk of being affected and the proportion of your staff who may be affected.

### **PPE**

**Question:** Once we have the COVID-19 vaccine will we still have to wear PPE? Our residents do not like it.

**Answer:** Yes, at least for some time due to how long it will take to give everyone the vaccine, and some people refusing to have the vaccine. Also it may be helping to reduce the spread of flu. To support residents other homes wear badges with photos of them smiling.

### **Sutton Care Hub**

We have now launched the [Sutton Care Hub](#), a brand new website which will become the single point of access for guidance, resources and information for all staff working across all Sutton's provider services.

The Hub will be public, therefore provide staff, at all levels, with the assurance that they can access the correct, most up to date information at any time from their computer, phone or tablet. The Hub will support the London Borough of Sutton (LBS), South West London CCG (SWLCCG) and our providers to work together to build a stable, sensitive and supportive care offer in Sutton.

The Hub will be regularly updated with the latest news, guidance and much more. Please also [subscribe to the Sutton Care Bulletin](#) for bimonthly updates on the sector's big news, spotlights on key successes, links to training and plenty more. If you have any feedback or suggestions for additional content on the Care Hub, please contact [asc.providercomms@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:asc.providercomms@sutton.gov.uk)

### **Visiting Guidelines**

Please carry on using [visiting guidance](#) provided at the start of lockdown. We are waiting for more clarity on reliability of rapid testing from the pilots.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

- Elderly care homes will be the first priority group. We are still following up on the priority grouping of:
  - LD homes
  - Mixed needs homes
  - Non-care care home staff
- It is unlikely vaccinations will be given out before Christmas.

### **Flu vaccine**

- Supplies of flu vaccinations keep changing all the time so it is advisable for care homes to contact their own community pharmacist or GP clinical lead first to see if they can help. The next step would be to email the Chief Pharmacist Sarah Taylor who is also the Joint Flu Lead for Sutton on [Sarah.taylor@swlondon.nhs.uk](mailto:Sarah.taylor@swlondon.nhs.uk)

### **Blood tests in Care Homes**

Some homes are completing their own blood tests and some are using the phlebotomy service. Please, can we encourage homes to do their own blood tests. As the phlebotomy service's supplies are not enough to cover all care homes. Care home Support Team are available to provide refresher training if needed. Care Homes can also order bottles and equipment from pathology.

### **Guidance from the British Geriatric Society**

[Updated BGS guidance](#) has been published and 2 important factors that prevent staff from being involved in direct care of residents are highlighted below;

- all staff must use PPE and those who are unable to wear PPE should not be involved in direct care of residents.
- staff who decline regular testing must not be involved in direct care of residents.

These staff may need to be offered alternative roles.

### **DOLS**

We must act in the patient/residents best interest and try to encourage adherence to social distancing. If staff decline regular testing, they shouldn't be performing care staff duties. If residents decline, Care Homes should develop a strategy to support them to get the test.

### **Potential future themes**

- Admissions to homes

Wednesday 11th November

### **COVID-19 Vaccination**

- Primary care has to submit their plan by Tuesday about how the COVID-19 vaccine will be delivered, if it is signed off. Older adults in Care Homes and Care staff are in the priority group. We will come back to you with more information on what is included in Care Home staff e.g. care staff / administration / managerial / housekeeping.
- People need to be given 2 vaccinations 1 month apart. They need to be stored at -80 degrees. Once delivered (in batches of 975) they need to be given out in 3 or 4 days. Everyone who gets the vaccine should be observed for 15 minutes.
- We are looking at training and will provide more details as more information comes out.
- The communications are being worked on currently, and we will share with you ASAP.
- Shazma will provide a list of community pharmacies that have the flu vaccine separately.
- The priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination are being worked up and although not mandatory all people in these high risk groups should be encouraged to get vaccinated.
- For more information please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/research/coronavirus-vaccine-research/>

### **Visiting homes**

- If people do want to visit their family homes we need to complete a dynamic risk assessment. For example if we think it is appropriate service users can go home, we must minimise risk of transmission as much as possible.
- The issue with this approach is some services users feel that it is one rule for one and another rule for someone else.
- It should hopefully be more clear for older people's homes in lockdown. If you want to discuss specific cases please contact Hanna Gottschling (hanna.gottschling@sutton.gov.uk) and Modupe Omonijo (modupe.omonijo@sutton.gov.uk).
- Please continue to refer service users to the [https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200588/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/2166/visiting\\_relatives\\_in\\_care\\_homes](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200588/health_and_wellbeing/2166/visiting_relatives_in_care_homes)
- Homes are still looking at visiting pods.

### **Themes for Q&A sessions**

**Question:** Would you like a calendar for items to discuss at the Q&A sessions? These could be COVID-19 and none COVID-19. They could relate to the information in the newsletter.

**Answer:** Yes

### **MDTs**

**Question:** Is there any feedback on the sessions? The sessions can speak about individual residents and their physical, social, medical issues all at once. The suggestion is that managers attend those meeting

**Answer:** Two homes have had sessions and agree they were very useful.

### **Testing**

**Question:** Some staff are concerned about having tests. Some people have refused. Social media is creating myths around testing / vaccines ect. We can create some mythbusters and appropriate responses, if this would be helpful?

**Answer:**

- One home stated this will be very important around the COVID-19 vaccine. Managers need to have the right messages to relay about the positives and that it has come from a credible source e.g. the local authority.
- If homes can provide feedback on what sorts of myths they are hearing and what demographic (e.g. age group / gender) it is coming from so we can target communication. This will help us to not make assumptions on why staff are not taking the vaccine.

### **Outbreak management**

Please do reach out if you have a COVID-19 positive case. It is not because of a lack of protocols or quality on your part. We are in a pandemic, in which cases are very prevalent and we can only minimise risk as much as possible. We are here to support you in these situations.

### **Sutton Care Hub**

The Sutton Care Hub website is the single point of access for guidance, resources and information for all staff working across all Sutton's provider services and will be live on Tuesday 18th November. The Hub will be public, therefore provide staff, at all levels, with the assurance that they can access the correct, most up to date information at any time from their computer, phone or tablet. The Hub will support the London Borough of Sutton (LBS), South West London CCG (SWLCCG) and our providers to work together to build a stable, sensitive and supportive care offer in Sutton.

The Hub will:

- Hold information, guidance and resources for care providers in one central location.
- Provide up to date information, guidance and resources on remaining safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Highlight the latest news and guidance available.
- Signpost staff to the latest local and national resources from other key organisations.
- Provide a single, joint calendar for events and activities.

Wednesday 4th November

**Flu vaccinations for staff**

**Question:** We are still having issues accessing the flu jab for staff. Can we have an update on this?

**Answer:**

- Flu vaccinations for care home staff - either they can get this from their own GP surgery or any community pharmacy. Providers are now able to apply centrally for more vaccines if they are running out. Any queries to email Shazma Mawani (shazma.mawani@nhs.net) or Sarah Taylor (Chief Pharmacist and Flu Lead - Sarah.Taylor@swlondon.nhs.uk).
- To note Community Pharmacies are experiencing similar problems to GP practices in obtaining flu vaccination stocks. However, details of how they are (and will be) able to access central stocks of vaccine have now been made available.
- NHSE have also launched a scheme to incentivise community pharmacies to vaccinate staff/residents of care homes, but needs a minimum of 30 vaccines (and maximum of 50) to be payable.

**Visiting guidance**

- There are likely to be some changes around visiting guidance because of the new national lockdown. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>
- The infection prevention control 2 fund can be used to support safe visiting, but it must be in line with the new guidance.
- Please contact Hanna Gottschling ([hanna.gottschling@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:hanna.gottschling@sutton.gov.uk)) for support completing risk assessments for specific residents having visitors.
- We are looking at building a 'frequently asked questions' document around visiting to share knowledge.
- Central Government is encouraging visiting through pods and window visits. They are looking into rapid testing.

**Further guidance**

**Question:** Would it be useful to create guidance around testing and isolating?

**Answer:**

- We need policies to be consistent across Care Homes.
- It would be helpful to have a consistent stance on visitors. One home has purchased rapid tests for visitors. We have not issued guidance on this yet.
- We are launching the Sutton Care Hub (phase 1) in November. Phase 2 will include a password protected section where Care Home Managers could share information.

- We currently have a Care Home managers whatsapp group which has proved very useful (about 12 people). The website could do something similar and be moderated by LBS.

#### **Outbreak management**

**Question:** We had a positive test result on 29th Sept, All subsequent tests came back negative. Whole home testing was done yesterday and I am waiting for results. Unfortunately, one member of staff could not attend for testing although she has been negative last on 20th Oct. Will I not be able to have my outbreak declared over due to this? I am supposed to take in a new resident tomorrow.

**Answer:**

- Yes, the outbreak can be declared as over. The 28 day cycle is to ensure the risk around other people being infected is assessed.

#### **Infection Control Training**

**Question:** Do homes feel they need more Infection Control training?

**Answer:**

- One home noted they were going to get their new staff to complete ICP training. They were told they needed to wait 2 weeks. LBS will look into this. Care Home staff should be priority.
- PLEASE NOTE: There are open sessions being held at Sutton Civic offices every Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm. All places must be booked through Sarah.Brown@swlondon.nhs.uk via email as we are limited to 8 people per session in order to maintain the 2m social distancing recommendations.
- Currently are fully booked until the first of December, however if there are sufficient enquiries, Sarah will look to book a room on a Friday.
- If there are new starters that need initial training quicker, Helen Thurlow at Sutton CCG is part of a team who can hold on line training at much shorter notice, usually within a week. She can be contacted on [helen.thurlow@swlondon.nhs.uk](mailto:helen.thurlow@swlondon.nhs.uk).
- Some staff came back from the training and had a question around the spread of Covid-19 from plastic, aprons, gloves, arm coverings. Clarification from Sarah Brown (Infection control team). Plastic shoe covers and sleeve covers are not advised from an IPC point of view because, as they are not absorbent, the virus particles can be 'flicked off' during movement. Plastic PPE such as gloves, aprons or visors etc. pose next to no risk of spreading the virus providing the correct donning and doffing procedures are followed.
- We have been advised to disinfect frequently used surfaces (door knobs, worktops etc) twice daily.

#### **Audits**

**Question:** How are people finding the ICP audits?

**Answer:**

- One Care Home noted we are working on a number of audits at once. They have their ICP champion completing the ICP audit.
- Another home noted they have completed both (CCG & CQC), and the audits highlighted things the home needed to change.
- We could use the Sutton Care Hub to share learning between homes for audits.

**IPC fund**

**Question:** For those homes who have accepted the ICP funding, is there any other support that you need from the system which is not covered in the factors listed by the funding?

**Answer:** One home noted they feel much more confident they have things covered.

**Infection Prevention Control**

**Question:** Can we have a recap on domestic staff training, like cleaning high risk areas, colour coding of cleaning equipment etc?

**Answer:** We will check this with the Infection Control Team.

**Question:** Would people appreciate LBS organising a small, virtual Christmas event, potentially involving schools designing christmas cards?

**Answer:**

- Yes it will be helpful for morale.
- We will actively pursue and involve as many managers as possible.

**Shopping**

**Question:** Can we get a dedicated slot at the shops again?

**Answer:** Asda have said that their stock position is much healthier than it was in April and they are not anticipating a queueing situation. If this changes they will look to putting the dedicated hour back in. However, if shoppers for the homes can carry a letter of authorisation/ID, they will allow them to buy in greater quantities than the general public.

**PPE**

- PLEASE: Stock up on the free PPE that is on offer via the Government PPE portal. Currently not all providers are using the portal. You can only order so much, but you can order each week. The limits are being continually increased. The portal is easy to use and quick to be delivered (usually within 2 days).
- Current Order limits
  - Residential care homes with fewer than 10 beds can order up to (per week):
    - 200 IIR masks
    - 400 aprons
    - 800 gloves (400 pairs)
    - 2 bottles of hand hygiene (usually 500ml)
    - one box of visors (usually 50 per box)

- Residential care homes with between 10 and 24 beds can order up to (per week):
  - 300 IIR masks
  - 1,200 aprons
  - 2,400 gloves (1,200 pairs)
  - 4 bottles of hand hygiene (usually 500ml)
  - 2 boxes of visors (usually 50 per box)
- Residential care homes with between 25 and 49 beds can order up to (per week):
  - 400 IIR masks
  - 2,000 aprons
  - 4,000 gloves (2,000 pairs)
  - 6 bottles of hand hygiene (usually 500ml)
  - 2 boxes of visors (usually 50 per box)
- If you cannot find your log in you will need to contact the customer service team on 0800 876 6802. The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week, to help resolve your queries.

Wednesday 28th October

### **Flu Immunisation**

- We have vaccinated 83% of residents across all our Care Homes in Sutton.
- Between 40 and 50% of residents in Learning Disabilities homes have been vaccinated.
- Please contact Shazma Mawani ([shazma.mawani@nhs.net](mailto:shazma.mawani@nhs.net)) if you require support in getting residents or staff vaccinated in your home.

**Question:** Can we insist staff get the flu vaccination? Some staff do not want to be vaccinated for various reasons.

#### **Answer:**

- We need to communicate the risk of staff being carriers to residents, if they do not get the vaccination.
- Getting the flu vaccination is a personal choice, however, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, we encourage all staff to get the vaccination.
- Please share [this video](#) with staff which shows staff explaining why they have got the vaccination. Please note the video was filmed pre COVID-19 therefore staff are not wearing PPE however it will cover key issues for staff.
- If the issue is the access to the flu vaccine, community pharmacists can deliver it in your Care Home or pharmacy.
- More information is coming out on Friday for how to access free flu vaccinations for LD Home Care Staff and residents.
- We recommend trying to get staff to champion the vaccine to each other and have the information come from a peer to peer level.
- If staff or residents will not get the vaccine, a risk assessment should be put in place.

### **Phlebotomy**

**Question:** Our phlebotomy services are stretched at the moment. Are Care Homes finding this is an issue?

#### **Answer:**

- Some nurses require new training. Shazma agreed she will look into this and report back.
- The Care Home Support Team will organise some refresher training for nurses to be able to take bloods. Lee Thorogood has also organised a system where care homes can order blood bottles from St Helier's and collect them from pathology reception.

### **Infection Prevention Control Training**

**Question:** Are homes able to access training for all staff, particularly for new starters?

**Answer:**

- There are open sessions being held at Sutton Civic offices every Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm throughout October and will continue through November if the demand is there. All places must be booked through Sarah.Brown@swlondon.nhs.uk via email as we are limited to 8 people per session in order to maintain the 2m social distancing recommendations.
- If you have available to you a large enough room to enable social distancing and a minimum of 5 people attending, additional training sessions can be organised at the location of your choice, within the Sutton area.

### **Guidance on people going home to family**

**Question:** In our Care Home residents do not get visitors they leave the home and go elsewhere. Is there guidance around this? Particularly as we struggle to ensure LD residents to isolate for the full 14 days, when they return. The approach is currently person centred and not consistent. Christmas may be a particular issue.

**Answer:**

- Some homes are still doing window visits.
- People seem to be more understanding now we have moved into tier 2.
- A home has ordered a visiting pod.
- 2 main issues:
  - Preventing infections due to challenges such as social distancing during visits when loved one expect more physical contact and inability to use PPE e.g. in some LD homes
  - Visiting policies have been largely a provider responsibility however more guidance is needed to ensure consistency.
- A statement has been put on the council website. The main point of the statement is that policies have been left to the providers discretion because of the varied needs of residents and individual situations in each home.
- An appreciation video for staff is going to be released soon. This will hopefully help cascade the messages to residents and their families and friends, about the commitment of the staff to look after loved ones and highlight the complexity of the situation.
- We are happy to continue to advise and provide support for individual cases.
- Please bring issues to this weekly forum so we can make decisions as a group.

### **DOLS and restrictions**

**Question:** If an individual does not have a DOLS and they need to go see a sick relative, Where do the DOLS and restrictions come in?

**Answer:**

- You should complete a mental capacity assessment to understand their understanding of the situation.
- Please speak to the Council's DOLS leader on specific situations such as this. Hanna Gottschling (hanna.gottschling@sutton.gov.uk)
- The new MCA and DOLS guidance will be shared in Friday's newsletter

#### **Sutton Care Hub**

- The Sutton Care Hub is the single point of access for guidance, resources and information for all staff working across all Sutton's provider service.
- The Hub provides staff, at all levels, with the assurance that they can access the correct, most up to date information at any time from their computer, phone or tablet.
- Content will include:
  - News stories
  - Events and activities
  - Data submission
  - Care Home visitors
  - Testing
  - Outbreak Management
  - Infection prevention and control
  - Latest Guidance for Providers
  - Flu Vaccine
  - Training
  - Safeguarding
  - Workforce
  - Clinical Support
- The site will be enhanced over the next 6 months.

#### **Infection Control Fund**

- Payment 1 was made 28th October, so should be with you by the 29th October, for those who accepted the conditions.

**Question:** If we are forced to use agency or bank staff, does this affect our funding?

**Answer:**

- Your allocation will remain 100% even if your Care Home is not at full capacity.

- If this happens we recommend you pay the bank/agency staff full time (using the ICF fund) even if you only need them part time to reduce the likelihood that they would also work at another organisation.
- The priority is to support you to control the risk, we can work with you if you're having particular issues around movement of staff.

### Wellbeing

- We are here to support you technically and your wellbeing. There are a number of wellbeing support service available to you:
- Council's employee assistance programme - we'll recirculate that

To speak to someone

- Urgent Support: Good-Thinking's [Urgent Support page](#) has numbers and links to help you access urgent support,
- 1:1 Mental health support 24 hours a day: Text FRONTLINE to 85258 for a text chat or call 116 123 for a phone conversation
- Visit [Bereavement Support Online](#) or call the free confidential bereavement support line (Hospice UK), on 0300 303 4434, 8am – 8pm
- NHS Psychological therapy (IAPT): Search [here](#) to find out how to get access to NHS psychological therapy (IAPT)
- Finances: If relatives of staff are financially affected by COVID-19, they can access the [Money Advice Service web-chat](#) or call 0800 138 1677, from [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

Evidence-based apps and personalised online tools

- Worry and anxiety: The free [Daylight phone app](#) teaches you to manage worry and anxiety by offering audio-led guidance tailored to you
- Sleep: [Sleepio](#) is a highly personalised free digital sleep-improvement program which helps you get to the root of poor sleep.

Work and well-being

- Going Home checklist: Find simple steps to help you manage your own wellbeing at the end of each working shift in this [video](#)
- Risk Assessment BAME staff: Use Risk Reduction Framework for staff at risk of COVID-19 infection (pages 9 and 10) [here](#) and assessment [here](#)
- Preventing work related stress: Use Health and Safety Executive's talking toolkit for preventing work related stress [here](#)
- 'Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Staff, Volunteers and Communities in an Outbreak of Novel Coronavirus': Guidance from the British Red Cross for staff, volunteers and communities. Can be found [here](#)



**South West London**  
Clinical Commissioning Group



- Mental Health at work: Information and resources for managers on taking care of your staff. Learn how to support your staff [here](#)
- Anxiety and worry: Access the Guide to managing worry and anxiety amidst uncertainty from Practitioner Health (Psychology Tools) [here](#)
- This information and any additional information on wellbeing resources which are shared in this session will be posted on the Sutton Care Hub.
- One Care Home is running monthly competitions, for example: most outrageous photo ever taken / most outrageous holiday to win a £25 voucher. This has been helpful to boost morale and give staff something else to focus on.