

Weekly Q&A with Care Homes

Wednesday 16th December
COVID-19 vaccine dedicated webinar

Question: If someone is allergic to many things? What is the risk of getting a reaction to the vaccine?

Answer:

- The overall side effects of the vaccine for most people seem very mild, for example: a tired arm. Two people (with severe allergies) have had an anaphylactic reaction.
 - If you have had an anaphylactic reaction in the past the recommendation is you do not have the vaccine.
 - If you have been prescribed an epi pen you should not have the vaccine.
 - If you have a mild allergic response, for example you get a rash or mild allergic reaction you can still have the vaccine.
- All staff given the vaccines are trained in anaphylaxis, just in case.

COVID-19 Vaccine Presentation

Presented by Sarah Taylor (Chief Pharmacist for the Sutton Borough)

Some key points from the presentation are:

- The COVID-19 vaccine is a messenger mRNA vaccine. There is no live / whole virus in the vaccine. In getting the vaccine your body will produce antibodies which are ready if you are then exposed to COVID-19. The vaccine does not change your DNA.
- Some people are worried about how quickly the vaccine has been produced. The vaccine has gone through the normal clinical trials on 44,000 people across age, ethnicities and gender demographics. The vaccine showed effectiveness of 95%. The difference between this and other vaccines, which have taken longer to develop, is that there were more resources and finance put into this vaccine to help it move quickly.
- Everyone can have the vaccine, except :
 - People who have experienced an anaphylactic reaction to vaccines, food or medicines in the past and/or have an epi pen.
 - Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning on getting pregnant. This is not because the vaccine affects your fertility. This is only because all new medication and vaccines are not given to pregnant or breast feeding women, as they are not tested on pregnant women.
 - People who have had the flu vaccine in the last 7 days. The advice is for staff and residents to get their flu vaccine now so you are ready to have your COVID-19 vaccine when you can.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is given in two doses 21 days apart.

- You may be thinking you are fit and healthy and if you get COVID-19 you will be fine, however:
 - You can not predict who is more likely to be more severely affected
 - You may experience long covid symptoms even if you are not carrying the virus anymore
 - You may feel well but you can still carry the vaccine to other people
- At the moment we cannot bring the vaccine to Care Homes however we hope to either be able to do this soon or use the oxford vaccine once signed off. When this is an option, the vaccine may be brought to you by your GP or Care Home Support team.
- The MHRA are currently reviewing the Oxford vaccine for approval, we hope that this will be more suitable (logistically) to bring to care homes.
- Please start to obtain consent and have best interest discussions, if necessary, from your residents about the vaccine so you are prepared to give it to them when the time comes.
- Nursing staff who will be giving out the vaccine will need to complete the appropriate training. Please see the Sutton Care Hub's [COVID-19 vaccine page](#) for more information

COVID-19 Vaccine Booking Process

Presented by Shazma Mawani (GP & PCN Clinical Director).

Please see [COVID Vaccine booking registration and booking 151220](#) for more information.

Question: What are the arrangements regarding giving vaccines to residents INSIDE their own nursing homes? My Jesmund nursing home colleague suggests that there may be licensing issues?

Answer:

- The current vaccine can not be delivered to homes. If you have a resident who is over 80 and relatively mobile, you can book them an appointment at the vaccination site. However the site was rainy and muddy today and it may be more safe to wait for the vaccine to be able to come to you.

Question: People believe the vaccine has been delivered too fast and hasn't gone through the right checks because of pressure from the Government.

Answer:

- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) completes approvals completely independently of the Government. The Government is not able to influence the MHRA's approval.
- The MHRA is one of the most robust and respected organisations in the world.
- When vaccines are developed in the past they would complete stages one at time because of resources. Whereas with the amount of money and resources dedicated to the COVID-19 vaccine they have been able to run stages in parallel so things can

move quicker. The finance behind this vaccine is a bigger driver for speed. The safety aspect is completely separate to the government.

Question: Staff are worried about long term effects.

Answer:

- The initial side effects are pain in the arm which is short lived, tiredness headaches or joint pain. It tends to last a couple of days. There were 44,000 volunteers in the clinical trial of all different ages and ethnicities. There is no evidence of long term effects. It doesn't change your DNA. It doesn't affect your fertility. It does not contain animal products,
- There can be long term effects of Covid-19 which can be worse than the vaccine.

Question: Theory about microchips

Answer: The vaccine does definitely not contain microchips. It purely builds up your immune response. It is not a live vaccine, it is an inactive vaccine.

Question: Has anyone on the call had the vaccine?

Answer:

- Jane Ingrim noted she has had the vaccine. She experienced an achy arm for 24 hours. She was in and out very quickly and was able to go back to work, after 15 minutes observation.
- Now managers have started getting the COVID-19 vaccine, it has made staff be more willing to get it. Setting an example is key.
- There are no policies in place around a COVID-19 passport but this may be a thing in the future for travel or large events. This possibility is convincing individuals to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- We are seeing a shift in attitude as people are having the vaccine and returning to work fine.

Wednesday 9th December

Lateral Flow Device Testing

Question: Does the maximum two named visitors still apply given that visitors will be tested before entering?

Answer:

- The guidance on safe visiting states that visitors should be limited to a maximum of 2 constant visitors wherever possible to limit the overall number of visitors to the care home and/or to the individual, and the consequent risk of disease transmission from multiple different routes. This is still in place. You should carry out a risk assessment to what works for your home. For example, one home has put some flexibility around this rule for individual cases. You should speak to your families and decide together, keeping in mind the time required to carry out the tests and other things that are going on.
- If homes require support with training for lateral flow tests please let us know. It is important that the test is done correctly so the result is accurate. Even homes who have been chosen to use the LFT cannot start testing until the 14th December.
- If homes are interested in joining the Sutton LFT devices pilot scheme and receiving additional staff training, please let us know via asc.providercomms@sutton.gov.uk.

Question: Where does the liability sit if the test is wrong or a person is hurt during the test?

Answer: We are advising you to do your own risk assessment. It is your responsibility to complete the assessment.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The vaccination programme

- Care home staff are priority group 1 and started to receive the COVID-19 vaccination on Tuesday, at St George's hospital or Croydon hospital.
- The vaccine is currently not cleared to be taken to the Care Homes. Therefore we are focussing on Care Home staff who are able to get to Croydon University Hospital or St George's Hospital.
- We are not able to come to homes yet and give the vaccine to residents. We are hoping the vaccine can be made more stable so it can be transported to the homes. If not, we will have to wait for the second vaccine.
- Nonsuch mansion is being set up as a dedicated spot to get the vaccines for mobile residents over 80. There is a national IT issue which means Care Home staff cannot currently get the vaccine at this local site, but we are hoping this will change. There will be a list of NHS staff and care home workers who can be contacted if there are any vaccines left over for people in lower priority groups.

Booking an appointment

- It is very easy to book an appointment to get the vaccine early. If you work for a care home in South West London and would like the covid-19 vaccine early, please email us at carehome.covidvaccine@swlondon.nhs.uk with:
 - Your name
 - Your email address
 - Your mobile telephone number
 - The care home you work at and its postcode
 - If you would prefer to travel to Croydon University Hospital or St George's Hospital for your vaccine

Question: Some of our staff have emailed to book an appointment and not heard back, whilst others have.

Answer: If you don't receive an email that lodges your request you should re-register. It may be an admin or technical function. It may be that one hospital site has more slots available than the other. Some people are getting St George's appointments the next day. As the service gets busier, it may take longer to process requests. It also depends on vaccine supply and delivery during a particular week.

Myth busting

- People are getting inaccurate information from social media and other sources. We will develop an FAQ.
- Two people with severe allergic reactions have had issues however most people have been completely fine other having a sore arm. Anyone that has a vaccine will now be observed for 15 minutes. Staff should have anaphylactic training. There will always be trained doctors on site.
- There is some fear from people who think it's going to affect their reproductive system. A lot of staff are young women of childbearing age. It is recommended pregnant women do not get the vaccine or women who are within 2 months of trying to conceive. There is no evidence the vaccine affects fertility. With any new medication or vaccine, it is normal practice for pregnant women not to be given it until it has been in circulation for a while to reduce any unknown risks.
- There are complications of COVID-19 which can affect people in the long term including young people. The side effects of having COVID-19 are worse than the vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccine dedicated webinar

- We propose this session next week is dedicated to the COVID-19 vaccine. Each home should send at least two members of staff who can cascade the information to their colleagues. Please send any questions in advance to asc.providercomms@sutton.gov.uk.
- We will cover
 - what the vaccine contains
 - what the side effects of the vaccine could be
 - Any questions you have

Delivering the vaccine

- We will have a core team between community and primary care to support home to provide the appropriate staff on vaccination training. We are asking all GPs if they are willing to go into homes to provide the vaccine. If not the Care Home Support Team may train nurses from nursing homes and deliver the vaccine for residential and learning disabilities homes.
- If residents have capacity we only need a verbal consent
- If not, there is a process around that consent, please see [COVID-19 vaccination: consent forms and letters for care home residents](#) for the forms.

Wednesday 2nd December

COVID-19 Vaccination

Question: Our GP is in Surrey and they say they will only be providing their service users the COVID-19 vaccination. I am a bit worried as we are in that unique position where we are Surrey for Health and Sutton for everything else. The GP has said they will not be giving out a vaccine they will need to go to the hospital.

Answer: You will need to work with the Surrey GP on this because the COVID-19 vaccination programme falls under the primary care network (PCN).

- We are awaiting clarification about which vaccine is the most appropriate for Care Homes and on the training requirements.
- The vaccine may need to be given out by nurses in nursing homes and in residential and LD homes may need additional support to provide the vaccine. We are working with GPs to see if they are able to go into Care Homes to give out the vaccines. The dedicated Care Home Support Teams may also support the delivery of vaccines.
- LBS and Care Homes have been told we will get 10 days notice to when the supply of the vaccine will be arriving.
- Residents in LD homes and staff will ideally be vaccinated in homes, however this may not be possible and they may need to go to the fixed, dedicated site. We are currently looking at potential sites and locations. More updates will be provided in next week's Q&A session.
- Please see [COVID-19 vaccine guidance for health and social care workers](#) and [COVID-19 vaccination programme](#)

Question: What about homes who have staff who live out of the area (SWL)?

Answer:

- Each region in London will be working on plans for administration of the vaccine and staff should keep an eye on information distributed in the area they live.
- There are also discussions around whether GP's can vaccinate staff not registered to their clinic.

Question: Is there a consent form for staff we can use?

Answer: There will be. We can start creating a COVID-19 vaccine page on the Sutton Care Hub and add information about the vaccine to that.

Question: What are the minimum training requirements to deliver the vaccine?

Answer: Please see [COVID-19: vaccinator training recommendations](#). Please let us know if you require support to top up or deliver some of this training.

Question: We need an answer on LD home residents

Answer: We need to confirm the logistics to understand the prioritisation of people receiving the vaccine, we will answer this question as soon as we can. Please see [Priority groups for coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination: advice from the JCVI, 2 December 2020](#).

Fogging

Message on the use of Fogging (also referred to as 'Fumigation' or 'wide-area spraying' or 'disinfectant fogging')

Fogging is not recommended in any national guidance and its effectiveness in cleaning surfaces, decontamination or killing COVID-19 has not been provided. Also, if fogging is not done correctly, it may be harmful as it can expose people in the environment, where it is used and others, to hazardous chemicals and environmental pollutants.

Please continue to follow the [National guidance](#) which recommends that routine cleaning must be performed using either:

- a combined detergent/disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine (ppm available chlorine (av.cl.)); or
- a general-purpose neutral detergent in a solution of warm water followed by a disinfectant solution of 1,000ppm av.cl

List of useful evidence can be found below:

- **HSE:** During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, fog, mist, vapour or UV treatments may be suitable options to help control the spread of the virus, by cleaning and disinfecting a larger space or room. Any use of these treatments for these purposes should form part of your COVID-19 risk assessment. Users must be competent and properly trained. ***Disinfecting premises using fog, mist, vapour or ultraviolet (UV) systems during the coronavirus pandemic***
- **WHO:** In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces via spraying or fogging (also known as fumigation or misting) is not recommended. Spraying environmental surfaces in both health care and non-healthcare settings (e.g. patient households) with disinfectants will not be effective and may pose harm to individuals. If disinfectants are to be applied, manual surface cleaning with detergent and water using applied friction (e.g. brushing, scrubbing) must be performed first to ensure physical removal of organic materials, followed by use of a cloth or wipe which is soaked in the disinfectant - ***Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation Report – 115***

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

The rollout of LFT has started with the largest Care Homes in the country and so far no Sutton Homes have been selected for the first phase. We are uncertain whether the tests will arrive before Christmas and await further confirmation from DHSC. In preparation for the rollout of the LFT you can use your ICF money and LBS will be calling every home over the next week to understand the additional practical and financial support you may need to deliver the LFT. We are going to provide a package of support based on this feedback.

Visiting guidance

Question: Families have been told they can be tested and visit their relatives but we have not been provided LFT tests. The guidance keeps changing and families are angry. The difference between what the media is reporting and the real situation.

Answer:

- Visits to care homes should be supported wherever they can happen safely and please follow the guidance and carry out risk assessments.
- The registered manager of each care home is responsible for setting the visiting policy and for considering the individual needs of each resident.
- Keep very thorough notes of your risk assessment and why decisions have been made.
- According to the guidance,
 - visitors can come into the care home if they:
 - Test negative on every visit
 - Wear the right PPE
 - Follow all infection control measures
 - Outdoor and screened visits are an option for visitors who haven't been tested. Social distancing, PPE and good hand hygiene are still very important.
 - Visits in exceptional circumstances, such as end of life, should always be supported.
 - It is essential visiting is supported by good infection control while in and around the care home, including during the visit itself.
 - If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the care home, unfortunately visiting will have to stop until the outbreak is over.
 - We will provide over the coming week more details on visiting over Christmas, following calls with each home.
 - We will develop into an easy to read format for you to provide to friends and family of residents.
 - Sarah will share learning from the visiting pods and from the LFT tests she has
 - Care Homes should be carrying on with the weekly tests.

Question: Can resident's families buy the tests themselves?

Answer:

- There is no guidance on using other tests apart from the national tests. If they bought the test themselves - you would need to be assured the test was taken properly and at the right time. You need to do a risk assessment. The testing could be inaccurate.
 - Visits out of care homes should only be considered of residents of working age (e.g. under 65s). This is law.
 - We will support you to start planning in the interim before you get the kits.

Question: A home is coming under pressure to take a resident who is continually testing positive 4 weeks down the line. Should we accept her? If we get a positive test does that count as an outbreak and therefore visiting is canceled.

Answer:

- The PCR test is sensitive and so people can continue to test positive for a while after isolation. Care Homes shouldn't be under pressure to take a resident back if the isolation period of 14 days after the first positive test has not been completed. After the 14 days isolation, they should be non-infectious AND if they have no new symptoms and no fever without use of paracetamol etc for 48 hours, they don't have to be retested, so you should be fine to accept the resident.
- We are creating a flowchart on this. If infections are not linked we wouldn't count it as an outbreak. Outbreaks are only if the transmissions are within the home.
- You will only be advised if you are doing things outside the guidance or you have an outbreak. Other than that we are here to support you to make your own policies and judgement. We are trying to support and not intervene if necessary.

Wednesday 25th November

Flu vaccine

- Flu vaccinations for care home staff - either they can get this from their own GP surgery or any community pharmacy. There is a 38% uptake for care home staff at the moment. Community Pharmacies are still experiencing similar problems in obtaining flu vaccination stocks. Any queries to email Sarah Taylor (Chief Pharmacist and Flu Lead - Sarah.Taylor@swlondon.nhs.uk).

COVID-19 Vaccine

- Nurses for nursing homes, GPs for LD homes and the Care Home Support Team may be able to provide the COVID-19 vaccine.
- We are also working on consent policies for those who do not have capacity. We will look at what you already have in place for the flu vaccine, to see if it is suitable.

Admissions and discharge

Question: Accepting patients into Care Homes from hospitals and from temporary facilities. Are people experiencing issues with this?

Answer: No one noted any issues. If you are having any issues please contact the Care Home Support team.

IPC training and champions

- You can access both face to face training (at LBS Civic offices), Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons and virtual training which can be arranged at a time suitable for you. Please see the Sutton Care Hub's [Infection Prevention and Control training page](#) for more information and to book.

- We are looking for infection prevention and control champions to be linked in to ICP information. You can use some of your infection control funding to pay a member of staff to take on this role. Please see the Sutton Care Hub's [Infection Prevention and Control page](#) for more information on the role.

Testing

Question: A resident tested positive in the last 90 days, is it ok that we are retesting them every week?

Answer: No there is no need to retest them. If staff or residents test positive, they are not to be tested again for 90 days unless they develop new possible COVID-19 symptoms.

- You should receive direct communications about the roll out of lateral flow testing in Care Homes. The test is a swab and Care Homes can process results themselves within 30 minutes. Larger homes will receive the kits first. All care homes may receive a kit before Christmas. There should be enough tests for staff, residents and up to 4 visitors a week per resident.
- PCR tests will continue and more details about frequency of both PCR and the lateral flow tests will be provided.
- Time taken to upload data on the system is one big constraint in testing. Homes can use an IC fund for an administrative staff to work extra hours to carry out the upload.
- People can self test but it's noted to be less accurate than when administered by a trained professional.
- It is important for accuracy homes to not wait longer than 30 minutes to read the results.
- Good for picking up positives in those with a high viral load (i.e. when they are most infectious and the quick results turnaround helps prompt isolation).
- Even if you have a negative result you should still wear PPE and follow strict IPC.

Question: Where does the liability sit if the test is wrong or a person is hurt during the test?

Answer: Our Director of Public Health asked this question at a recent DHSC webinar on lateral flow testing and we are expecting clarification from DHSC soon.

Visitors

- If you have an ongoing outbreak you should not have visitors.

Question: Will visitors be allowed to hold their resident hand / hug?

Answer: According to advice from DHSC, testing is one way of minimising the risk of visiting a care home. If a visitor has a negative test, is wearing appropriate PPE, and follows other infection control measures then it will be possible for visitors to have physical contact with their loved one, such as providing personal care, holding hands and a hug.

Christmas

- We will work on some further guidance around Christmas day. We will get something centrally from South West London CCG on decorations / presents. We have not yet found any published guidelines around decorations. Some homes are looking at decorations which can be cleaned down. Outside decorations are still fine.
- One home shared a bulletin which provided advice on single use decorations and decorations which can be hung high on the walls, therefore will not be touched. We will review this guidance and bring some information back to the next Q&A session next week and add to the Care Matters newsletter.
- One home mentioned they will be quarantining gifts for residents for 72 hours before they are given to the residents.

Q&A session

Question: Are you finding the Q&A sessions useful? Does it need to be weekly?

- Yes homes enjoy the session. The Tuesday SWL webinar is more focussed on IPC and is South West London wide. This session feels more local. Homes attending agreed to spread the word about the usefulness of the session to other 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.

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

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

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
- 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) 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.
- 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) if you require support in getting residents of 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

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.