Draft Letter to Care Home Managers re Designated Discharges Guidance December 2020

**DHSC Guidance on Discharge into Care homes: Designated Settings**

I am writing to update you on new guidance on discharge from hospital of Covid-19 positive individuals into care homes that was published by the Department of Health and Social Care on 16th December.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that everyone receives the right care, in the right place, at the right time and the prevention of infection in care homes.

It confirms and builds on previous guidance that we wrote to you about in November and the arrangements the six local authorities and NHS in South West London have put in place to provide temporary alternative designated accommodation for those individuals unable to return or be admitted to a care home because they are Covid-19 positive and are yet to complete the 14 days isolation period.

The guidance refers to existing care home residents returning to the care home following discharge from hospital and those individual’s leaving hospital who require ongoing care in a care home. It sets out the following requirements:

* Anyone being discharged from hospital into a care home must receive a PCR Covid test result within 48 hours prior to discharge. No one will be discharged into, or back into a care home without having been tested and having received their test result.
* Everyone with a positive Covid-19 test result who has not completed their 14 day isolation period should where possible be discharged into a designated setting in the first instance. The isolation period can take place across multiple settings, for example it may start in hospital and be completed in a designated setting before being transferred to their longer term care home.
* Subject to the care home provider’s decision and a clinical assessment to determine if the individual is likely to be infectious, residents will not have to undergo a further period of isolation on transfer to their longer term care home.
* The local authority and NHS will work together to ensure there is sufficient alternative designated setting provision available with this funded from the NHS Discharge Funding.
* All designated settings must be inspected by the CQC to provide assurance they meet the latest CQC infection control standards.
* Everyone being discharged into a care home must have a time-stamped reported COVID-19 test result, and this must be communicated to the person themselves and the care home prior to the person being discharged from hospital. The care home’s registered manager should continue to assure themselves that all its admissions or readmissions are consistent with this requirement.

The guidance does not apply to those who have contracted Covid-19 in care home with no requirement to transfer them to a designated setting as long as safe isolation and care is being maintained, or to people using A&E, outpatients and day case facilities.

The attached document provides some further information on the designated setting guidance and on the arrangements for Temporary Alternative Discharge Destination provision as the designated settings are known in South West London. The full guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-settings-for-people-discharged-to-a-care-home/discharge-into-care-homes-designated-settings>

The guidance should be read in line with the principles set out in the Mental Capacity Act and the Human Rights Acts which continue to apply in any decisions about where people may need to be care for.

Building on the success of a designated setting in Merton we would welcome further designated settings in South West London (covering boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton & Wandsworth). If this is something you think you would be interested in please review Section 3 of the guidance and the CQC Infection Prevention and Control protocol on their website (<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/residential-adult-social-care/infection-prevention-control-care-homes>) and contact your local authority lead to discuss further [add details here]

**Further information**

Please contact your local borough care home team [to add details] if you would like more information about the points raised in this letter