

Adult Care Services
Interim Director: Chris Badger



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Dear Colleague,

We would again like to thank you for your continued commitment to working in partnership to deliver high quality support to Hertfordshire citizens.

We are in an extremely critical period and the pressure on our care services is immense. We will continue to support you in every way we can – through our multi-agency outbreak support, Provider Hub and financially.

We recognise the benefits (and extra administration) from the introduction of rapid testing however, we urge you to use this testing method to complement and not in any way replace your existing infection, prevention and control actions. Particularly with the new strain of Covid which is highly transmissible in care settings and in the community.

Likewise, the extremely positive news of the wider roll-out of the vaccine is welcomed by us all. Government guidance on infection prevention and control continues to apply to all care settings, even where staff and residents are vaccinated.

The Provider Hub continues to support providers with information, training and guidance on infection control: www.hcpa.info/covid-19/.

In this new wave, we would ask you to please be particularly aware of situations where staff meet **informally**:

- car sharing
- smoking huts
- staff rooms and restaurants
- storage facilities and coat racks

These have been areas where we have seen outbreaks start. It is also very important that people isolate as soon as they get symptoms while you wait for test results.

Please consider how you can keep training your teams, particularly in new tasks such as testing; and be extremely meticulous around checking competencies. Be especially diligent in ensuring staff are donning and doffing PPE and changing their uniforms on entering and leaving places of work.

Finance:

There are several funding streams available to support you with the additional costs associated with Covid-19 and we thought it would be helpful to summarise them below:

Infection Control Fund:

To support you with the additional staff costs associated with implementing Infection Control measures, and with staff time involved in testing and vaccinations, we would like to remind you that all of these costs can be allocated to your Infection Control grant allocation. The second tranche of this funding will be available on or before 15 January 2021 (following submission of your December Spend Tracker). Please submit an invoice for your second allocation and any queries to ACS.CarePayments@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Funding to Support Increased Care Home Testing:

There will be additional funding available from the Government (£149m nationally), in addition to the Infection Control Fund, to support care homes with the costs associated with testing. As soon as we receive the guidance, we will pass the funding on to care home providers.

Additional Financial Support:

For our commissioned providers, there is an additional financial support package available which has been extended to March 2021. This is to fund additional staff costs associated with Covid-19 over and above those claimed against your ICF and for any PPE or Infection Control related costs not covered by ICF or delivered through the PPE portal. Commissioned care providers can claim for the proportion of the costs that relate to HCC funded beds, or people supported by using the attached claim forms. We are aware that some commissioned care providers are putting additional measures in place to support infection control and to increase existing staff capacity. If you are unsure whether you can claim for these, please contact your commissioners who will be able to advise.

Our HCPA/HCC Provider Hub will keep you up to date with any new guidance when it becomes available and can be contacted on **01707 708108** from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday or by email at assistance@hcpa.info. Please check your inbox daily for updates from HCPA.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. We know many care homes are already going through the vaccination process and there will be more information in the next few days for the wider social care workforce. In the interim, please remain vigilant and know we are here to support you in any way we can, that we are continually grateful of your efforts and mindful of the personal and organisational challenges you face.

Yours sincerely



Chris Badger
Interim Director, Adult Care Services