

**Bath & North East Somerset Council
People and Communities Department
Commissioning Services**

Kempthorne House
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Date: 24th March 2020

Dear Provider,

Update and FAQ's relating to COVID-19

Firstly, can i say a huge thank you to all of you who are helping support the most vulnerable people both in our region and beyond, in what is the most challenging time many of us can remember. We are working in an unprecented situation and the adapatability and support from you, the providers, has been exceptional.

One of our key priorities in supporting you is to ensure you can access sufficient supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We are receiving a number of queries relating to PPE and we hope to answer some of these in this letter.

COVID-19 is placing huge global demand on the supply chain of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), with manufacturing having slowed down in affected countries, especially in countries worst hit such as China which manufactures a large amount of PPE. The Government, NHS Supply Chain and the NHS are pursuing all avenues to secure additional supplies and manufacture PPE to distribute to health and social care providers.

PPE Orders

Thank you to those of you who responded to a request for your PPE order last week. As you will appreciate this is a very fast-moving situation and it has become apparent that the route for supply of PPE has now changed.

All care homes, hospices and care providers will have a PPE delivery as part of broader supply to the NHS, and whilst you might not receive all the items requested, you should still receive 300 face masks at this time. We will keep you updated on supply of PPE whenever we receive information ourselves.

In the meantime please continue to source PPE from your usual supplier. However, if you are finding it difficult to order PPE and are concerned about your stock levels, please contact the

The NHS's stockpiled PPE is checked as part of the stock management process operated throughout the NHS supply chain. Whilst some products may appear to have out of date use by/expiration dates or have relabelled dates, please be assured products being issued have passed stringent tests that demonstrate they are safe. PPE is exposed to extreme conditions for prolonged periods of time to see how the product deteriorates and all those that do not meet standards are destroyed.

Care Home Guidance

What PPE is required for Care Homes

The PPE requirement for Care Homes is:

- Asymptomatic (not displaying symptoms) resident: as per local policy and standard precautions
- Symptomatic: fluid resistant surgical mask, plastic apron and gloves.

How do I manage waste with a suspected or confirmed case?

If the waste is generated within the care home setting, follow the infection control guidance section (5.8 page 19) for the management of suspected COVID-19 case and local policies https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874316/Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_for_pandemic_coronavirus.pdf

Should residents be tested for COVID-19?

Requests for laboratory testing of individuals must meet the criteria for a possible case of COVID-19. Public Health England may request testing of care homes residents if they meet these criteria which currently include a hospital admission combined with clinical indicators including evidence of pneumonia, or acute respiratory distress syndrome, or an influenza like illness.

Home Care Guidance

As we have been discussing with you over recent weeks the government are clear that it is important that providers of this service review their client list and make sure it is up to date including levels of informal support that are available to individuals.

What PPE is required for those providing homecare

If the individual being cared for has symptoms of COVID-19 the care worker should use PPE for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids. PPE should include aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks.

Should a home care provider still undertake visits if the service user self-isolating?

If a client is displaying symptoms the care workers should use the appropriate PPE as outlined above.

Should home care still be undertaken if the client does not have symptoms but is part of a household where there are symptoms?

If the individual being cared for and their worker can remain at a safe protected distance from the symptomatic member of the household, then care can be provided without additional precaution. This would apply, for example, where the symptomatic family member can remain in their own room, is using separate bathroom facilities and is observing robust isolation procedures, staying 2 meters away from other family members.

Where this is not possible – and this will vary on a case-by-case basis – the same procedures should be adopted as if the person being cared for did have symptoms of COVID-19. Care should continue to be taken to limit contact with any household member that has symptoms.

How do I manage waste with a suspected or confirmed case?

PPE waste generated from home visits with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be placed into **a domestic waste bag, then placed again into another domestic waste bag**, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin. Personal waste (such as used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths should also be disposed following this same process.

Cleaning and laundry

Where care workers are assisting with cleaning then they should use usual household products such as detergent and bleach that will be effective in getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly.

If care workers are supporting with laundry they should not shake dirty laundry before washing, in order to minimise the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air. Items should be washed as usual in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. Heavily soiled items, for example with vomit, diarrhoea or other bodily fluids, or items that cannot be washed should be disposed of, with the owner's consent.

What if a care worker is concerned they have COVID-19?

If a member of staff is concerned they may have COVID-19 they should follow NHS advice, self-isolate at home, and not visit or care for individuals until safe to do so.

We will continue to communicate with you on a regular basis, as further information becomes available. Your commitment and support for our local community at this most testing of times is appreciated, as we continue to ensure we can support the most vulnerable of our local residents.

Yours sincerely

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