Date: 5th February 2021

Dear Care and Community Support Provider,

Once again thank you to you and your staff for helping to keep our residents safe and well during this time. Please continue to report any cases or outbreaks to the Community Infection Control Team on 0151 295 3036. The best way to prevent outbreaks is to continue with good hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and to continue using PPE as per the national guidance and maintaining social distancing.

As you will be aware from the news, the South African variant of Covid-19 has been detected in Sefton, specifically within the Norwood area of Southport. Targeted ‘surge’ testing is taking place in parts of the PR9 postcode area, where anyone over the age of 16 years is invited to go to the dedicated mobile testing unit established at the Kew Park & Ride, even if they haven’t got symptoms and a team of staff is also visiting residents in the targeted area to provide and collect testing kits. We would ask you to encourage people from this area to get tested as soon as possible and to only leave home for essential purposes. If anyone tests positive, they are advised to self-isolate.

Whilst it is excellent news that staff are being vaccinated, it is only the first dose and it will take a few weeks for the body to build up protection. Please continue to follow infection control measures within work and social distancing outside of work.

GPs from the South Sefton and Southport and Formby areas have put together some short videos about the vaccine programme and what you can do to help, about getting your vaccine and vaccine safety. All videos can be found at this link. [Sefton GP's talk about the COVID Vaccine Programme](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCn6CMQmsERkBRII11Iwy3vXebPHp7fj_)

There is a national ask from the DHSC of all **Homecare/Domiciliary Care Providers** to update the Capacity Tracker as there are additional questions contained within the COVID-19 Update (Daily) Survey to ensure a consistent mechanism for monitoring and reporting on vaccination status which will help to ensure equitable access to vaccines and ultimately the safety of staff and residents across social care.

Please note the following:

* Attached to this letter is the letter that was sent out to providers by DHSC yesterday informing them of the requirement for this additional information to support the National Vaccination Programme. We have also attached the updated guidance note that contains all the questions along with some support on how best to complete the survey. This will be uploaded to the Resource Centre / Help Tab>What’s New Section.
* Home Care changes captured in slide format attached
* There is also an email address for providers to contact if they have not yet been contacted by Local Authorities In relation to the offer of a COVID-19 vaccination
* Reports – The following reports have been updated as follows
* Home Care Survey Report - captures home care new survey information
* COVID Vaccination reports – captures home care new survey information
* IFC/ASC2 Response by question report updated to include filters, CCG, LA, STP etc.
* COVID 19 Testing report, now includes designated safe filter toggle
* Notification will be posted on the Main Menu Message Board to advise users upon log on of recent changes.

Please do try and attend the national system champion Q&A call every Thursday, where they run through what this means to you as a system. This is the most effective and efficient way to ensure you are up to speed with everything you need to know.

We would like to remind you of the mental health and wellbeing support that is available to you, your staff and residents. QWELL is an anonymous, free and safe online mental health and wellbeing service specifically commissioned for care home, domiciliary and supported living workforce in Sefton to support their mental health. Two QWELL Awareness sessions (virtual via zoom) have now been organised on the following dates: -

* Monday 22nd February at 2:30pm to 3pm
* Thursday 25th February at 7pm to7.30pm

Aim:

* To increase the understanding of and accessibility to the commissioned service QWELL

Objectives:

* To describe and give a live demonstration of the support available through the QWELL online mental health and emotional wellbeing support service.
* To recognise when, how and where that support can be accessed.

Please could you share the information with your staff and any nominations can be sent directly to [Louise.Kearney@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Kearney@sefton.gov.uk).

The sessions are just information giving sessions so please reassure yourself and the staff nobody will be asked for any private information.

**Infection Control Fund – Payments from the Remaining 20% of Round 2**

As you will be aware, a report on the use of the remaining 20% of the fund have been approved. As a result, the following payments are proposed to be implemented;

Care Homes

One-off payments will be made to support homes with visiting arrangements. Payments will be calculated based on a weekly cost of £22 (to cover staff, PPE and cleaning costs) per current resident per week, for 8 weeks.

The number of current residents will be taken from a report run from the Capacity Tracker for data submitted on Wednesday 10th February 2021 – so care homes will need to ensure that they update the Capacity Tracker on that day

Payment will then be made based on this data – for example, if the Capacity Tracker report shows that a care home has 30 current residents, then that care home will receive £5,280 (30 Residents x £22 per week x 8 weeks)

Domiciliary Care / Supported Living / Extra Care / Individual Service Fund / Community Support Providers

One-off payments to support Providers to reimburse care staff who deliver the above services in Sefton for costs associated with them attending the vaccination HUBS.

Payment will be made based on the Provider completing an submitting a declaration detailing the number of staff who have either been vaccinated or are scheduled to be vaccinated, and the payment will be calculated in the following way:

Number of staff x £22 (cost for time taken to attend and travel costs).

Providers are therefore expected to pass on these payments to each staff member.

**Change to ICF Rd 2 Annex B Template due to Rapid Test Fund**

A change to the existing template used to submit monthly actuals / forecast expenditure will need to made to ensure grant expenditure relating to Rapid Test fund is captured also.

A revised template will be circulated with next week’s update. Please use this for future returns.

Information for Extra Care and Supported Living

You will have been contacted direct by DHSC, providing you with an update on retesting, steps to use the self-referral portal, key updates to test kits contents and courier collection timeslots. The bulletin also includes answers to frequently asked questions and an invitation to their webinars.

Information for Care Homes

In connection to the South African strain identified in Southport, care homes in the Norwood area will be contacted direct but can we ask you to be extra careful. You may continue with any non-contact pod visits, following risk assessment and IPC processes and continue with your regular PCR asymptomatic testing as normal. These tests will be sent to the Lighthouse Labs for genome sequencing. If there are care homes outside of the targeted area, but staff live in the Norwood ward, they will need to be retested, but please wait for more guidance and communications on this.

Earlier this week we sent you a bulletin which included links to a flow chart and guidance about the retesting of staff, patients and staff in health and social care settings and outlining the specific sections of the guidance relating to PCR testing following a positive test (section 6) and LFD testing for people who are asymptomatic and those who have tested positive (section 7).

We know that there have been some queries relating to this in the past couple of weeks and hope that this helps to clarify things. For any specific cases and circumstances, you can contact the IPC team and the Public Health team at [public.health@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:public.health@sefton.gov.uk) for support.

Please be aware that all Mersey Care staff now complete twice weekly PCR tests and that the Lateral Flow Test in addition, is not required, when visiting care homes.

We are aware that several homes have residents for various reasons have not received their first vaccination, but who wish to. The Southport and Formby and South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (S&F/SS CCG’s) are planning on getting to these residents as soon as possible.

Care Homes are asked to contact S&F/SS CCG’s to advise of the names and numbers of those residents who require their first vaccination.

South Sefton Care Homes please email:

[Jayne.Williams29@NHS.Net](mailto:Jayne.Williams29@NHS.Net)

Southport and Formby Care Homes please email:

[Sfhealth.carecoordinator@nhs.net](mailto:Sfhealth.carecoordinator@nhs.net)

A member of the vaccination team will be in touch to advise of a date when your resident/s will be vaccinated.

Staff can also be vaccinated at the Hospital Hubs to receive their vaccine if they haven’t had it by using the links below:

Pfizer Vaccine - [Southport Vaccination Clinic | Scheduling and Booking Website (nhsbookings.com)](https://southportvaccinationclinic.nhsbookings.com/v2/)

Astra Zeneca Oxford Vaccine - <https://ormskirkvaccinationclinic.nhsbookings.com/v2/>

This is the other link that care home staff can access vaccination, ideally all care home staff should take evidence of their place of work

<https://aintreeuniversityhospital.nhsbookings.com/v2/>

Thank you to the care homes who offered support to help promote the vaccine to other social care staff to encourage them to have the vaccine.

This week, we also sent you some information in connection to the DSPT and NHS mail updates. To reiterate, the definitive hygiene date is 1st March 2021.   Therefore, homes only have four weeks to activate/reactive individual NHSmail accounts before they are permanently deleted.

The report has been updated to reflect 2020/2021 submissions. The submissions for 2019/2020 are still valid until 1st July 2021 for residential/nursing homes and 1st November 2021 for all other CQC Registered services.

You’ll all be aware that after the **19th February 2021**, Entry Level (11 questions) will no longer exist and will be replaced by Approaching Standards (26/27 questions, plus additional requirements or Standards Met that has 45 questions). Providers can still publish at Entry Level up until this date and this will count as your submission for 20/21.

There have been two support sessions this week and a further support session is planned for Monday 8th February, 10am – 1pm. Ten places are available on a first come basis.

Places can be booked via [england.dsptnorth@nhs.net](mailto:england.dsptnorth@nhs.net)

As you will be aware Adult Social Care in Sefton launched a formal consultation with residential care providers in relation to the proposed fees and annual uplift for the 2021/22 financial year on the 18th of January. The consultation will close at midnight on the 21st February 2021. More information about the consultation process can be found [on the care home provider web page](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/social-care-provider-information/care-homes-information/) and in addition to dedicated meetings to discuss this with providers, we will continue through the consultation to provide a Question and Answer dialogue on our web page to ensure that we are both open and transparent in our consultation.

Finally, for our Care Homes we would like to make you aware of a Care Homes COVID Oximetry@Home National Webinar next week. This event had been planned for March however it has been brought forward to next Tuesday so please can we draw your attention to the booking link below as a matter of urgency:

<https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/remote-monitoring-using-pulse-oximetry-in-care-homes>

From us, all the Health and Care partners and Councillor Paul Cummins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, we would like to thank you and your staff once again for all your hard work and everything you are doing at this time.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Butcher

Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health



Fiona Taylor

Chief Officer, NHS South Sefton and NHS Southport and Formby CCGs