Date: 12th February 2021

Dear Care and Community Support Provider,

As you will be aware from the news, the ‘surge’ testing has been expanded to the Dukes and Cambridge Wards, with an additional mobile testing unit at Southport Theatre and Convention Centre for people who don’t have symptoms from these wards and extra ‘doorstep testing’ is also taking place in targeted postcodes. Anyone over the age of 16 years from these areas is invited to go to the dedicated mobile testing site or the site at Kew Park and Ride and get tested as soon as possible or alternatively carry out a self-test when visited by the testing teams.

Even if staff have been vaccinated, it is essential to continue with good hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and to continue using PPE as per the national guidance.

Please also maintain social distancing and avoid car-sharing wherever possible.

**Additional route for booking first vaccine**

We have been informed by the DHSC that from yesterday there is an additional route for eligible frontline health and social care workers to book their first vaccination appointment via the National Booking System, initially for two weeks. Please find attached a letter from Stuart Miller and David Pearson containing more information about this to support the vaccination of Social Care Workers.

The National Booking Service can be accessed via: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/> or by phone: 119.

We are aware that there may be some frontline care workers who will have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Also attached is a short document which provides links to some key resources which may help in any conversations you will be having with your colleagues. This includes short videos and a blog by a social care worker.

This is an additional route to support you; please do continue to book on to the Hospital Hubs with the links we have shared or to access the St Helens Hub as per previous communication which ever route is most suitable for you. The important thing is to ensure that you access the offer of a vaccine. Please remember to let us know when the vaccination has been received as we are required to report centrally the number of people who have received the vaccination as a Priority 2 worker’s.

We would like to remind you that staff who care for someone whose care and support involves an Aerosol Generating Procedure that they must follow additional PPE guidance to keep themselves safe. FFP3 masks do not work unless they are fit tested to the individual carer and with the correct brand

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-aerosol-generating-procedures>

Please contact EmergencyPPE@Sefton.gov.uk or order from the portal to obtain the required PPE. Please also let us know if you need support to access Fit Testing.

Please continue to update the Capacity Tracker daily and can we remind you that there is a national expectation to complete the questions about vaccinations. This is collated centrally to inform a picture of the priority 1 and 2 cohorts to understand the level of take-up and to help with the critical planning of the rollout to other priority groups. We would be grateful if you could please encourage staff, who haven’t had the vaccine yet, to consider having it. It will help to get on top of infections in the area. We thank you for your ongoing cooperation with this.

**Social Care Recruitment Campaign**

The Department of Health and Social Care has launched the next phase of the

national adult social care recruitment campaign to help fill the 112,000 vacancies across the

sector. It is hoped that millions of people will see the campaign, helping to reframe adult social care as an inspiring and fulfilling career choice. The campaign highlights the rewarding, varied and flexible roles available across the sector, as well as showing people that all you need to start are the right qualities, as there’s training for everything else. The campaign advertising directs people to **everydayisdifferent.com** which provides everything they will need to research a career in

adult social care. Potential candidates can also search for social care jobs near them through

**DWP ‘Find a Job’.**

Please find attached a recruitment campaign briefing and letter for providers from NW ADASS, which includes resources and links to social media accounts for any marketing and recruitment campaign you may be doing. The information has also been shared with the Care Home Cell partners to promote the campaign.

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

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

**Infection Control / Rapid Test Funding Update**

Care Home Returns

DHSC has issued additional grant for care homes which for reporting purposes, is an extension to the Infection Control Fund Rd 2 – this additional grant is called Rapid Test Funding.

The Rapid Test fund is for expenditure incurred after 2 December 20 – 31 March 21 and has been allocated on a basis of £254.26 per CQC registered room.

As it is being treated as an extension of the ICF Rd 2 grant, the original Annex A i.e. signed acceptance of grant conditions, that you have returned will also apply to this extension.

The Annex B – monthly return showing actual spend to date plus forecast to year end, has been updated to include both an additional allocation made from the 20% discretionary element and the Rapid Test fund.

There are crossovers as to how the 20% and the Rapid Test allocation can be used with the original grant allocated, i.e. the original conditions of the ICF round 2 allowed the grant to be used for COVID-19 testing and the Rapid Test fund is specifically related to testing. If you have previously allocated spend to ICF round 2 which you would now want to reallocate to Rapid Test funding this is acceptable for expenditure from 2/12/20.

The updated version is attached, and I would ask that all care homes use this version for their return due on **Friday 19th February.**

Please make every effort to ensure that all expenditure included as ‘actual’ up to Jan 21 is correctly recorded against each grant element and you have maintained records to evidence expenditure if required.

If you do not expect to spend your grant in full please advise us of this in advance.

Community Providers

At this stage, the monthly Annex B return has not been updated for community providers, but this will be done before the March return for the 20% element.

**Additional Information for Care Homes**

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.

In connection to the South African strain identified in Southport, care homes in the three targeted areas of Southport should continue to carry out their PCR testing as usual. The PCR tests will be picked up and sent off separately. There is no need to do anything differently. If there is a positive test, these will be sent off for genome sequencing. If you have any queries, please email public.health@sefton.gov.uk (FAO Charlotte Smith).

The COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings has been updated (28th January) and now includes a new section on lateral flow antigen testing in asymptomatic health and social care staff (section 7).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

**Care Home Grant**

As you are aware Care Homes were invited to apply for the Care Home Grants Programme. The deadline was Friday 29th January and we have had a great response and we are pleased to have received 42 applications.

The Grant Scheme consists of a total funding amount of £200,000, with the maximum for any one bid being £20,000.

Applications will be reviewed on an individual basis. Successful applications bids will show clearly that funding awarded will be for either;

* Making physical improvements to care homes such as:
* Improvements to gardens / outdoor spaces / communal areas to afford Service Users and their Families improved opportunities to access outdoor spaces and use areas for improved social interaction and activities
* Improvements to communal areas within the care home to support greater social interaction
* Improvements to areas within the care home in order to make them more dementia friendly and to provide an environment which reduces Service User anxiety/distress

OR

* Implementing technological solutions such as:
* The purchasing of technological solutions/equipment (for example Interactive Tables, Robotic Pets and technology to support reminiscence therapy and contact with family) for use by Service Users in order to improve their quality of life

This criterion has been chosen with a goal in mind, and that is to make care homes more dementia friendly, to increase the positive experiences for service users and their families/advocates.

We are currently collating the applications received and these will be reviewed by a Panel on February 16th, 2021. Successful applicants will be notified as soon as possible after this date.

A free DoLs Training session is being arranged for 28th April 2021. This will be a virtual half-day session. If you have staff who would like to attend, please self-register at [www.seftonclc.co.uk](http://www.seftonclc.co.uk).

We have been asked to remind you that you are welcome to join the North and South Sefton Care Home Group (NSSCHG) WhatsApp Group. If you are interested, please text Jonathan on 07733338398.

The NSSCGH is working with Skills for Care to resurrect the Registered Care Managers Forum and will be part of a virtual conference, which is currently planned for Wednesday 31st March at 1100-1230 hrs. More detail to follow.

Finally, we would like to remind you again of the Councils current consultation in relation to the residential and nursing care annual fees proposal which began on the 18th of January 2021 and is currently due to close at midnight on the 21st of February 2021. Please consider the proposal and provide a response back to us, your feedback is extremely important and will inform the final recommendations that are put forward for decision. The email contact for responses is neil.watson@sefton.gov.uk or postal responses can be sent to Deborah Butcher, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health, c/o Bootle Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, L20 7AE.

The consultation meeting with providers on the 11th of February was well attended and we are currently collating the feedback and the questions which will appear on the dedicated consultation web page on the council website next week. The link is <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/social-care-provider-information/care-homes-information/>

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

THIS IS A WEB VERSION OF THE LETTER – IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANY DOCUMENTS MENTIONED, PLEASE CONTACT Jayne.vincent@sefton.gov.uk