Date: 26th February 2021

Dear Care and Community Support Provider,

Thank you for everything you are doing to keep your staff and residents safe currently. We know that you are working hard to prevent outbreaks. As mentioned last week, we are starting to see a gradual reduction in the number of outbreaks, and this is testament to the dedication and commitment of you and your staff teams. If you do have cases or outbreaks, please continue to report these promptly to the Community Infection Control Team on 0151 295 3036.

If there are any staff who have yet to have the vaccine and would like one, they can still book onto the Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Hub to receive their vaccine by using the links below:

Southport and Formby - 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/>

South Sefton - <https://aintreeuniversityhospital.nhsbookings.com/v2/>

Please remind staff to bring their ID and the consent form and most importantly not to share the link with anyone.

To keep up to date with the latest news on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout programme, visit the CCG webpage below.

<https://www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/covid-19-vaccination-programme-what-you-need-to-know/>

Your staff may also be interested in watching this short video from the Liverpool Women’s Hospital about the vaccine and pregnancy/infertility <https://youtu.be/jUgn-f-pYc4>

**PPE Safety Alerts**

The DHSC have received information indicating that the Nitri-Hand Non-Sterile Nitrile Examination Glove - Product Codes: FTG813, FTG814, FTG815, FTE9936, FTE9940, FTE9941 may not meet the technical specifications set out as part of the DHSC essential technical specification for examination gloves. Whilst this is reviewed with the regulators and a response is requested from the supplier, we have taken the decision to cease distribution of this item until the investigation is concluded. We would ask that you check your stocks and immediately quarantine any of this product.

The DHSC have received information from the manufacturer indicating that the Duraweld Face Visors – EPVS0143 may contain latex in the product’s headband for items manufactured and dated up to the 13 July 2020, when the headband components were changed. Whilst these visors are safe to use for people who do not have a latex allergy, there has been some correspondence relating to the quality of the head band. They have therefore taken the decision to immediately lock and quarantine this item with a view to collecting it from those sites affected. If you do have these visors, please email [productqueries@ppeenquiries.com](mailto:productqueries@ppeenquiries.com) quoting reference *Visor - Duraweld* and confirming the volume of product held in order to facilitate collection.

Please find attached the two letters from the DHSC with more information, about these safety alerts.

We wish to remind you that if you are offering respiratory protective equipment (RPE), of which FFP2 are included in this categorisation, then there is very clear guidance that the employer needs to complete a face fit test for the employee.

The latest Royal College of Nursing guidance states that FFP3 and FFP2 face masks are types of tight fitting respiratory protective equipment that provide a higher level of respiratory protection than surgical face masks. Their safety is dependent on wearers undergoing a fit test, to ensure that there is an adequate personal fit and seal to protect the wearer from fine aerosols containing virus particles.

There are two fit test methods, qualitative and quantitative:

* Qualitative fit testing is a pass/fail test based on the wearer’s subjective assessment of any leakage through the face seal region by detecting the introduction of bitter- or sweet-tasting aerosol as a test agent.
* Quantitative fit testing, which involves ambient particle counting or controlled negative pressure measurements, should be used as an alternative to test the adequacy of the respirator.

Where national Infection Prevention and Control Guidance and/or local risk assessments indicate that FFP3 or FFP2 levels of protection are required, a fit test must be carried out prior to first wearing a new model of FFP3 or FFP2 mask. Fit tests must also be carried out whenever there is a change to the type or model or whenever there is a change in circumstances of the wearer that could alter the fit of the mask e.g. weight loss or gain or substantial dental work.

Fit testing must be carried out by a competent person as described by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). You can find further guidance from the HSE here - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg479.htm>

**NHS Mail Accounts and DSPT**

Please note any inactive accounts will be closed from the **1st March 2021**, so this is the last week to activate/reactive individual NHSmail accounts across the region before they are deactivated. Following this, care providers will have 30 days to reactivate their account before it will be deleted see bulletin <https://support.nhs.net/knowledge-base/national-administration-service-nas-bulletin-february-2021/>

Please email the National Administration Service if any individuals still have access to the shared mailbox, authorising the reinstation of the deleted account by including the individual NHSmail email address and the deleted account user’s mobile number.

A text is being/has been sent to care providers by NHS Digital with the following wording: Please log into your NHSmail account before 1/3/21 to keep active and avoid deletion. For help, visit: <https://support.nhs.net/knowledge-base/nhsmail-pods-faqs/>

* The DSPT North team are prioritising areas which cannot receive the Individual Mailbox Report because they are unable to complete this task effectively without this document.
* Additional support will be available for specific providers, preferably introduce providers to us through the shared mailbox [england.dsptnorth@nhs.net](mailto:england.dsptnorth@nhs.net) to ensure we can complete this task efficiently.
* Updated guidance for the complaints and escalations process provided by NHS Digital went live on the 8th December 2020. Please view this information using the following link https://support.nhs.net/knowledge-base/complaints-and-escalations-process/

Please note that the waiver permitting NHSmail access, prior to DSPT publication, has been formally extended until June 30th, 2021.

Date Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT)

Approaching Standards is scheduled to replace Entry Level on 5th March.

The deadline dates for 2020/2021 submission are currently:

* 30th June 2021 for Residential and Nursing settings
* 31st October 2021 for Other CQC registered services

**Workforce Capacity Grant Fund**

Please note that the due to the tight timescales re distribution / expenditure of this fund we will aim to distribute 80% directly to providers based on recent completion of the capacity tracker by care homes and Community Providers who have a CQC registered location in Sefton.

We believe that Providers are best placed to decide how to use the funding in their own services, in a manner which addresses their capacity issues.

As this is separate funding to the Infection Control Fund and Rapid testing Fund, we anticipate that we will need to issue Providers who receive the funding an additional reporting template.

**Shaping Care Together**

We would like to remind you that patients, carers and staff who use and deliver services are invited to give their feedback and help shape, develop and improve future services at Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals. Shaping Care Together is giving all members of local communities the opportunity to get involved and share views on:

* What works well
* What could be improved
* What is important to them

To take part, visit their interactive engagement site [www.yoursayshapingcaretogether.co.uk](http://www.yoursayshapingcaretogether.co.uk) for more information and to complete a short survey. If you would prefer to speak to someone or require information in a different format or language, please call 01695 588025. Please note that at this stage it is a listening exercise and no decisions have been made. We would be grateful if you could please also share this information with your staff teams.

Information for Community Support Providers

You may have been contacted directly from the DHSC in connection to the Supported Living/Extra Care testing update. The latest bulletin includes information about staff testing regimes in line with care homes for high-risk settings, updated LFD guidance, an expansion of testing to wider Extra Care and Supported living settings that meet the criteria, a frequently Asked Question section and details of the weekly webinars that you are invited to join, starting from 3rd March, 11.00am. To join the webinar, please use this link <https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1380165&tp_key=dfecd07a9d>

Please find attached a copy of the full bulletin in case you didn’t receive it.

This week we have written to domiciliary care, supported living, extra care and community support providers to invite you to attend a dedicated consultation meeting in connection to the fee proposals for 2021/22. An invitation has been sent to you based on what we believe is the most relevant meeting for you to attend in relation to your specific service:

• Extra Care/Supported Living Providers- 10th March 2021, 12 Noon to 1pm

• Domiciliary Care/Community Support- 17th March 2021, 11am to 12 Noon

We do hope you are able to attend and, in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the lead officers for the consultation if you have any questions or would like further information:

Extra Care- [Alison.taylor@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.taylor@sefton.gov.uk)

Supported Living- [Joanne.christensen@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.christensen@sefton.gov.uk)

Domiciliary Care- [Neil.watson@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.watson@sefton.gov.uk)

Community Support- [Rebecca.bond@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.bond@sefton.gov.uk) or [joanne.christensen@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.christensen@sefton.gov.uk)

Information for Care Homes

Plans are being developed for the 2nd dose of the vaccine for staff and residents. The intention for the rollout of the second dose is South Sefton care homes will be the week commencing 15th March and Southport and Formby care homes from the week commencing 25th March, for both staff and residents, who we gave the first vaccination to. Please be aware that dates will be dependent on the supply of the vaccines.

You will be sent a spreadsheet two weeks before the 2nd vaccine dose is due, which we will ask you to complete and return and this will be followed up with a phone call to you. So that no vaccine is wasted, we will also ask you to confirm that the staff you include on the spreadsheet, will be available on the day of the second dose.

We are continuing to provide ‘mop up’ sessions for any resident who has not had their first vaccination

Any new staff or staff who have decided to have the vaccine are asked to make an appointment at one of the Hospital Hubs mentioned above.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed a **Vaccine Information Pack** for staff, which is attached. This resource pack has been developed to provide clear guidance to Care Homes about the COVID-19 vaccine and bring useful resources and information together in one place. It’s a great resource for all staff, but also particularly informative if you have staff who have been hesitant to have the vaccine so far, and we ask that you share this resource with them.

Whilst it is great news that more and more of us are being vaccinated, there are still people who haven’t been vaccinated. Can we please ask that the high levels of infection, prevention and control measures remain in place – we can’t afford for complacency to creep in – and all staff must take precautions to both protect their own health and prevent passing on infection to the vulnerable people they care for during their work, colleagues, and even their own family. Please find attached a PPE information sheet for your information, that you may wish to print off for staff/noticeboards. Here is the link to the [PPE Guidance for Care Home workers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes/covid-19-ppe-recommendations-for-care-home-workers-explained), for your information.

Last week we shared with you the amendments to the outbreak testing policy, that came into effect from 22nd February. To reiterate, the amendments are as follows:

* From 22nd February, residents should be tested using LFD at the same time as the outbreak PCR tests on day 1 and again between day 4-7 in a new outbreak. As with all testing of residents, if the resident is unable to consent to the test, the care home should consider the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and ‘best interest decisions’.
* Daily staff LFD testing is being extended beyond day 7 if positive tests are still occurring (from 22nd February onwards).
* With immediate effect, care home outbreak PCR testing for staff and residents at the start of a new outbreak is moving from Pillar 1 (local PHE and NHS labs) to the usual care home testing process through Pillar 2 (the National Testing Programme) to simplify the process and speed up test results.

More information can be found on page 39 of the [care home testing guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961926/care-home-testing-guidance-england-v1602.pdf), please also see this [infographic](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961927/care-home-outbreak-testing-guidance-england-visual-v1602.pdf) which summarises the new outbreak testing process.

We would also like to draw your attention to the [amended guidance on page 9](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961926/care-home-testing-guidance-england-v1602.pdf) regarding changes to LFD testing within 90 days of a positive coronavirus test. From now on, if someone tests positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFD for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR.

We have also recently received a Provider FAQ on this, which you may find helpful? This is attached to this letter.

As you will be aware the Government announced that from the 8th March residents are to be allowed [one visitor per resident Government announcement](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/care-home-residents-to-be-allowed-one-visitor-as-part-of-cautious-easing-of-lockdown). Please note that we are still waiting formal guidance on the single-named visitor scheme and we will share this with you as we receive it. In the meantime, you may wish to review your risk assessments and environments in readiness.

We are aware that vitamin D drops for your residents have been delivered to homes from the Department of Health and we are in the middle of sorting out a plan for how these can be safely administered to appropriate residents in your homes. To ensure continuity the Medicines Management Team are working with medicines management leads across Cheshire and Merseyside, so this is taking a little time to formulate a plan. Please can we ask that GP practices are not contacted to authorise administration for residents. We are hopeful in the next couple of weeks the Medicines Management team will be in touch with homes with a plan of action.

In the meantime, if you have any queries please email [seftonmm.hub@nhs.net](mailto:seftonmm.hub@nhs.net) for the attention of Jenny Johnston.

We know from the strategic call with care homes this week that the iPads received last year are being put to good use – from helping with social engagement to logging tests and completing DoLs assessments. We are aware though that there are a few homes that haven’t activated their iPad yet and some that haven’t been active during the past 14 days.

For technical queries and support relating to how the iPad works, including breakdowns and apps please contact the Jigsaw24 service desk on: 03332 409 234 or send an email to: [carehomesupport@jigsaw24.com](mailto:carehomesupport@jigsaw24.com). The service desk is open Monday to Friday 08:30 – 18:00 (excluding bank holidays).

You can also access a wide selection of support materials here <https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/social-care-technology/nhsx-care-home-ipads/> to help you use your iPad

We have attached again the support documentation from Jigsaw that we circulated in January, which provides more information.

We wrote to you this week, to notify you that there is another fee consultation meeting planned for the 9th March at 11.00am. An invitation to this meeting has been sent and we hope that you will be able to join us. There is also information about the consultation and the interim Equality Impact Assessment on the care home providers webpage: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/social-care-provider-information/care-homes-information/>

The email contact for responses is [neil.watson@sefton.gov.uk](mailto: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.

Finally, we are aware that Central Government will be contacting care homes in the coming days on Shielding and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People, so please watch out for this communication.

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