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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.

Last week we shared some information with you in response to the new measures put in place because of the Omicron COVID-19 variant in the UK.

As a reminder, public and staff are now required to wear face coverings in a range of public areas. This does not apply to people who are unable to wear a face covering, which includes children under the age of 11 and people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability. [You can find out more on Face coverings, when to wear one and exemptions on the Government website.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own)

There are several places in Sefton where people can get their vaccines:

**Walk-in** - You can search for local walk in vaccination centres [here](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site)

**Book** - You can book your jab by calling the National Booking Service on 119 or by visiting the [website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) You will be offered a list of slots at vaccination centres including any available at pharmacy run sites in Sefton.

Or

If you are a ***Southport and Formby*** patient aged over 16 you can also book an appointment at Southport Centre for Health and Wellbeing Centre by calling 01704 395830.

Or

If you are a ***South Sefton*** resident aged over 16 you can book at Seaforth Village Surgery by calling 07979938229 or at Netherton Health Centre on 0151 247 6413.

Any carers under the age of 40 years, will need to show evidence of their employment/ caring role when they attend for vaccine booster.

The Council is still reminding anyone who starts to show COVID symptoms of a high temperature, a new persistent cough or a loss of taste or smell, should book a PCR test by calling 119 or visiting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).  It is recommending that people out and about on a regular basis, meeting up with groups or attending indoor events to carry out regular tests using the rapid home test kits available free from pharmacies and other locations.

We would like to remind you that Swab Squads will be out across Sefton over the coming week, providing free lateral flow testing kits and vaccination information and advice. Details will be published on the Council’s [@SeftonCouncil](https://twitter.com/seftoncouncil) Twitter feed.

Mobile test units will be operating at locations in the Borough in December - [Dates and locations here.](https://mysefton.co.uk/2021/11/29/mobile-testing-in-sefton-december-2021/)

**Information for Care Homes**

**Care Home Strategic Partnership**

Last week we wrote to Care Home Managers separately about the development of the Partnership to build on the contact, mutual aid, and joint work over the past 21 months. We remind care homes that we hope to discuss the Partnership with you on **14th December, 4.00 – 5.00pm**.

**Care Home Improvement Grants**

We would like to remind care homes that Round 2 of the Care Home Improvement Grants is available. We have sent some applicant packs out but if you like would a pack, please contact asc.development@sefton.gov.uk The deadline for round 2 applications is **17th December 2021.**

**Cost of Care Exercise**

We would also like to reiterate the importance of the **Cost of Care Exercise** work. As emailed previously, the timescales for return of survey & cost templates is **7th January 2022**.

The exercise will link to the following ongoing strategic commissioning priorities:

* **We all want a sustainable market going forward:** and want to understand supply and demand factors as well as simply costs, which ARCC are aiming to cover in the survey & 1:1s
* **Sefton wish to change their existing fee uplift process:** BUT need meaningful & transparent market engagement to create a new way of arriving at fees in future
* **We need to avoid making assumptions on costs based on existing data and non-local data:**  which is outdated – as this will not serve to create a forward-thinking model for uplifts in future
* **Also need to create a new more inclusive framework:**  ARCC 1:1s and workshops are intended to consult on the wider commissioning ambitions as well as just looking at costs – and so future commissioning will not be transformational unless we get insight from the market
* **Longer engagement timescales will delay the fee consultation process** – Sefton want to avoid cash flow pressures on the market

ARCC have also asked us to reiterate that they want to be flexible and help all those providers who are able to work with them on this exercise, so please get in touch with them if you have other availability or proposals to work with them. Please also note the following:

* **All information submitted to ARCC is confidential:** they will not share individualised cost information with Commissioners, only aggregated and anonymised information is shared with Commissioners
* **Extending timescales for cost information:** they want to ensure that timescales are not a discouraging factor and therefore invite you to work with them and offer a timescale that works for you in collating information.
* **Using existing data and formats already to hand:** please let them know if staging the return of certain types of information (i.e. such as payroll / invoicing data) that is readily available & requires much less analytical work; can be submitted in an anonymised form to reduce your administrative burden, as well as offering any existing formats in which you supply data internally (i.e. such as management accounts that may be prepared on a monthly / quarterly basis) and would not require translating into the cost template they have provided.
* **Consulting on the results:**  ARCC can’t progress feedback workshops and discuss the results of the cost analysis with the market if they have no information to work with – they can only have meaningful engagement once they have a critical mass of information to work with.

**Care Home Admissions / Hospital Discharges**

As our acute colleague’s experience pressures relating to discharges, we ask for your support in being able to assess and accept new residents as quickly as possible. If it is possible to do this on the same day, then that would greatly support alleviating current pressures.

We would also ask that cut-off times for patients arriving at care homes are extended as it has been reported that some care homes are now putting in cut-offs for patients arriving at 3pm or 4pm at the latest. Anything care homes can do to support flexibility with cut-off times would be much appreciated.

**ICF/Testing/ Vaccine Grant**

We remind care homes that the first return to show expenditure for October / November is due **today**. Please make every effort to meet this deadline to allow us to submit a consolidated return to DHSC.

**Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant**

We anticipate that we willoutline allocations to Providers next week.

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.

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