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

Date: 7th January 2022

Dear Care and Community Support Provider,

First, we would like to wish you and your teams a Happy New Year! We know that you are still experiencing difficult times but would like to thank you for your continued efforts and your huge commitment to care for our most vulnerable residents.

As you are aware, we are seeing a high rate of COVID-19 transmission in the borough and outbreaks in several care homes. We urge anyone who shows COVID symptoms of a raised temperature, persistent new cough or a loss of taste or smell, to get a PCR test by  calling 119 or visiting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus.](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus.%20)

Staff can also attend the three additional Military Testing Units across the borough.  January dates for each site are listed below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Site** | **Deployment Date - January** |
| North  | Southport Esplanade (Eco Centre) | 8th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 17th,22nd, 23rd 24th, 29th & 30th |
| Central | Maghull Town Hall | 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th, 21st, 27th & 28th  |
| South | Litherland Sports Park | 5th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 18th, 19th, 25th,26th, 31st |

Appointments for all sites are booked in the usual way via the Gov.uk website (link above).

We would also like to remind everyone how important it is that we are all fully vaccinated, and that means having the booster jab too. Vaccinations still, without doubt, provide the best clinical protection for all of us against the COVID-19 virus, which is still spreading in our communities.  We ask you to speak with your staff about getting the jab/s; whether that be the first, second or booster if they are already eligible, or to keep an eye on the latest information from the Government who have said all eligible over-18s will be offered a jab by the end of January.  Whether it’s their first, second or third, booster jab, it’s never too late to get vaccinated.

**COVID-19 booster vaccine**

A booster dose of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine helps improve the protection you have from your first 2 doses of the vaccine. It helps give you longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

You can find out who is currently eligible on the NHS website [here.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-booster-vaccine/)

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

### Book an appointment using the National Booking Service

Use the National Booking Service to book a COVID-19 booster vaccine at your nearest available site.

You can find out more about who is currently eligible for which dose of vaccine and book an appointment [here.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/book-or-manage-a-1st-or-2nd-dose-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/)

**Book an appointment at a GP-led vaccination site**

If you are a resident living in Southport and Formby, you can contact Southport Centre for Health and Wellbeing Centre by calling 01704 395830 to book an appointment for a booster vaccine if eligible.

If you are a resident living in south Sefton, you can contact Seaforth Village Surgery by calling 07979938229, or Netherton Health Centre on 0151 247 6413, to book an appointment for a booster vaccine if eligible.

### Find walk-in clinics for COVID-19 vaccines

You can search for walk-in sites, and find out who is currently eligible to get a booster vaccine a walk-in centre, on the NHS website [here.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/)

**PPE**

Just a reminder that Emergency PPE is available from Sefton Community Equipment Service Store, Unit 2c Bechers Drive, Aintree Racecourse Business Park, Liverpool L9 5AY.  If you need to place an order, please email in advance specifying what you require.  emergencyppe@sefton.gov.uk

**QWELL**

The Qwell service can provide free counselling and emotional wellbeing support for social care workers. Qwell is safe, confidential and can be accessed free through a smart phone, tablet or PC, at [**www.qwell.io**](http://www.qwell.io/).

It gives you access to online counsellors every day until 10pm via drop-in sessions or scheduled text-based sessions; self-help materials; moderated forums and personal goal-based journals.

The Qwell magazine shares personal experiences and tips from others and the Qwell team, while its Discussion Boards are a chance to start or join a conversation with the friendly Qwell community. There is also a Daily Journal, which you can use to track your feelings or emotions and reflect on how you're doing

The first time you visit Qwell, you need to create an account by choosing Sefton from the drop-down menu. You then need to pick the most appropriate role from the options in the second drop-down window.

[Find out more about the service here.](https://www.qwell.io/)

**Specific Information for Care Homes**

**Care Home Strategic Partnership**

The next meeting of the Care Home Strategic Partnership is Tuesday 11th January, 4.00 – 5.00pm. We do hope you are able to join us. To access the meeting, please use this link: [Click here to join the meeting](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_NzdlODE5YTAtZGI1OS00MDhkLWIwNWEtNTc2MDEzZTRkODE2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22bf3a3387-dc95-4c7d-940e-49cc2fc9d4f1%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%227980ebac-f4fc-4859-929d-9be7da0b5368%22%7d)

If you are interested in acting as Chair / vice Chair then please email Neil.Watson@sefton.gov.uk

**Hospital Bed Management**

Given the number of current COVID +ve cases in our care homes and within the hospitals, we would like to remind you that if you have an outbreak and a patient needs to be transferred to a hospital that **you let the ambulance/receiving hospital know about the outbreak** - even if the patient going to hospital has not tested +VE. Thank you for your support with this - this will be helpful for bed management in hospitals at this critical time.

**Continuing Health Care**

Care homes and the wider system is under an incredible amount of pressure because of the Omicron outbreak, sickness levels and winter pressures overall. However, the NHS still has a legal requirement to ensure that individuals that are indicated as requiring a continuing health care (CHC) assessment can do so. There have not been any changes to the framework in that respect. It is important that we continue to work collectively as best we can in these challenging circumstances to facilitate those important assessments. Your ongoing support for that in these challenging times is greatly appreciated.

**Guidance for outbreaks in Care Homes**

This week we wrote separately to care homes about some new guidance we would like to see implemented locally around outbreaks.

Given the current pressures across the health and care system, (UKHSA and the Regional Directors of Public Health) in partnership Association of Directors of Public Health North West have agreed that we can utilise the standard 14 day outbreak restrictions, following the last COVID case in an outbreak. This will be based on a risk assessment of the situation which will be led by the Community Infection Control team and/or UKHSA.

The letter to care homes provides more details on this and information on visiting during outbreaks, infection control measures and staff receiving a positive result.

If you have not received a copy of the letter, please contact commissioningandcontracts@sefton.gov.uk, who will be able to send you a copy.

**Essential Care Giver**

We know that you will be working extremely hard to reduce infection risk and isolate any outbreak as far as possible. We know that this may mean that there are some residents who are isolated from their loved ones and this can affect the physical and mental health of residents.

Current government guidance on care home visiting recognises the vital role loved ones play and provides the means to mitigate against these risks, in the form of the ‘Essential Care Giver’ (ECG) role and you will be aware that the guidance states that every resident should be supported to nominate an ECG who should be able to visit under all circumstances, including during periods of self-isolation and outbreak.

To support your teams an Essential Caregiver Fact Sheet and poster have been developed, which are below. The intention is that by using these documents as part of your outbreak management plan, you can mitigate the many risks that arise from visiting restrictions and support providers to ensure residents safely maintain contact with their loved ones, which is so essential to their physical and mental health and well-being.

**Self-certification deadline**

We wrote to care homes in December to forward a letter from the Department of Health and Social Care about an extension to vaccination as a condition of deployment and the self-certification cut-off.

As a reminder, for anyone who has registered a self-certification before the 24th December 2021, the self-certification forms will continue to be valid until 31 March 2022, so long as they have been received before 24 December 2021.

The reason for this extension is because we are aware that some people who have applied for a formal exemption have experienced a delay in the outcome of their application being notified. Extending the cut-off for self-certification will allow sufficient time for individuals whose formal medical exemption is unsuccessful to be fully vaccinated before 31 March 2022.

**Invitation to trial MYQoL equipment**

An opportunity has arisen for a small bed home care home in Sefton (max 25 beds), supporting elderly residents with Dementia to participate in a free 3-month trial of digital monitoring equipment. The supplier is a company called MYQoL, and they are offering to supply the BedXit, ALM (Assisted Living Monitoring) and RITA (Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities) products to test out the value of having all technologies working cohesively together in a care home setting.

More information can be found attached to this letter and there is a presentation, which can be found at this link: [MYQOL Technology Presentation.pptx](https://mdin.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/s/ExternalSharing/EX-mXMg0SLRLnPWw5X_mfVUBMKJJi4vobXRk_mpM6Ibt9A?e=pPu7Hi)

It is anticipated that the trial will begin in March 2022 and end in June 2022.

Please can you contact Diane Clayton at Sefton Council if you would like to be considered for this opportunity by **Thursday 13th January 2021.**

Email: diane.clayton@sefton.gov.uk or please ring Diane on 07773096538

**External Funding/Grants**

As you will be aware, DHSC has allocated funding in the form of various grants, i.e. Infection Control, Testing, Vaccine for the period Oct21 - Mar 22. The first tranche has been allocated and the 2nd tranche will be made available after the February returns are submitted.  Sefton has received £1.032M of Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund which will be allocated approximately 3rd week in January.  Details on the proposals being considered by the Cabinet Member on allocations from this fund can be found in the following link - <https://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=67230&Opt=0>

DHSC have circulated information about additional grants which may be available however full details of allocations require further discussion. We will keep you updated.

**Cost of Care Exercise**

We will be writing to care homes separately regarding this exercise as the timescales for it have been extended and we also wish to outline further how this exercise links to wider national work.

From us, all the Health and Care partners and Councillor Paul Cummins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you and your staff teams for everything you are doing to support our most vulnerable residents. Your dedication, support and hard work is very much appreciated by us all.

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