

19 March 2020

Dear Colleague

Re: COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS

We are writing to you in response to the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus) which we know will place significant pressures on us all within the health and social care system over the coming weeks and months. In response to this, we have today started to publish a Frequently Asked Questions, the first of which can be found by use the following link and is also attached for ease of reference:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/2059/covid-19_coronavirus_-_information_for_care_providers

We recognise that you we will need each other's mutual support over the coming months. The Council have enacted a number of our emergency plans to free up essential staff capacity to respond to the crisis and our Brokerage and Commissioning Teams have been identified as critical in the current crisis to ensure you are supported. We are doing our best to mitigate the impact on our own service and will do our utmost to remain responsive, however we may also require your patience and understanding at this time also.

Our focus at present and over the coming weeks will be:

- To ensure you have channels of communication available to you and up to date information as the situation changes
- To ensure we do all we can to maximise the flexibility to yourselves and your staff to support service users in a safe but pragmatic way
- To ensure we provide financial assistance and minimise any unnecessary administrative processes, allowing you to focus on providing good quality care to as many people as possible
- To maximise the capacity available across the market to ensure as many service users can be supported as possible over the coming months

The details of our approach are contained within the attached FAQ (also published at the above web address or via www.birmingham.gov.uk/stm and click on the COVID-19 tile) and will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and supportive.

We know many of you have been in touch regarding availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and I am pleased to confirm this is now being released from the National Flu Pandemic supply. Further details are included in the FAQ, so please do check for more information.

We also appreciate many of you will be concerned regarding yesterday's announcement of school closures across England from Monday. Please be assured we are lobbying hard to ensure the social care workforce are prioritised in the alternative school arrangements being considered for key workers. Further announcements on this are expected today and we will provide further updates via our website above as they are available.

We will also be writing to citizens who have care and support funded by the Council and asking them to consider their own contingency plans, working with their friends, family and community

networks and also to ensure they work with you as care providers to ensure we are all delivering essential care and support.

We realise you are likely to experience increased staff absences during the outbreak due to illness, self isolation and caring responsibilities, at precisely the time when the challenge presented by the virus will be at its height. There will be pressures on everyone from the NHS to informal carers which makes usual contingency planning as challenging as it could be. However, we would like to thank you and your staff for continuing to provide vital support to citizens of Birmingham and working in partnership with us to maintain and increase service levels to meet the coming challenges.

Yours sincerely



Professor Graeme Betts
Corporate Director - Adult Social Care