

Frequently Asked Questions for Providers – Adult Social Care

Note: New issue/questions since the last publication are highlighted in Yellow

Points of contact	How do I contact the Council's Commissioning Team?	In the first instance please contact us by email at operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk Please provide clear and concise details of your query and your email address and contact number so we can respond directly to you. If the matter is more urgent and you feel that you need and immediate response, then please contact your local area Commissioning Officers. You can find phone numbers and email addresses of officers on our webpage using the following link: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/1719/who_to_contact_in_the_commissioning_team/1
	How do I contact social work teams?	Please avoid contacting social workers or our Adult Care Access Point unless the matter is very urgent or you want to raise a safeguarding alert to report possible abuse or neglect of an adult with care and support needs. You can contact the Adult Care Access Point (ACAP) by email at acap@birmingham.gov.uk or by phone on 0121 303 1234.
	How do I contact Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (BSol CCG)?	BSol CCG have provided further advice and guidance for professionals on their website at https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus-advice-for-professionals If you are experiencing challenges, please inform BSol CCG immediately so they can help support you by email at nhsbsolccg.covid19@nhs.net
	How do I contact and keep in touch with the Local Resilience Forum?	Please use the following contact details: West Midlands Conurbation Local Resilience Forum, Events Control Suite, Tally Ho, Pershore Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B5 7RN. Contact: Gregg Arrand Tel: 07920 275 579 West Midlands Conurbation LRF Community Risk Register . @WMidsPrepared, @PreparedPanda

Finance	How has the Council allocated - or planned to allocate - Birmingham's share of the Government's Infection Control Fund for Care Homes?	<p>Birmingham City Council has recently received the Conditions of Grant in relation to the £600m infection control fund and published our Care Homes Support Plan on 29 May 2020. Our plan is available on our website at:</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16356/minister_of_state_for_care_response_-_birmingham</p> <p>We are currently making the necessary administrative arrangements to comply with the Conditions of Grant.</p>
	Infection Control Fund – Allocation of funds	<p>On 13 May the Government announced that it would make available a £600 million Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England to reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience. This fund is being distributed by Local Authorities to care homes and other care providers in the form of a Ring-fenced Grant.</p> <p>The National Grant Conditions can be found here https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-infection-control-fund</p> <p>Birmingham's allocation of £9.761m will be distributed as follows:</p> <p>75% (£7.321m) of the Infection Control Fund will be allocated directly to Care Homes in 2 payments – one in June 2020 and one in July 2020 – based on the current number of CQC registered beds within each home and in accordance with the Grant Determination requirements. Grant Agreement Letters have been distributed to all care homes and you should expect to receive payment by Friday 19 June 2020.</p> <p>25% (£2.44m) of the Fund will be used to support Extra Care, Supported Living and Home Support providers with infection control measures in line with the Grant Determination requirements. The Council has yet to determine the best way to use this part of the Fund and we shall update care providers when plans are agreed.</p>

<p>Will the Council be putting in place additional financial support measures to care providers during the Covid-19 crisis.</p>	<p>In recognition of the increased unexpected costs incurred by care providers and of the additional pressures being placed on the system the Council has approved a range of measures to support care providers across the market. Details of these are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speed of response hospital D2A pathway incentive – a one-off payment of an additional £1000 will be paid to care homes facilitating admissions to the home from hospitals (including the return of existing placements following a hospital admission), and Discharge to Assess Bed Based and Community provision. This is to recognise the potential additional costs associated with assessing and discharging quickly and to ensure finances are quickly available to support discharge in line with the national guidance. We also need providers’ support in delivering against the following conditions and the additional funding will be provided where these conditions are met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The home can demonstrate it is actively operating a referral, assessment and admission service between 8am-8pm, 7 days a week. b. The home has made an offer to the care package referral via CareMatch Portal within 4 hours of the referral being posted. c. The home has facilitated admission of the citizen to the home within 24 hours of being informed by the social worker that they have made the ‘winning’ offer for the care package. d. The home accepts admissions regardless of the citizen’s Covid-19 testing or diagnosis status at the point of discharge 2. Amendment of rates paid to out of area care homes – in a variation to current contracting arrangements, and on a temporary basis, the Council will pay the higher of the host local authority rate or BCC standard care home rate to providers located outside of Birmingham. This includes all placements made regardless of whether the admission is from hospital or from the community. 3. Reimbursement of additional costs borne by providers specific to the COVID-19 situation – The Council recognises that care providers have incurred and continue to incur a number of additional costs over and above those which could have been reasonably anticipated in this situation, particularly in relation to PPE, staff sickness pay until SME’s can claim this back from Government, and agency staff costs. The Council has agreed that it will reimburse providers delivering care and support in Birmingham for all reasonable additional costs incurred as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, which could not have ordinarily been anticipated as part of normal business continuity planning. Birmingham based care providers will be able to invoice the Council on a monthly basis for these additional costs. The Council’s intention is to authorise swift payment of these invoices on the basis that submissions are reasonable, truthful, and can be evidenced. It will in future carry out a retrospective audit of
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	<p>Financial support package to care providers – How much has been distributed?</p>	<p>26 June 2020 update</p> <p>In April 2020 Birmingham City Council approved a £5m pound package of support for care provider across the city. The support was put in place to recognise the additional costs providers are incurring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>One of the elements of the support package was to reimburse care providers for reasonable additional costs incurred since 16 March 2020 which could not have been anticipated in the normal course of business continuity planning – particularly in relation to additional PPE, staff isolation and agency staff costs.</p> <p>As at 18 June 2020 the Council has paid 338 additional cost claims totalling £749,006.</p> <p>The Council continues to accept additional cost claims from care providers in line with the process we have set out on our webpage:</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/2175/covid-19_additional_costs</p>

	<p>Why have you decided to provide financial support in this way and is it equitable?</p>	<p>The Council very carefully considered the best approach to ensuring funding was made available to as many providers as possible in a timely and equitable way. The package of support we have published in relation to additional cost pressures experienced by providers, is open to all Birmingham care providers regardless of whether the Council currently contracts with them or not. We are clear that regardless of contractual status, all care providers are supporting vulnerable people and will have faced additional costs over recent months. We have also made provision for contracted providers outside of Birmingham to be able to claim back costs relating to Birmingham-funded service users. The Council has only been provided funding to support Birmingham residents, but have carefully considered the complex way care providers are funded and how services are commissioned outside of Birmingham to ensure this is available to as many providers as possible.</p>
	<p>Did the Council consider giving a fee increase in these circumstances?</p>	<p>There have been a range of national and regional discussions regarding the best approach to providing funding to care providers, however unfortunately a single approach couldn't be agreed upon, as circumstances in each local area vary considerably. The Council had already agreed a fee increase of 4.6% for contracted home support/supported living providers and 3.7% for care homes, which are significantly above fee increases agreed elsewhere regionally. There were a number of significant considerations as to whether a further fee increase would be the right solution and this was ruled out due to the following risks/issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the 2020/2021 fee increase was already in the process of being administered by both the Council and care providers, a further change may result in further delays with the volume of invoices/payments being delayed by going into query likely to increase. • If the Council had passported the money to providers via a fee increase, these additional costs would have automatically been passed on to citizens who make a financial contribution to their care and would have also resulted in thousands of additional financial assessments for citizens. We were keen that citizens weren't disadvantaged by the circumstances in what is already a difficult time for many. • The provision of a fee increase would have only benefitted those providers who are contracted to the Council and packages of care where the Council is the funding body – all other providers would not have received any funding, yet will have certainly incurred Covid-related expenses. • A fee increase approach would have meant the additional costs would be reimbursed as part of our usual payment cycles. Going outside of this process, will mean the money will be released within days of receipt of a claim rather than providers having to wait for the next routine payment cycle.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We wanted to ensure the process recognised that the circumstances of each provider may be different. A flat percentage fee increase may not have covered the additional costs for some providers and some providers may have experienced much lower additional costs.
	How does the £1000 incentive work?	The £1,000 incentive is to recognise the potential additional costs associated with facilitating quick discharges and also costs associated with isolating anyone upon discharge in line with the guidance. The Adult Social Care Action Plan has been published and sets out the position on testing and discharge, and seeks to balance the need to maintain hospital bed capacity for the most unwell and to slow the spread of the virus into care homes. We have agreed an approach to this with our NHS colleagues and a letter was issued to providers on this. We will continue to work with homes to ensure the safe discharge of citizens from hospital and the best way to achieve this for each home. The financial incentive is also available to providers accepting service users who have been receiving care and support in a short term bed and/or who are returning to a care home after a hospital stay, as long as this is completed in a timely way.
	What evidence will be required to support claims for additional costs?	More detailed guidance about the process has now been published that sets this out. The funding being made available to the Council is public money and must be clearly accounted for. The Council will be expected to evidence to Government, how and where money has been spent and we are very much expecting the process to be conducted on the basis of trust with providers. While we are confident that the majority of providers will work openly with us and claim only for the cost incurred, we are also mindful that in line with usual value for money and public accounting principles - we must allow scope for the Council to audit the process should it be required and for any funding that cannot be evidenced to be reclaimed. We are not anticipating the need to use this process, but are simply being transparent and clear about the terms to avoid any confusion at a later date. We will of course be pragmatic in relation to evidence availability and Commissioning managers will be reviewing and authorising all requests submitted to ensure this happens.
	How do I raise a claim to the Council for additional Covid-19 related care costs?	Care homes, home support agencies and supported living providers can now invoice the Council for additional costs resulting directly from the Covid-19 situation. Providers will be able to submit claims for additional costs dating back to 16 March 2020 and for each calendar month thereafter until the Council ceases the scheme. We have set out the conditions of payment as well as guidance informing you how to make a claim. These are available on our webpage: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/homepage/352/covid-19 coronavirus - information for care providers

		<p>Please read the guidance before submitting your claim – incorrectly submitted claims will unfortunately be rejected.</p>
	<p>Exceptional payment of historic invoices in query</p>	<p>To support providers with cashflow at this difficult time, the Council has decided to release approximately £1m of home support/supported living invoices which are currently held with its Invoice Query team. Payment will be made according to the following conditions and is on a Without Prejudice basis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All elements of the invoice are correct with the sole exception that the invoice value does not match the service agreement value held on the Council’s care records system. 2. If other elements of the invoice are incorrect then the invoice will remain unpaid in full and will remain with our Invoice Query team for resolution. 3. The Council will make payment to the value of the service agreement held on its care records system. The difference between the amount paid and the invoice amount will form the disputed invoice value moving forwards. 4. The outstanding disputed invoice values will remain on record with our Invoice Query team which will continue to work with providers to resolve queries on a case by case basis and recognising/balancing current pressures you may be facing. 5. This exceptional action of making payment is in no way indicative that the Council will pay invoices in this way in the future. Indeed, incorrectly submitted future invoices will not be paid and will be either passed directly back to you to be corrected and resubmitted or passed to the Invoice Query team to resolve directly with care providers. <p>We are working to complete this process before 8 May 2020.</p>
	<p>How do I claim the statutory sick pay the government has announced due to Covid-19 and is there any</p>	<p>The government has set out a range of support measures for businesses including reclaiming Statutory Sick Pay paid for sickness absence due to Covid-19. Further details of these can be found on the government's website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses</p>

	<p>additional government support?</p>	
	<p>Will I be paid for home support calls if my carer is turned away by the service user because they are self-isolating?</p>	<p>You should record that the call has been declined, the reason why, and then make follow-up contact with the service user and/or their representative to confirm arrangements for future calls. It is only necessary to inform the Adult Care Access Point of refusals for cases of Covid-19 related self-isolation, if you are concerned that the service user is placing themselves at risk by refusing or continuing to refuse care in the short term. You should submit your invoice for the initial call that was refused which will be paid (please mark any relevant amount on the invoice as 'COVID19'), however for further planned refusals or cancellations you should not submit invoices, in line with the contractual arrangements, as these will not be paid. The expectation is that you will reuse this spare capacity to deliver other care packages, for which you will then be paid in the usual way.</p>
	<p>Is the Council planning to make changes to its payment arrangements to help providers maintain cashflow?</p>	<p>The Council has taken the decision to relax the 'tolerance' levels of its invoice payment system in order to allow you to respond to changing care needs during the Covid crisis and to assist with cashflow and reduce the number of invoices going unpaid/into query. This will allow you to flex hours of care by up to 25% of the invoice/care package value in discussion with service users and families, without recourse to the Council. The Council will continue to review how it pays providers as the current situation develops and further advice and guidance is released by the Government. Please ensure any additional calls or amounts are marked separately on your invoice as 'COVID19'.</p> <p>14 May 20 - update As previously notified, amendments to calls and invoice amounts related to Covid should be clearly marked separately on invoices as 'COVID19'. It has become clear during the processing of this year's Period 1 invoices that this instruction has not been followed and that invoice totals have simply been amended without accompanying detail and reason.</p> <p>While the Council is committed to ensuring provider cashflow is maximised during this period, the invoicing process and rules have not changed and must be adhered to. In future, if invoices are not completed correctly and in line with instructions then unfortunately they will not be processed and passed to the Invoice Query team to resolve. This will result in delayed payment to you.</p>

		To clarify, if you have flexed hours in agreement with a citizen because of a temporary COVID-19 circumstance, you must detail clearly on the invoice against each individual service agreement and period the number of additional care hours and the additional amount you are invoicing for alongside the reason – COVID19. This process is not to be used to claim for other additional COVID-19 related costs such as additional PPE. We have set out separate arrangements for this and any invoices received outside of that process will not be processed.
	How do I get paid for the additional support I may have to put in place if my resident's day centre closes because of Covid-19?	In such situations you will be able to temporarily flex the amount of care hours provided by up to 25% without recourse to the Council to enable payment as set out above. Should you be required to increase the number of care hours above 25% then you will need to submit a variation using the standard form. You can find the form and details of where to send this to on our website: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/143/invoice_payment_and_fees
	Council support for Birmingham business during the outbreak	Birmingham City Council has stepped up efforts to help businesses in Birmingham meet the coronavirus challenge. For further details please see the Council's website using this link: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50232/support_for_businesses_during_the_coronavirus_covid-19
Infection Prevention and Control	Younger Adult Care Homes – Infection Prevention and Control training (NHS and Birmingham City Council)	As part of its support to care homes, the NHS and Birmingham City Council have arranged for an external trainer to deliver infection control training to Younger Adult Care Homes. The training will be delivered by Sarah Keenan Training. Sarah Keenan, the lead trainer has 15 years of direct practical experience in Health and Social Care. The training will begin immediately and is scheduled to run until the end of August 2020. The training content is outlined below: Aim: Deliver a series of bespoke Infection Control and Prevention courses, specifically looking at the effective use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Care homes. Approximate session time is 2 hours, depending on participant numbers. Outcomes:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief overview of Covid-19 and its mode of transmission • Definition of recommended PPE – disposable gloves, plastic aprons, face masks and eye protection • When to use PPE • How to use PPE effectively – to include effective hand and respiratory hygiene and maintain standard infection control/prevention • How and when PPE should be put on and removed (doffing) • Replacing PPE • Disposal of waste and laundry <p>Younger adult care homes will be contacted by Sarah Keenan Training to arrange delivery of the training. Should you have any questions or concerns about this support please contact Chris MacAdams (Commissioning Manager) Email: chris.macadams@birmingham.gov.uk Telephone: 07833 059264</p>
	Continued support to care homes – Education and training	<p>Please see the link below to the letter of continued support to care homes from BSol CCG and the request to complete the included questionnaire and respond to the CCG by 25 May 2020.</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16326/continued_support_to_care_homes_education_and_training_infection_prevention_and_control_-_19_may_letter_from_bsolccg</p>
	Infection Prevention and Control	<p>We have created a specific page on the Birmingham City Council Commissioning Team website where you will be able to access up to date guidance.</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/3465/covid_19_infection_prevention_and_control_information</p>
	Management of exposed staff and patients in health and social care settings	<p>Government guidance on the management of staff and patients exposed to coronavirus in health and social care settings can be found using the link below:</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>Compendium of links to Infection Prevention and Control published guidance and training resources</p>	<p>Please see the following links providing infection prevention and control supporting documentation:</p> <p>Compendium of published guidance https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/C0372-compedium-of-publications-and-communications-covid-19-ipc-in-healthcare-settings.pdf</p> <p>Compendium of training resources https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/C0372-training-resources-covid-19-ipc-in-healthcare-settings.pdf</p>
<p>PPE</p>	<p>PPE supply – national and local support routes to access PPE</p>	<p>Please use the link below to view the updated letter which was issued to all Birmingham care providers on 10 June 2020, to provide support to access PPE. https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16221/4_may_-_letter_from_birmingham_city_council_and_nhs_to_care_providers_about_supply_of_ppe</p> <p>Sequence of steps to source PPE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to order through your normal supply chain in the first instance. 2. Try suppliers on the list of distributors checked by the West Midlands Combined Authority at the end of the letter. 3. Small Care Homes (24 beds or less) and small Home Support agencies (99 or fewer clients) – use the national PPE portal. Small Care Homes and Home Care agencies are being invited by Department of Health and Social Care to register with a new PPE Portal to directly order emergency PPE. A small care home is defined as having 24 beds or less and a small home care agency as having 99 or fewer clients. Invitations will be received via the email address registered with CQC and only those homes and agencies that have received an invitation will be able to register. More information is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment#who-can-use-the-portal 4. Contact local support arrangements through Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Care homes/hospice – 0121 466 6488 or email covid-19.ppe@bhamcommunity.nhs.uk Home support/supported living/Extra Care/Shared Lives/Personal Assistant – Complete on-line form at https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/xfp/form/731 (only contact ppestock@birmingham.gov.uk if you are experiencing any difficulties with the on-line form) 5. If you continue to experience difficulties contact the National Supply Distribution line on 0800 915 9964 or email supplydistributionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

	<p>Temporary VAT zero rate applied to PPE – 1 May to 31 July 2020</p>	<p>The government has announced the introduction of a temporary VAT zero rate on all supplies of PPE between 1 May and 31 July 2020. Use the link below for further details:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-zero-rating-for-personal-protective-equipment</p>
	<p>What is the latest PPE guidance for home support?</p>	<p>The government's latest guidance, COVID-19: How to work safely in domiciliary care in England, can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-domiciliary-care</p>
	<p>What is the latest PPE guidance for care homes?</p>	<p>The government's latest guidance, COVID-19: How to work safely in care homes, can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes</p>
	<p>Can Personal Assistants employed through a Direct Payment access the emergency supplies of PPE?</p>	<p>Please use the link below to view the updated letter which was issued on 10 June 2020, to provide support to access PPE https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16221/4_may_-_letter_from_birmingham_city_council_and_nhs_to_care_providers_about_supply_of_ppe</p> <p>Sequence of steps to source PPE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to order through your normal supply chain in the first instance. 2. Try suppliers on the list of distributors checked by the West Midlands Combined Authority at the end of the letter. 3. Complete on-line form at https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/xfp/form/731 (only contact ppestock@birmingham.gov.uk if you are experiencing any difficulties with the on-line form) 4. If you continue to experience difficulties contact the National Supply Distribution line on 0800 915 9964 or email supplydistributionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk
	<p>What PPE is required to provide care and support to service users who do not have a Covid-19 diagnosis but have symptoms</p>	<p>The Council has produced a helpful guide providing specific guidance on the use of PPE in a range of different scenarios. This can be found in the guidance section on our webpage https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/15918/ppe_use_scenario_guidance_birmingham_city_council</p>

	requiring self-isolation?	
	Fake PPE websites/offers and PPE scams	Please be aware that we are receiving reports of fake or scam websites being set up offering PPE supplies and providers receiving emails inviting them to make purchases. As is the case with all purchases please ensure you carry out due diligence checks on all companies you plan to make orders with, in particular those soliciting for business. The best advice is to continue to use your usual supplier and seek advice from the National supply Disruption service if you are having difficulty obtaining supplies or need advice about which suppliers to use.
COVID-19 Testing	Repeat testing of residents and staff in care homes	<p>From 6 July 2020 The Department of Health and Social Care has started to roll out weekly testing of staff and testing of care home residents every 28 days in all care home without a current COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat testing will be initially prioritised for care homes primarily looking after over 65's or those with dementia. • Repeat testing will be extended to include all care homes for working age adults in August. <p>Care homes will need to re-register on the care home portal to apply for regular testing: https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home?wp-linkindex=1&utm_campaign=ASC_testing_e-shot&utm_content=dhsc-mail.co.uk&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Department_of_Health_and_Social_Care</p> <p>Find out more about regular testing: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regular-retesting-rolled-out-for-care-home-staff-and-residents?wp-linkindex=2&utm_campaign=ASC_testing_e-shot&utm_content=dhsc-mail.co.uk&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Department_of_Health_and_Social_Care</p>
	Covid-19 testing for care workers on Birmingham.	<p>Covid-19 testing facilities are now available at Edgbaston Cricket Ground or via a home test kit for care workers with or without symptoms. You should note that the test is most effective within 3 days of symptoms developing.</p> <p>Tests for essential workers can be booked through the government's Testing Portal. Essential workers can self-refer or their employer can make a referral on their behalf. Further details of the scheme and access to the portal can be found using the following link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested?utm_source=a484350f-5964-4e4f-baf7-db2b3a8f0f15&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily</p>

		<p>Please note that employers can also refer care workers for a test using Birmingham’s Occupational Health Service. This runs in tandem alongside the national testing portal. See the letter on our website which details instructions for booking a test via Birmingham Occupational Health: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16036/covid_19_testing_for_care_workers_in_birmingham</p> <p>Please also see the testing proforma application form which you must use when applying for tests on behalf of your employees via the Councils testing service: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16037/covid_19_testing_proforma</p>
	<p>COVID-19 Testing in care homes</p>	<p>You will be aware that the CQC have launched a digital portal which enables care homes to apply online to order test kits so that you can carry out swabbing of residents within your care homes directly. As of 7 June 2020 this portal is now open to all care homes: https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home</p> <p>Webinars are being hosted each weekday, in the morning and afternoon on the whole home swab testing process. Care Homes can register to access the webinar: https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/2375949/724EF6345473A192F6B9C19334699A29/1077953</p> <p>Across Birmingham and Solihull we will continue supporting homes by providing an enhanced testing programme, with our local teams visiting care homes to swab all of your residents. This testing programme helps to identify Covid infection as early as possible and provides you with ongoing localised support around infection control to reduce the impact on both residents and staff.</p> <p>Under our local programme, results will continue to be telephoned through to you and infection prevention advice and guidance around any other concerns you have, will also be provided at this time.</p> <p>Testing can be arranged for all staff within your home via the national portal with appointments given at the testing centre at Edgbaston. There is a home test option for nondrivers. Appointments can be booked directly by your staff using the following link:</p>

		<p>https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers</p> <p>Alternatively you can book tests on behalf of your staff by registering with the national portal at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home</p> <p>In the meantime, if you have concerns that any of your residents are symptomatic, please continue to inform the local Public Health England team via the online portal:</p> <p>https://surveys.phe.org.uk/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=n4KL97m2I</p> <p>This reporting will enable us to ensure that you, your residents and your staff can be supported appropriately.</p> <p>Please remember that staff who are negative but have symptoms must not return to work until at least 7 days has passed from the onset and they are symptom-free. Staff who are positive and asymptomatic should also remain off work for the Government recommended 7 day period of isolation from the day of the test. If they develop symptoms during this time they should not return to work for 7 days or until symptom free. Please note a cough can linger for some time so it is fine to return to work after the 7 days if only a cough persists so long as the staff member has been free of a fever for at least 48 hours.</p>
Food	Where can I access food supplies?	<p>If you are experiencing difficulty in accessing food from your usual supplier, we recommend the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with your usual supplier or supermarket and ensure they understand you are a business supplying services to vulnerable adults and ask to be prioritised. 2. Consider contacting one of the large wholesale food suppliers and set up a business account, for example, http://www.bikold.co.uk/ and https://www.brake.co.uk/ They will no longer be supplying restaurants and so large wholesalers will supply to smaller businesses. 3. Finally, consider shopping locally at small shops and suppliers. Local butchers, grocers and bakers are still operating and being creative in the way that they supply and deliver food.
Home support calls	When invoking my Business Continuity Plan, can I introduce flexibility	<p>Yes, we actively encourage you to review all support plans, identify which elements of support are critical to that person's well-being, prioritise those critical care and support elements and amend call planning as necessary. You can do this without recourse to the Council, but you must ensure you inform and agree with service users any changes to normal arrangements. Under these circumstances we will not be enforcing the 30 minute minimum call</p>

	around call durations and call frequency?	duration contractual requirement or tolerances around start and finish times of calls. We do hope this allows you greater flexibility to meet the needs of current services users and potentially increase your capacity to support more services users as the situation changes.
	Can I sub-contract calls to other care providers?	<p>Yes, the Council gives its agreement to you to enter into emergency sub-contracting arrangements provided you have invoked your Business Continuity Plan and have informed the Commissioning Team by email at operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk The Council does not give its agreement to you to enter sub-contracting arrangements with providers who are not registered with the CQC, if the provider has an Inadequate CQC rating, or if they do not have the necessary level of insurance as set out in the contract.</p> <p>The following clause of the Framework Agreement contract sets out the terms and conditions for sub-contracting:</p> <p>Clause 20 Sub-Contracting</p> <p>20.1 The Provider shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure continuity of the Service if its Employees are unavailable due to emergency or any planned or unplanned absences.</p> <p>20.2 Where the Provider is unable to provide the Service, the Provider may discharge its obligations under this Framework Agreement by arranging for the Service to be carried out by another Provider or Sub-Contractor provided that:</p> <p>20.2.1 the Provider has obtained prior permission from a Council Commissioning Officer;</p> <p>20.2.2 if it is to provide Personal Care, the Sub-Contractor or alternative Provider is Registered with the Care Quality Commission and its employees are Criminal Records Checked to Enhanced Disclosure Level (Enhanced DBS);</p> <p>20.2.3 the Provider shall remain liable for its obligations under this Framework Agreement in relation to the Service provided by the Sub-Contractor;</p> <p>20.2.4 any additional costs incurred in relation to the appointment of the Sub-contractor will be the responsibility of the Provider;</p> <p>20.2.5 the appointment of a Sub-Contractor in accordance with this clause 20 shall last no more than a period of four (4) weeks, unless agreement to extend the appointment is approved by the Council.</p> <p>20.3 In the case of extreme emergency the Provider may appoint a Sub-Contractor without obtaining prior permission from the Council subject to clauses 20.2.2 to 20.2.5, but must notify the Council in writing within 24 hours of this situation arising.</p>

		We are hopeful this will increase your capacity to allow you to continue to support existing service users as sickness absence levels increase and also allow you to provide home support to further service users requiring your care and support as demand increases.
	ID badges and uniforms	Unfortunately, we have received notification of some very sad instances of thieves entering citizens' property falsely claiming to be social care or NHS staff and then carrying out a burglary. Please remind all of your employees to wear ID badges and uniforms (where appropriate). Please remind citizens to always check ID before they allow entry to their property, to refuse entry if no ID is shown, and to call your office if they are in doubt.
Discharges from hospital to care homes	Health and Care System Support to Birmingham Care homes	<p>The Birmingham Health and Care System (Birmingham City Council and the NHS) has set out a range of support available to care homes in Birmingham. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health Protection Team Toolkit 2. Contact details of the Enhanced Care Home Support Team - a team of Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Support Staff who can provide practical advice and support in relation to discharges from hospital, managing patient care in times of deteriorating health, maintaining citizens in care homes, PPE and Covid-19 swab testing for residents. 3. Access to Primary Medical Care for both Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG care homes. 4. PPE guidance 5. Other Key National Guidance <p>The letter setting out further details of this support can be found on our website: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16035/coronavirus_health_and_care_system_support_for_care_homes_in_birmingham</p>

	<p>Streamlined application process - Interim Flexible Contracting Arrangements For The Provision Of Care Homes With And Without Nursing Services For Care Providers (Signing Up To A Contract With The Council During The Coronavirus [Covid-19] Pandemic).</p>	<p>In response to Covid-19 and the need to create additional bed capacity, from April 2020 Birmingham City Council will be using CareMatch to operate Interim Flexible Contracting Arrangements For The Provision Of Care Homes With And Without Nursing Services.</p> <p>The benefit to the Provider will be that the application process has been streamlined and that the process as a whole is simpler and quicker.</p> <p>This application process refers to this category of care only (and therefore does not apply to Supported Living, Home Support or Extra Care) and providers that are already signed up to the Council's Flexible Contracting Arrangements For The Provision Of Care Homes With And Without Nursing Services And Care And Support (Supported Living) do not need to apply. Any applications from Providers already signed up to that contract will be rejected.</p> <p>Please note that you are asked to submit evidence of £10m Public Liability Insurance (including loss or damage to service user's personal effects) - this has been changed to £5m for these interim contractual arrangements and therefore the insurance certificate uploaded will need to be for £5m only.</p> <p>The application process for the Interim Flexible Contracting Arrangements shall commence in April 2020 and will remain open for applications until the Covid-19 crisis has passed (this exact date will be determined by the Council). Any Interim Flexible Contracting Arrangements awarded will remain in place until 31 March 2021 unless terminated earlier in accordance with its terms. Any provider continuing to support citizens from 01 April 2021 will need to apply to the Council's full Care Homes With and Without Nursing Contract, for which a separate set of terms and conditions will apply.</p> <p>For support with making an application please visit https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/1792/care_match_implementation/1</p>
	<p>New Hospital Discharge Service Requirements</p>	<p>The Council is working closely with its NHS partners to swiftly develop and coordinate a revised model of discharge of patients from acute hospital settings to home (with and without support) and into care homes. The objective of this model is simply to release capacity within hospitals for the provision of intensive care beds, in order to save lives. The intention is to safely discharge significant numbers of patients from hospital in the next 10 days in order to give hospitals the best opportunity cope with and manage the expected significant increase in Covid-19 related</p>

		<p>hospital cases over the coming weeks. To facilitate this we will need your support to access both vacant beds, accommodation in supported living and ExtraCare schemes, and unused home support capacity.</p> <p>We shall contact you in the coming days with further specific details, but examples of the types of things we shall be seeking to put in place are 7 day admissions to care homes including facilitation of admissions outside normal office hours, shortened turnaround time from acceptance of placement to actual admission, and same day access to accommodation or housing. We shall also be seeking to work with all providers in Birmingham, both currently contracted and non-contracted. Where contractual changes are required we shall seek to implement this through variation of current contracts or the award of new ones.</p>
	Government advice – safe admission to care homes	<p>On 2 April 2020 the Government issued guidance on the Admission and care of residents during Covid-19 incident in a care home. You can view the guidance using the link below:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-admission-and-care-of-people-in-care-homes?utm_source=ac47bed8-b52a-4c2f-b961-a48468e031b1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate</p>
	Where can I get health protection team advice and how do I contact my local Health Protection Team?	<p>Public Health England West Midlands Health Protection Team have issued a Covid-19 Toolkit and Frequently Asked Questions document. You can access these here:</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/3401/public_health_england_west_midlands_covid_19_care_home_toolkit_linking_to_first_attachment</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/3402/public_health_england_west_midlands_covid_19_frequently_asked_questions_for_care_settings</p> <p>Use the following link to identify your local Health Protection Team and find their contact details:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team</p>
	If I want to expand capacity in my care home, do I have to notify the CQC?	<p>Advice from the CQC to care homes who want to increase their bed capacity</p> <p>Please see the useful advice and guidance below from the CQC to care homes who are wanting to increase their bed capacity as part of the COVID-19 response.</p>

		<p>If providers are making an application to increase their capacity and help meet DHSC or CCG COVID-19 contingency plans, it's important they tell the CQC in their covering email and clearly mark it 'COVID- 19 application'.</p> <p>The CQC are prioritising these applications. More information can be found here: https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/registration/covid-19-registrations#socialcare-registered</p>
	<p>Register for and use NHSmail</p>	<p>From 23 March 2020 all care home providers are being asked to register for and use NHSmail in their homes to ease communication between the NHS and social care providers. NHSmail is the secure email service approved by the DoHSC for sharing patient identifiable information. Visit https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhsmail for more information</p> <p>West Midlands Care Association will support providers if you need help with registering from NHSmail. They can be contacted by phone on 01384 637116 and have further details about how to register on their website www.wmca.care/digital</p> <p>West Midlands Care Association have issued the following message: The NHS has temporarily suspended the compliance requirements for NHS Mail and simplified the opening process To open your NHS Mail account, you need to fill in a very short online form by clicking on the link below You will need to open two accounts and each account needs an existing email address (can be business or personal and a mobile phone number (again can be business or personal) These are only used during the account opening process and are not shared. You must use a different email address and mobile number for each account (ie you cannot use the same email address and mobile number twice). We suggest setting up an account for your Registered Manager plus a deputy but it's your decision. Once we receive your application, we will check it and send it to NHS Mail to be processed. You will receive an email containing details of your new NHS Mail account and how to set it up plus a text message containing a one time passcode usually 24-48 hours later. The passcode you receive should be valid for a week from issue Once this crisis is over, we will work with you on the compliance side of things (Completion of the DSP Toolkit) so that you can continue to use NHS Mail in the future We realise that you have a lot of things on your plate at the moment but secure communication between the Health Service and Care Providers is a priority during these troubled times and it really doesn't take long to set up www.wmca.care/digital</p>

	<p>Tracking capacity in care homes – change to previous advice</p>	<p>Following guidance published by the Government on 19 March 2020 (COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements), care homes are required to make vacancy information available to NHS and social care teams in real time from 1 April 2020. This is to be done through the national Capacity Tracker.</p> <p>Please ignore the previous instruction issued by Midlands and Lancashire NHS Commissioning Support Unit in relation to Birmingham and Solihull care homes being required to register for EMS+. This was incorrect.</p> <p>All Care Homes are required to sign up to Capacity Tracker directly. Comprehensive support for registration and operation is being developed. The full support offer to enable organisations will include a call centre, online tools, and webinars to enable users to understand what they need to input and how. To register please visit the Capacity Tracker website address: https://carehomes.necsu.nhs.uk/</p> <p>Birmingham City Council will continue to collect capacity data in the short term through the weekly Be Heard questionnaire to support our current discharge planning with hospitals.</p>
	<p>Tracking capacity in home support, supported living and Extracare provision</p>	<p>The Council is seeking to capture local capacity and business continuity issues through regular distribution of a short questionnaire administered via the Council’s Birmingham Be Heard consultation portal. The questionnaire contains 7 questions and should take no more than a few minutes to complete. When you receive an email with a link to the questionnaire and we request that you complete as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Council’s Commissioning officers will also contact providers regularly by phone to identify some local and business continuity information, however we shall attempt to keep this to a minimum.</p>
<p>Mutual Aid</p>	<p>Can you tell me more about the Council's plans for Mutual Aid?</p>	<p>The Council is developing further plans. Currently the Council would like you to consider joint working and sub-contracting with other providers. We are also distributing a regular Covid-19 Capacity and Business Continuity Questionnaire to understand your capacity to deliver care and support and to inform us how we can best support care providers as the current situation develops.</p> <p>Should you have any offers or suggestions, please include these in your response to the above questionnaire when issued or email us at: operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk</p>

	<p>Can you share contact details of other home support providers so we can explore sub-contracting arrangements with them?</p>	<p>We are collating details of CQC registered home support providers who have informed the Council that they have spare capacity to deliver care and support. We shall publish these details in the Mutual Aid section of our website: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/3398/mutual_aid_programme</p>
	<p>Can you share contact details for staffing agencies?</p>	<p>We have compiled a list of staffing agencies who have indicated to us they have trained staff available to work. The list can be found in the Mutual Aid section on our webpage https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/homepage/352/covid-19_coronavirus_-_information_for_care_providers</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>Care Workforce App</p>	<p>A new dedicated app for the adult social care workforce in England has been launched to support staff on-the-go through the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>The Care Workforce App can be accessed through Google Play Store, the Apple App Store and is also accessible online at: https://workforce.adultsocialcare.uk</p> <p>The tool will be the first of its kind provided for the care workforce, and will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act as a single one-stop-shop providing the sector with all the latest guidance, wellbeing support and advice they need to protect themselves from COVID-19 and keep themselves well • provide access to learning resources on crucial areas such as infection control as well as practical advice and support for mental wellbeing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show how care workers can take advantage of offers available to NHS and social care staff, including free car parking and discounts through organisations and initiatives like Discounts for Carers and the Blue Light Card • signpost free access to apps like Silvercloud, Daylight and Sleepio, which can help boost users' mental wellbeing through programmes covering sleep, stress and resilience
	Reuse of medicines in a care home or hospice setting	<p>The Department of Health and Social care has issued a standard operating procedure on how to run a safe and effective medicines reuse scheme in a care home or hospice during the coronavirus outbreak. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice</p> <p>Further advice can be obtained from Birmingham and Solihull CCG Medicines team if required at: nhsbsolccg.medsteam@nhs.net</p>
	Skills for Care	<p>Skills for Care have developed a support pack for Registered Managers during the COVID-19 situation. The details can be found at: https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Leadership-management/support-for-registered-managers/support-for-registered-managers.aspx</p>
	Compendium of useful support links	<p>Birmingham Occupational Health have compiled a list of links which employees or service users may find useful:</p> <p>Free mental health support for care workers - a range of support services to aid frontline/social care staff including 24hrs contact and resources, tips and tools for wellbeing. https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/ourfrontline-socialcare</p> <p>An NHS service to support good mental health helps with expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing. https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters</p> <p>Mind Infoline - info@mind.org.uk (mental health support charity) Telephone: 0300 123 3393 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)</p> <p>Samaritans - jo@samaritans.org (mental health support in a crisis) Telephone: 116 123 (Free 24 hours a day)</p>

		<p>Cruse Bereavement Services - https://www.cruse.org.uk/ Or call the free helpline: 0808 808 1677 (support for those affected by bereavement)</p> <p>Preventative and supportive mental health foundation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/b/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities</p> <p>NHS Live Well https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/ (encouraging and supporting positive benefits of exercise).</p> <p><u>Domestic Abuse support</u></p> <p>West Midlands Forced Marriage - 24hr helpline: 0800 953 9777 National Domestic Violence Helpline - 24hr helpline: 0808 2000 247 National Centre for Domestic Violence: 0800 970 2070 or Text NCDV to 60777 National LGBT+ domestic abuse helpline: 0800 999 5428 Rape Crisis England and Wales: 0808 802 9999 Men’s Advice Line: 0808 801 0327 Respect helpline (anyone worried about their own behaviour): 0808 802 0231</p> <p>Please do ensure these contacts and links are provided to your staff teams and promoted, as we all recognise the impact the current Covid situation is having on our mental and physical wellbeing. The Council has a range of wider tips and information on it’s website that your staff may also find useful:</p> <p>https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50238/wellbeing_during_the_coronavirus_covid-19</p>
	Key Worker helpline	<p>The Covid-19 pandemic is a particularly difficult and demanding time for a lot of key workers. We are extremely mindful of the effect this can have on emotional wellbeing and mental health, particularly for staff in frontline services such as care homes. We would like to remind everyone of the Key Worker helpline that has been set up through Birmingham and Solihull NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust and is delivered by the Living Well Consortium:</p>

		<p>Key Worker Helpline: 7 days a week (9am-11pm): 0121 663 1217</p> <p>Further information on the support, including information and opening hours for other helplines (adults, children and young people) etc., is available here: www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health-support-offer</p>
	Care Act 2014 Easements	<p>On the 14 April the Acting Director for Adult Social Care took the decision to implement powers provided to Local Authorities in respect of their duties under the Care Act 2014 introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 which came into force on 31 March 2020. This meant that the local authority streamlined processes under Care Act easement Stage 3.</p> <p>On 18 May 2020 the Acting Director for Adult Social Care approved the cessation of Stage 3 Care Act easements and the reinstatement of normal Care Act duties with immediate effect.</p>
	Adult Social Care Action Plan	<p>The Adult Social Care Action Plan was published by the Department of Health and Social Care on 15 April 2020. The key focus of the Plan was to support care providers and recognise the importance of the work of the sector – which we very much welcome and echo. There are four pillars to the plan as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Controlling the spread of infection. 2. Supporting the workforce 3. Supporting independence, supporting people at the end of their lives, and responding to individual needs. 4. Supporting Local Authorities and care providers <p>The Council have been working closely with our partners across our health and social care system and yesterday published a letter regarding testing which can be found at: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/16142/coronavirus_nhs_support_to_testing_prior_to_admission_to_care_homes_in_birmingham</p> <p>Many of the other priorities are national initiatives which we will continue to support and promote across the sector. The Council has already announced our financial support to the sector in recognition of the challenges you face and the additional cost pressures and will continue to keep this under review, details of which can be found In the Finance section of this FAQ</p> <p>We are continuing to review other aspects of the Plan and will provide updates on these through our FAQ as the position is clarified. However, as always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do contact your geographic commissioner or email us at operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk</p>

		We once again thank yourselves and your teams for continuing to work tirelessly to ensure our vulnerable citizens are supported and protected at this unprecedented time.
	Will the Council continue to carry out quality monitoring visits?	The Council has decided to stop quality monitoring visits unless we receive intelligence that service users are at risk of harm.
	Will the CQC continue to carry out inspections?	The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced that it stopped routine inspections from Monday 16 March. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CQC's primary objective will be to support providers to keep people safe during a period of unprecedented pressure on the health and care system. The CQC have posted the following press release: https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/releases/cqc-stop-routine-inspections-focus-supporting-providers-deliver-safe-care-during-cov-0
	7-day assessments and admissions to care homes and home support	<p>Please support the NHS to maximise its hospital bed capacity. We are requesting all of our providers to move as far as possible to 7-day assessments and admissions to care homes / commencement of home support packages in order to enable the NHS to discharge citizens from hospital beds as quickly as possible.</p> <p>West Midlands Care Association which operates our Trusted Assessor process 6 days per week is seeking to expand to 7-day working and has expanded the number of Trusted Assessors currently operating.</p>
	Calling 111 when seeking self-isolation advice – care workers	Should care and support workers call 111 to seek advice about self-isolation, it is imperative that they make clear their job role as well as their specific health concerns so that the 111 operator is able to provide the correct and specific advice to the caller.
	Key worker travel permits	<p>Key workers are required to be in possession of their work ID, as well as additional photo ID such as a driving licence or passport to show to the police if requested. A Key Worker Travel Permit will be available from the Council should your staff experience any difficulties; however their work ID and photo ID should be sufficient. For any permit requests, please email:</p> <p>operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk</p>

	Recruitment – DBS checks	<p>The Government has introduced a Free-of-charge DBS applications and fast-track Barred list check service for certain keyworker groups, including social care staff. Please see the further guidance and referral form on the following website: https://www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/criminal-record-disclosure</p> <p>Please note there is no change to the requirement for all employees and volunteers to have a DBS check and for employers to carry out a full risk assessment process for any positive DBS check employees or volunteers, before they can be deployed in the care and support of vulnerable people.</p> <p>Only if the following conditions are satisfied should an employee or volunteer provide care and support without a valid DBS check.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The DBS application must have been submitted prior to start of work.2. The employee or volunteer must be directly supervised and remain in the company of a DBS checked employee at all times. For example, the employee or volunteer should only take part in 2 carer home support calls or care home support activities and play a supporting role.
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