

Helen Whately MP  
Minister of State for Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

29 May 2020

Dear Minister

**RE: SUPPORT FOR CARE HOMES**

I am pleased to provide Birmingham City Council's Care Home Support Plan as required by your letter dated 14th May 2020.

The Council and partners welcome the Government's recognition of the vital role that; Local Authorities; local health and social care systems; care providers; and of course, the wider adult social care workforce, plays in supporting some of our most vulnerable citizens.

We value the independent regulated care sector and have already demonstrated this locally through our improvement journey over the last 3 years. This journey has focused on supporting providers to improve quality, securing the best possible outcomes for citizens and securing investment and sustainability in the care sector. As a result of this work, significant improvements have already been made, including 73% of our care homes now quality rated as Gold or Silver, compared with 58% just 3 years ago and investment in the sector of over £25m.

Despite these collective achievements, the challenges facing the public sector and our care providers are unprecedented. In our view, Covid19 has exacerbated existing structural issues in both the care market and in adult social care more widely. It has highlighted the fragmented nature of the market, the financial fragility of the sector and the challenges of recruitment and retention.

We recognise there are some challenges we cannot face alone and are not equipped to deal with – including financial and structural issues in the market – however where we have shown our strength, is providing tailored and coordinated support to providers in a timely way. We strongly encourage Government to continue to support local systems to continue to deliver local solutions that are relevant and proportionate to the challenges we face.

**Overview of our current activity with care homes**

Like many health and social care systems across the country, our local system has used the Covid19 pandemic to unite our collective efforts and commitments to ensuring care homes are valued and supported as equal partners. Our local approach very much echoes the national

priorities that have been shared through Government correspondence and action plans, ensuring local systems provide enhanced support to care homes.

We are confident that as a system our collective support to care homes has had a positive impact and without this support, there would have been more outbreaks and sadly more deaths. The local approach has been coordinated both strategically and operationally through a clear governance structure during the Covid period, that includes all key partners as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Operationally a Standard Operating Procedure has been created and agreed by key partners which sets out the focus of this work. Through this mechanism, which is summarised in **Appendix 2**, all national/local data sets and market intelligence is shared and reviewed via a single data tracker and dashboard daily. Where care homes are identified as requiring support through this triangulation mechanism, they are prioritised for support from the most appropriate lead organisation.

Many of our local plans and offerings have been brought forward or enhanced as part of our collective Covid response and our strong system-wide response has comprised a range of support to our care homes. A Care Home Support Plan is contained in **Appendix 3** to this letter, which sets out the comprehensive support being provided as a local system to our care homes and will be shared with all care homes. Some examples of how this support has been delivered locally are summarised below:

1. **Infection Control** - we have collectively provided infection control advice, guidance, support and training to 100% of all care homes since the pandemic started. Each home has received infection prevention guidance, a suite of education packs, an on-line training offer, face to face training has been undertaken and will continue. A further wave of training is to be delivered over the coming weeks.
2. **Testing** – testing for care workers was launched locally on 10 April 2020 and we have conducted over 680 tests to date, allowing many care staff to return to their vital caring roles. This local solution was developed prior to the launch of the national testing portal for staff which went live on 24 April 2020. Where enhanced testing is undertaken, we are also coordinating and advising on the need for staff testing. Importantly we have now tested over 1,900 of the estimated 7,000 care home residents in Birmingham and are on track to test all residents by mid-June.
3. **Personal Protective Equipment** – we have supplied over 70,000 items of PPE to over 110 care homes to; ensure they can maintain infection control standards; reduce the risk of outbreaks; and continue to support residents in line with national guidance and good practice.
4. **Workforce Support** – we recognise the significant impact working in care homes has had on the wellbeing of the care workforce and have provided a range of health and wellbeing support. Local Hospices have provided bereavement support to care home staff and have been commissioned to provide a bespoke end of life training programme which launches on 29 May 2020.
5. **Clinical Support** – We have established a care home liaison service providing clinical support and specialist mental health advice to care homes. This has delivered; face-to-face clinical advice and support to 91 care homes; provided infection control training; supported homes to recognise/manage deterioration in residents; conducted over 90 advanced health assessments and care plans to reduce hospital admissions. We have put

in place interim GP support whilst we continue to develop our Primary Care and Community Health Support, as required nationally. A case study is included in **Appendix 4** which shows the difference the care home liaison service has made.

6. **Financial Support** – on 15 April 2020, the Council launched a £5m financial support package to the care sector to ensure care providers can claim back reasonable Covid-related costs. This was in addition to £8m of fee increases already confirmed for 2020/2021 which took account of the increased costs of the National Living Wage and inflation.
7. **Communication and Engagement** – a coordinated approach to communicating with care homes is in place to share key system messages as well as national and local guidance to providers on a regular basis. Our web pages have been maintained with the latest information throughout and have received over 2,200 hits since 16 March 2020. We have also maintained regular telephone contact with care homes, including over 1,000 coordinated outbounds calls, to ensure homes have all the information and support needed to support staff and residents. Between 70 – 80% of care homes are now updating the National Capacity Tracker at least weekly.
8. **Supporting Hospital Discharge** – whilst we have maintained a system focus on hospital discharges and flow, we have been clear that this was not to be at the ‘expense’ of other parts of the system, including care homes. Rapid acceleration of our Early Intervention Programme and adoption of the Discharge to Assess model has reduced the impact on care homes. As a result of this approach, we have supported 799 people to be discharged through Pathways 2 and 3 of the Discharge to Assess model, with almost all of them being supported through a short-term bed first (where appropriate for the individual). PPE has been provided upon discharge by all Acute Hospitals on a mutual aid basis. This, combined with our swift adoption of the national guidance on testing upon discharge from hospital, has helped to reduce further potential outbreaks in care homes.

In addition to the support we have offered to care homes to allow them to support their residents and staff, we have continued to support citizens and their families directly too. Wherever possible we have continued to conduct reviews (albeit in new ways), progress safeguarding referrals and provide advice and guidance. We will continue to work with partners, including Healthwatch, to ensure our support is accessible and communicated to residents.

Our strength in our response has undoubtedly been our ability to coordinate, prioritise and adapt the support we have been able to offer. Our intention is very much to build on this approach, not just as we prepare for future phases of recovery, but also as we consider other parts of the wider and still fragile, social care provider market who will no doubt benefit from our collective support.

### **How we will use the Infection Control Fund**

Our plan to support care homes in Birmingham will make full use of the available funds, and will adhere to the grant determination, requiring each provider’s co-operation with the completion of the Capacity Tracker to be eligible for funding. The Council will require confirmation by each provider of the use of the allocated funds and will seek assurance from partners that appropriate infection control measures are in place in each home. As a Local Authority, we will require care homes to provide an assurance statement confirming their use of the funds.

## **Safeguarding during Covid19**

The Coronavirus Act provided no easements for Section 42 of the Care Act or the Mental Capacity Act. Consequently, the Local Authority's responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults and Deprivation Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) have remained the same throughout.

Professional social work practice across the Council has been in line with the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care and we continue to ensure all staff safeguarding training is up to date. However, the greatest impact on practice during the pandemic has been adhering to guidance on social distancing when working with vulnerable adults. Social Workers and Best Interest Assessors have been exploring other means of engaging with vulnerable adults and eliciting their views. Where face-to-face contact has been necessary, this has occurred only after a risk assessment and the provision of appropriate PPE.

Following the introduction of the national lockdown on 23 March 2020, there was an initial fall in safeguarding concerns raised with Birmingham City Council. This was in line with the experience of Local Authorities across the region and beyond. Over the past four weeks, however, the numbers of concerns have returned to the average for the 12 months prior to lockdown. See table below: Birmingham City Council has seen no significant impact on the numbers of requests for DoLS assessments as a result of the Covid19 pandemic.

The Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board have been closely monitoring the change in referrals and concerns during the Covid pandemic and working with Adult Social Care to respond accordingly. Regular assurance is provided to Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board on quality and safeguarding in care homes and will continue.

## **Future plans - Short term**

Some of our more immediate plans involve continuous refinement of the processes and support we have set out in this letter, as well as consideration as to how we support the care market that stretches beyond care homes. We plan to retain 25% of the Infection Control Fund for this purpose and to ensure that, for example, infection control training, is available to all care providers including extra care, supported living and home support.

Whilst much of our work as a system has already included support for homes that support residents who are under 65 such as testing, infection control and financial support, we recognise the wider clinical support offering requires some further development. This work is well underway, to be responsive to these providers and the needs of their residents.

We will continue to implement the testing programme for all staff and residents in care homes and ensure all care homes managers and staff have received the latest infection prevention control training.

Many care providers have struggled with high levels of staff absence and lack of staff testing in the early stages of the pandemic and were unfortunately heavily reliant on the use of agency staff or working on a mutual aid basis with other care providers/partners. Whilst this position is improving, we will however need to continue to provide support to ensure the risk of further outbreaks is reduced and staffing solutions are in line with national guidance and the requirements of the Infection Control Fund. Our Support Plan sets out this aspect of our response.

Through the Health and Wellbeing Board, we will continue to develop our understanding and support to BAME communities who may have been affected disproportionately by the Covid pandemic.

### **Future plans - medium term**

As a system, we are keen to develop the coordinated and systemic approach we have taken to support care homes. Discussions have already started about developing the Standard Operating Procedure into a quality-focussed approach, triangulating a wider dataset and enhancing our existing local data sharing arrangements.

Plans were already underway for Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group to commission an enhanced support to care homes team that integrates primary and secondary care support for care homes. These plans will be progressed at pace to ensure the vital work of the team can be continued as staff return to their substantive roles and that the service is holistic.

We will continue to work with care homes to take advantage of technology to enhance clinical support, improve access to training and to ensure technology is used to enhance the care and support provided to care home residents.

As with many of the changes we have been able to achieve, this has been done on either a mutual aid or temporary basis to address the immediate needs of care homes during the pandemic. Many staff across the system who are providing essential support to care homes have been redeployed from other services. However, as we move into the recovery phase, we will need to carefully consider how the necessary support and focus on care homes can be maintained and review how we commission care homes in a more integrated system. This will form part of our system-wide review of our Older People's Programme and STP plans over the coming months.

As a final note, we are pleased to confirm that Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group have also confirmed their support and agreement to this response.

Yours sincerely



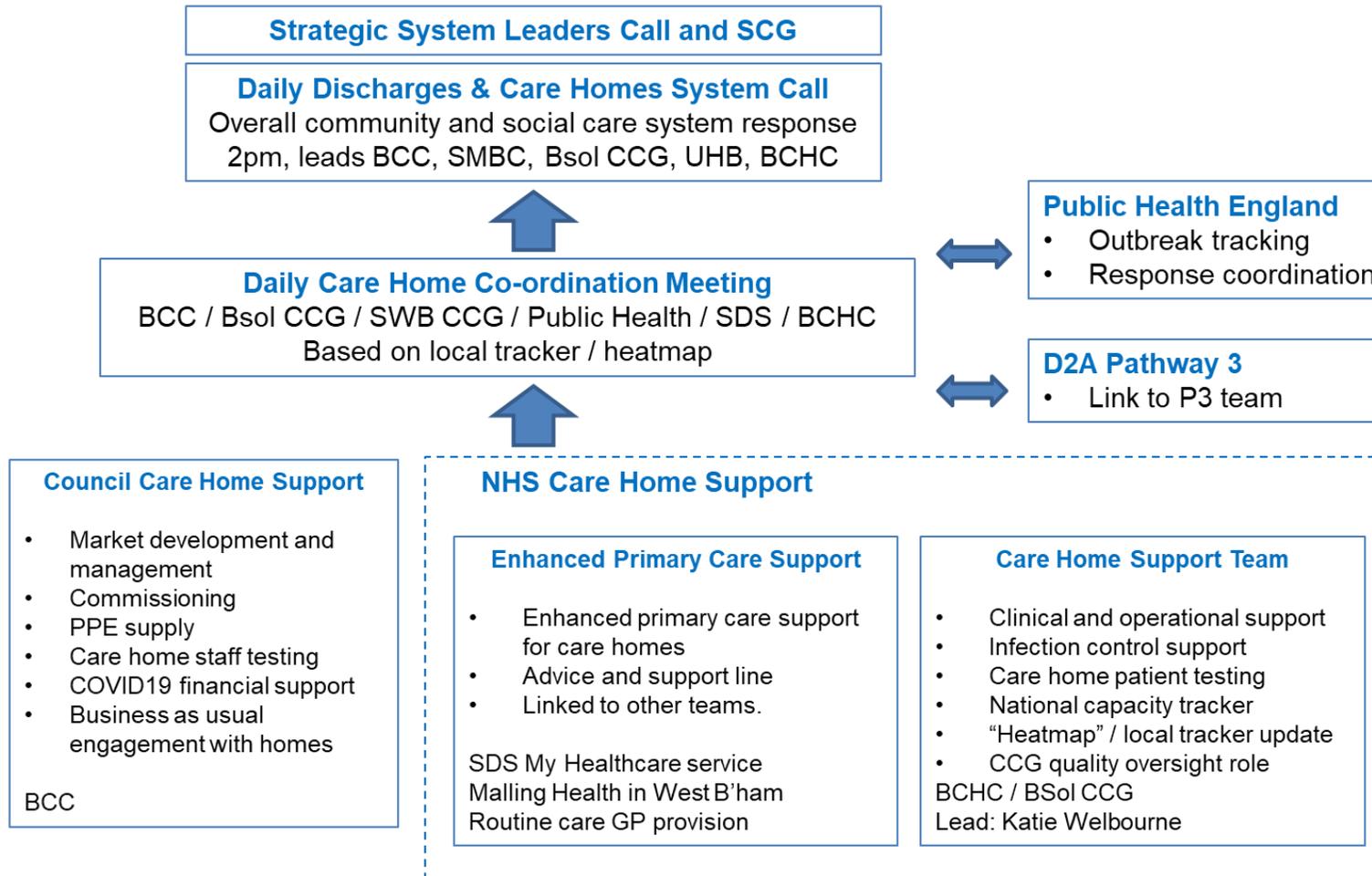
Chris Naylor  
Chief Executive  
Birmingham City Council



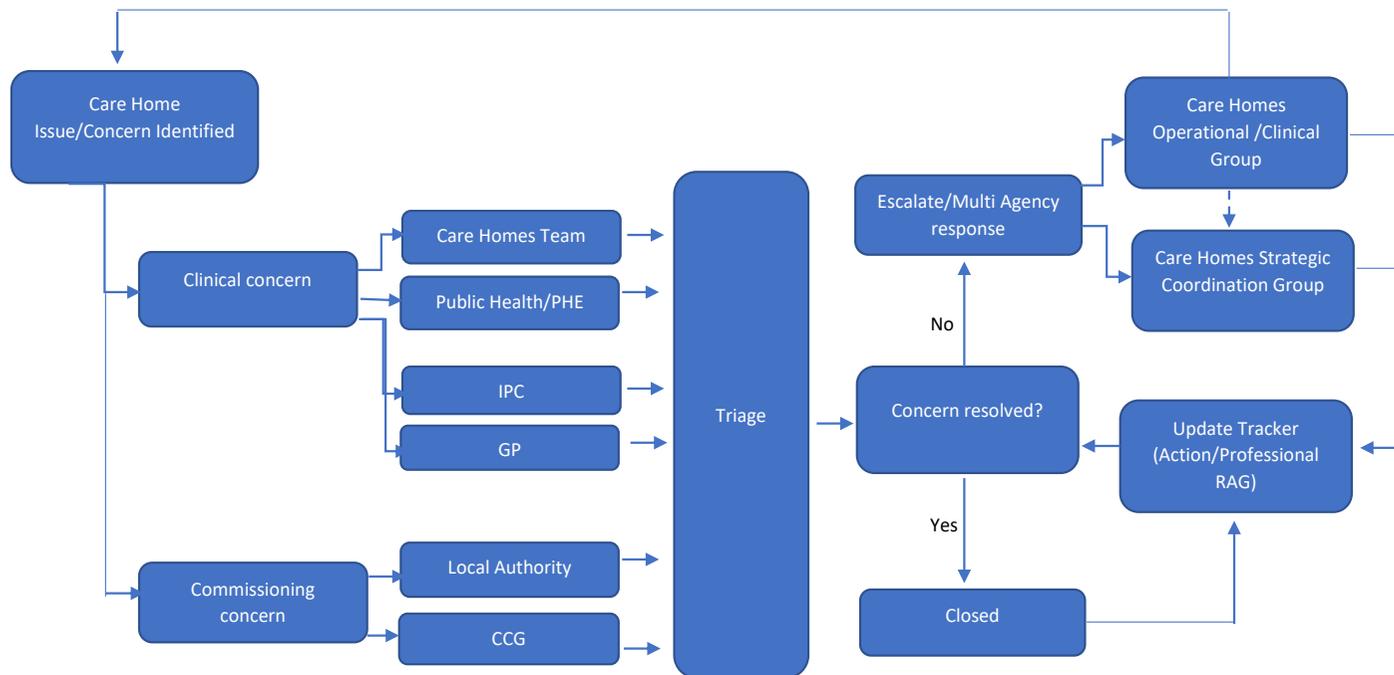
Paul Jennings  
Chief Executive  
Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group  
(Lead CCG)

## COVID-19 Discharges & Care Homes Group Care Home Support Arrangements - Birmingham

Multi-agency COVID19 support for care homes in Birmingham



## Appendix 2 – Daily Care Homes Standard Operating Procedure



A care home issue or concern could be raised by any professional via any route and/or may be raised by a daily review of the dashboard and associated data.

The purpose of the Birmingham Care Homes Standard Operating Procedure is to;

- ensure care homes are appropriately supported by all system partners;
- avoid duplication of effort between partners in working with care homes;
- reduce the administrative burden on care providers in providing information to the wider system;
- share information and intelligence received – ‘one version of the truth’ approach;
- coordinate appropriate and proportionate action in support of care homes;
- ensure the range of professional skills available across the system are appropriately coordinated and prioritised; and
- have a collective aim of increasing quality, maintaining safeguarding principles and reducing inequalities throughout our Covid response.

### Appendix 3 - Care Home Support Plan

The below plan will be published on the Council's website and issued to all care homes.

<b>Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)</b>	
<b>Infection Prevention and Control</b>	
Infection Prevention and Control Training	<p>A range of IPC training is available to care homes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of regular training materials and the latest guidance to all care homes by both the CCG and LA which is available <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• A compendium of IPC documentation has been provided</li> <li>• Delivery of the national IPC Covid Training Programme through the train-the-trainer cascade model.</li> <li>• Delivery of online training by external providers using the national programme.</li> <li>• Ongoing IPC advice through PHE outbreak advice and the PHE Toolkit.</li> <li>• Provision of IPC advice when enhanced swabbing results are shared with care homes.</li> <li>• IPC advice and guidance provided through regular and coordinated contact with care homes.</li> <li>• Face to face training being provided by the BCHC Enhanced Support to Care Homes Team where identified need arises.</li> </ul>
Covid19 Outbreak Support and Advice	<p>Partners across the system are in regular contact with homes with outbreaks which includes the PHE Local Health Protection Team. This activity is prioritised and coordinated using a range of national and local datasets and intelligence to identify homes at risk and discussed via a daily Operational/Clinical Care Homes Group. A detailed Standard Operating Procedure has been developed that sets out this process and how it operates.</p>
Support to help isolate/shield individuals in care homes	<p>National guidance on isolation has been issued to all care homes and compliance is being validated through coordinated and regular system calls and risk assessments of care homes.</p> <p>For citizens who need to be readmitted to a care home after a hospital stay, but due to their Covid status are unable to be supported immediately, a short-term bed will be identified by the Council and NHS partners. Partners will liaise with the home to agree an approach to readmission that ensures the citizen and home are supported and clear on requirements.</p>

**Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)**

	Where providers are unable to support residents in the short term to isolate or shield they should contact their Local <a href="#">Authority Commissioner</a> in the first instance. The most appropriate course of action will then be agreed, however short-term bed capacity has been commissioned for this purpose where this is in the best interests of the citizen and other residents of the home.
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**Testing in Care Homes**

Covid19 testing for care workers in Birmingham.	<p>Testing arrangements for care staff are in place and have been communicated.</p> <p>Testing facilities are available centrally in Birmingham and 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 <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Employers can also refer care workers for a test using Birmingham City Council’s Occupational Health Service. This runs in tandem alongside the national testing portal. Instructions for booking a test via Birmingham Occupational Health are available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Homes are encouraged to provide a list of staff to be tested to the CCG who can arrange priority access to the local testing services.</p>
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Covid19 Testing in care homes	<p>A local enhanced testing programme has been developed for care homes that supports that national digital portal. The national route enables care homes that look after older people or people with dementia to apply online to order test kits to carry out swabbing of residents and details are available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>However, across Birmingham and Solihull we continue supporting homes by providing an enhanced testing programme, with our local teams visiting care homes to swab all residents. This local offer helps to identify Covid infection as early as possible and provides ongoing localised support around infection control, to reduce the impact on both residents and staff. This approach has been communicated to providers, details of which can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>This approach is offered to all of our care homes, including those for younger people which aren’t currently able to access the national portal.</p> <p>Under our local programme, results will continue to be telephoned through to care home managers and infection prevention advice and guidance will also be provided.</p>
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**Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)**

All staff within the care home are also offered a test through the local programme with appointments given at the local testing centre. There is a home test option for non-drivers.

**PPE**

**PPE supply – national and local support routes to access PPE**

Care homes have been supported with emergency PPE supplies and this continues a mutual aid basis with the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust now providing this service.

We continue to use data from the National Capacity Tracker and other local sources of intelligence to identify providers who may require support with PPE and ensure this is prioritised.

Care homes have received details of how to access PPE and how to escalate supply issues, which can be found [here](#).

Information has also been provided about VAT changes, the Council’s financial support in relation to PPE and the latest guidance on use. This is all available via the Council’s [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

**Workforce Support**

**Care Workforce App**

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 and communicated to providers.

The tool is the first of its kind provided for the care workforce, and will:

- 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 Covid19 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
- 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

## Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)

<p>Compendium of useful support links</p>	<p>Birmingham City Council's Occupational Health have compiled a list of links care works to ensure they have access to health and wellbeing support. Care providers have been asked to ensure this is communicated to all staff and details have also been published on the Council's website via our <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>. The Council has also produced a range of wider materials to support wellbeing during the current pandemic which is available at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50238/wellbeing_during_the_coronavirus_covid-19">https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50238/wellbeing_during_the_coronavirus_covid-19</a></p>
<p>Key Worker helpline</p>	<p>We recognise that the Covid19 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. The Birmingham and Solihull NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust has commissioned a key worker helpline that is available 7 days per week and details of the service have been shared with all care providers and can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>Support to help maintain workforce and recruit</p>	<p>Corporate support has been provided to promote recruitment into the social care sector and free recruitment support continues. It is intended to draw on any available capacity from the NHS/Social Care returners willing to take up roles in the social care sector to support the pandemic response.</p> <p>The Council has shared information on a Mutual Aid basis with providers to assist with staff shortages. Where specialist staff are required, support has been offered on a case-by-case basis to ensure care homes are supported.</p> <p>Financial assistance has been provided to cover any additional agency costs, costs associated with increased levels of sickness absence and costs of additional hours of existing staff.</p> <p>The DBS requirements have been eased during Covid19 and this has been shared with providers.</p>
<p>Support for staff off sick who are struggling financially</p>	<p>Financial assistance has been provided to care providers who have been unable to claim Statutory Sick Pay at present, to allow them to continue to pay staff wages.</p>

<b>Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)</b>	
Responsibility and stress of role during Covid	<p>Regular contact has been made with all care homes to ensure they are supported, have access to the relevant information and to understand what challenges they are facing. Much of this contact has simply given care home managers the opportunity to discuss their concerns openly, provide reassurance they are doing all they should be and of course opportunities to ensure we are providing a range of holistic support.</p> <p>The My Home Life Team have provided support to a small number of managers to assist their response and approach in the current circumstances.</p>
<b>Clinical Support</b>	
Primary care support	<p>An enhanced primary care offer has been developed by South Doc Services (SDS) for Birmingham and Solihull CCG aligned care homes and has been communicated to homes. This service, along with other current Primary Care services will develop, in collaboration with the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Care Home Support Team, in line with the requirements set out by NHSE/I on the 1 May 2020.</p> <p>For Birmingham homes aligned to Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG homes Primary Care Networks are aligned to care homes to support with care planning and EOL care and an interim LIS (until October 2020) has been commissioned. The approach is aligned with Birmingham and Solihull CCG's approach and will offer a broader support package from primary care including integration with community providers.</p>
Clinical Education and Support	<p>Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust have increased their support to all older people's care homes (nursing and residential) to help ensure the well-being and safety of residents and staff is maintained during this difficult period. The enhanced support will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk stratification of care homes: develop a risk stratification tool to identify care homes that require intensive proactive support from the support to care home team.</li> <li>• Deliver educational sessions to the care home staff: - with the support of St Mary's Hospice, education sessions are delivered virtually on end of life, infection prevention control and identification and recognition of the deteriorating patients.</li> <li>• Align advanced clinical practitioner to care homes: - A team of Advanced Clinical Practitioners have been aligned to each care home in a locality. Their role is to risk stratify the care homes and provide advanced health assessment and care planning to those residents presenting with sub-acute illness.</li> </ul>

**Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)**

- Provide choice and control at end of life: - Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has worked in partnership with St Mary’s Hospice to provide rapid end of life support and care to the Birmingham Care Homes. Further work is planned to provide additional bereavement support to care home staff, residents, their families and carers
- Provide mutual aid to care homes: Birmingham Community NHS Foundation Trust provides urgent supply of personal protective equipment to care homes.
- Prevent unnecessary hospital admissions: provide rapid health assessment to deteriorating patients and if appropriate have direct access to ‘Ask OPAL’ geriatrician service, to provide expert medical advice and enabling care closer to home.

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust are providing specialist support to a number of care homes through their existing care homes service. This service is now being integrated into the wider system coordination approach and the Standard Operating Procedure.

An offer of support is currently under development for homes who support younger adults.

Support and training Covid specific and for increased EoL activity

Weekly palliative end of life care education webinar sessions has been developed for care homes. These will be hosted by Birmingham St Mary’s Hospice and supported by St Giles Hospice. All of these sessions have been developed in collaboration with the system partners in response to identified care home needs.

Based upon recent feedback received from local health professionals, the curriculum of the end of life education webinar sessions will cover a broad range of topics including:

- Symptom and drug management in Covid19 and non Covid19 patients
- Syringe drivers
- The recognition of dying in Covid19 and non Covid19 patients
- Advance care planning
- Managing a dying patient
- Verification of death

**Financial Support**

**Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)**

<p>Financial support measures to care providers during the Covid19 crisis</p>	<p>A £5m package of financial support is available to care providers to cover additional funding pressures as a result of Covid19. All reasonable additional costs will be considered, with supporting evidence. Details of the Local Authority scheme can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>These arrangements are in addition to the Council’s agreed fee increases for care homes of 3.7% which have been implemented from 6 April 2020.</p> <p>Additional nursing costs will be considered by the local Clinical Commissioning Group, along with any potential additional care hours for those who previously received health funding.</p>
<p>Council support for Birmingham business during the outbreak</p>	<p>Birmingham City Council has stepped up efforts to help small businesses in Birmingham meet the financial challenges of coronavirus and details of the scheme have been shared with care providers via the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/news/article/561/supporting_birmingham_businesses_through_the_coronavirus_outbreak">https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/news/article/561/supporting_birmingham_businesses_through_the_coronavirus_outbreak</a></p>

**Communication and Engagement**

<p>Contact arrangements for care homes</p>	<p>All care homes have a dedicated Local Authority Commissioner and all nursing homes have allocated CCG quality contacts. An email duty desk is provided by the Local Authority via:</p> <p><a href="mailto:operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk">operationalcommissioning@birmingham.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Local Authority Commissioner phone numbers and email addresses have been published and can be accessed using the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/1719/who_to_contact_in_the_commissioning_team/1">https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50173/providers_of_care_services/1719/who_to_contact_in_the_commissioning_team/1</a></p> <p>BSol CCG have provided further advice and guidance for professionals on their website at <a href="https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus-advice-for-professionals">https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus-advice-for-professionals</a></p>
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**Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)**

<p>Bulletins and alerts</p>	<p>A provider FAQ and relevant guidance and information are issued by email alert to all providers and published on the Council’s website <a href="#">here</a>. This is referred to as the single source of communication of updates and guidance, and providers are encouraged to refer to it for current information.</p>
<p>NHS Mail</p>	<p>West Midlands Care Association have been commissioned to support care homes with the NHS Mail application/governance process. This support has been extended as part of the Covid response to maximise the number of care homes that can access NHS Mail and its benefits.</p>
<p>Use of National Capacity Tracker</p>	<p>All care homes have been contacted regularly throughout the pandemic to encourage use of the National Capacity Tracker. Uptake has increased from around 16% at the start of the pandemic, to between 70 – 80% now updating regularly. This has taken significant system resource, but we are no confident this can be maintained and the national change in the data collected is now supporting our Covid response.</p>

**Supporting Hospital Discharge**

<p>Hospital discharges</p>	<p>Covid19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements have been implemented in full and the majority of citizens are discharged from hospital into a short-term bed to reduce the pressures on care homes.</p> <p>A member of the BCHC Enhanced Care Home team contact each care home 24 hours after a resident is discharged via Pathway 3. They will assist the home to develop a robust plan of care if required and provide any other advice or guidance needed, including support to staff.</p> <p>Advice and guidance have been issued to providers regarding how residents should be isolated and is updated regularly in line with national guidance.</p> <p>Financial support is being provided to facilitate prompt hospital discharges and recognise the potential additional costs of supporting residents including staff, PPE, cleaning and isolation costs as set out above.</p> <p>The Trusted Assessor pilot has been extended to work with all Enhanced Assessment Beds and in acute provider settings, to reduce footfall in hospitals and reduce the diversion of care home resources that would otherwise be required to conduct assessments.</p>
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## Birmingham Care Home Support Plan (May 2020)

Covid testing before discharge to a care home

In line with national guidance, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust are testing all patients prior to discharge to residential / nursing care homes, with the following testing policy now in place:

- If a patient has tested negative for Covid, then they should be re-tested prior to discharge.
- If a patient has not been tested for Covid, then they should be tested prior to discharge.
- If a patient has already tested positive for Covid (or other confirmation of diagnosis e.g. chest x-ray), then no further testing required prior to discharge. This is because the test will remain positive for 21 days (if not longer) and as such well beyond the period within which one can pass the infection on to the others.

Patient tests prior to discharge will be arranged by the Ward Team following a request by the Hospital Discharge Hub who are responsible for coordinating care home placements. The policy will cover all patients being discharged to a care home regardless of whether this is a long-term placement or for a period of rehabilitation/enhanced assessment.

If a person usually lives in care home and is likely to be able to be return there in <72 hours (without the need for the involvement of the Discharge Hub) it is recommended this patient is tested on admission to the ward to optimise the chance of a timely discharge.

The result of any Covid test undertaken prior to discharge is included in the ward discharge letter.

Patients who are not admitted into base wards but instead attend the Emergency Department or an assessment area will not be tested prior to returning to a care home.

#### **Appendix 4 – Case Study Demonstrating Enhanced Support to Care Homes**

The system-wide care home risk stratification process identified a care home experiencing problems with staffing levels due to an increase in patient acuity. A member of the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Enhanced Support to Care Homes Team contacted the care home to arrange a same day visit with the aim to undertake enhanced swabbing and assess the residents in the care home. The team members worked alongside the swabbing team to co-ordinate the enhanced swabbing of all residents in the care home and to complete a holistic assessment of all the residents. Following the initial assessment, a personalised care plan was completed to mitigate risk such as falls, medication prescribed to alleviate the breathlessness for symptomatic residents and support end of life care.

It was recognised that the lack of supervision places isolated residents at increased risk of injury, particularly from falls and also that their mental health might suffer. The team worked alongside the Infection Prevention Control Team and Birmingham and Solihull CCG and the community mental health services under the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, to provide expert support to contain the spread of Covid19.

The Enhanced Support to Care Homes Team also arranged an urgent supply of Personal Protective Equipment to be delivered to the care homes from Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, which is being supplied under Mutual Aid arrangements. Additional training has been delivered to the care home on infection prevention control, recognising and escalating the deteriorating patient and end of life care.

At the heart of this work is the understanding that the care homes are valued key partners in our health and social care economy, delivering highly complex care to the most vulnerable, at risk group in our community. Our ethos is to wrap our services and flex our resources to ensure as a system we continue to deliver high quality, safe and effective person-centred care.

## Appendix 5 – List of partners engaged in this response

Organisation	Role/Title	Name
Birmingham City Council	Chief Executive	Chris Naylor
	Leader of the Council	Councillor Ian Ward
	Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Health/Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board	Councillor Paulette Hamilton
	Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)	Professor Graeme Betts
	Assistant Director – Commissioning	Louise Collett
	Director of Public Health	Justin Varney
Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group	Chief Executive	Paul Jennings
	Chief Nurse	Helen Jenkinson
	Director of Integration	Karen Helliwell
	Associate Director – Urgent Care	Helen Kelly
Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group	Acting Managing Director	Michelle Carolan
	Senior Operations Manager	Debra Howls
Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust NHS Foundation	Chief Executive	Richard Kirby
	Chief Operating Officer	Chris Holt
	Director of Nursing	Liza Walsh
Healthwatch Birmingham	Chief Executive	Andy Cave
Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board	Independent Chair	Cherry Dale
West Midlands Care Association	Chief Executive	Debbie Le Quesne
Birmingham Care Consortium	Chair	Les Latchman
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Trust	Director of Partnerships	Andrew McKirgan
Local Resilience Forum – Vulnerable People Group	Chair	Matt Bowshers
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)	Jenny Wood