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To All Powys Social Services Providers

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*Eich cyf / Your ref :*

*Ein cyf / Our ref :*

*Dyddiad / Date : 20 March 2020*

*Os yn galw gofynnwch am /*

*If calling please ask for: Dylan Owen*

Dear Colleagues

#### [Powys Social Services Update to Providers as at 19 March 2020](#)

I write, as agreed with you all, as a follow up to the meeting held via Skype on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. You will be aware of the challenge faced as a result of the pandemic, COVID-19. During the meeting I shared some data which was correct at that time as to the prevalence and potential impact of the pandemic. As this is a quickly changing situation I will not record that here, but provide an update on our actions in preparation for the peak of the pandemic and on our expectations and plans in working with you.

Firstly, it is important that I acknowledge your support and work over the past few weeks and months, and also for your continued input. We are acutely aware of the challenges, but we anticipate that if we jointly prepare, we should be in a strong position to manage the situation as well as possible.

Information about the pandemic is also quickly changing and, therefore, we recommend accessing the Public Health Wales website for factual and up-to-date information:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

#### [Business Continuity](#)

The Council has invoked business continuity. This means that we are only undertaking business critical work. The Council has also set up Gold and Silver Commands and is working with the health board and partners to address the situation in a joined-up manner. Business continuity also means that all non-essential meetings with the public are stopped.

Business critical work includes:

- Provision of care in the home or in a residential or supported living setting
- Safeguarding
- Supporting people to transfer through the health and social care system, which will involve transfers home from hospital and, as such, hospital and home visiting
- Assessing for support at home where this is urgent



Our priority is to keep care provision available (domiciliary care, residential care and supported living); to keep children's placements available; and to maintain an equipment delivery and collection service where possible.

We are currently in the process of closing the Council run day centres and we are liaising with independent providers as to closing their day centres.

In an attempt to ensure flow through the system we have block booked a number of nursing care beds in the County and have purchased equipment for residential care homes to limit the requirement for delivery and collection during the peak period of the pandemic. The aim is to increase their stock of profiling beds, mattresses and pressure relieving products available to care homes. The additional supplies have arrived at our depot in Newtown and NRS are starting to contact care homes to arrange deliveries.

#### Workforce and Business Continuity

If the worst-case scenario were to become reality, we would face up to 20% of the workforce being off work unwell at once during the peak-period, which could be in approximately a month. Therefore, we reiterated at the meeting the importance of robust business continuity planning which identified service provision measures even with such a reduced workforce.

For domiciliary providers If you cannot deliver care flexibly during this time you need to let the brokerage team know and they will discuss the issue. If urgent care is needed, they will contact social work teams to see what urgent arrangements are possible.

In order to support this situation, we are working within the Council to develop a pool of staff from other departments who may be available to help with some care work or to undertake non-priority support calls.

We are working closely with the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) to develop a pool of volunteers who can support people in their communities who may be vulnerable.

We are writing to all recipients of direct payments and their personal assistants in order to assure them of our intention to pay for planned care in a similar manner as to independent providers of care and support.

#### Demand and Payment

We recognise that the demand for your work is going to fluctuate dramatically over the coming weeks and months as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, we agreed that as of the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 we would pay for planned care provision, regardless of actual delivery. This is in addition to the announcements that the Chancellor made in the budget around issues such as support for the payment of Statutory Sick Pay.

We ask in return for your continued support and flexibility in taking on new work at short notice wherever possible, and in engaging with us to increase capacity of the service where that is required. National guidance is due to come out shortly that allows us to prioritise individual care needs locally and we will be given permission to deviate from people's care plans during the period of the pandemic, always ensuring that we continue to work in a safe and person-centred way.



Locally, for domiciliary care, we will give you the ability to flex the hours of care by up to 25% (up or down) without recourse to the Council in a person centred and ethical manner. We will be providing guidance on procedures for this over the coming week.

We have also developed a business continuity plan for ensuring that invoices are paid swiftly and efficiently, so that you should not see any disruption to the service.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The guidance on supporting your staff to remain safe and to eliminate cross-infection is provided as an appendix to this letter. We are awaiting more guidance from the Welsh Government on this and we will share it with you as soon as it is made available to us.

We are also anticipating stock of PPE from the Welsh Government. This will be made available via the Council's equipment service and we will be communicating with you shortly about this.

It is important to note that if neither the care worker nor the individual receiving care and/or support is symptomatic, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond normal good hygiene practice, as set out by Public Health Wales here: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/95007>

#### What if Carers who've Visited People who have COVID-19?

Based on a query by one of you (providers) we asked Public Health in Powys the following:

"Where we have domiciliary care staff going into people's homes and it turns out afterwards that a person they supported has been infected with Covid-19 (or self-isolate because they show symptoms), these care staff will have moved on into other people's homes. What should be the advice we may have to give to those service users who have been visited after the 'original' visit?"

The answer given by Public Health on Tuesday 16.3.2020 was as follows:

"The advice doesn't really change from the general public advice, i.e. the person in the other home just needs to be aware of the signs and symptoms (fever and/or a new continuous cough) and if they develop those symptoms they should self-isolate (as far as is practicable) for 14-days. If they become clinically unwell while in isolation they should phone NHS111."

We would also recommend that you need to heed the advice of NHS Wales which is [here](#).

While it is really important that you follow the NHS advice as the only reliable and safe source, you also need to consider that this advice will change as we move through this period, so please look out for updates which we may share with you but also those in the above web link and others pointing to UK Government and Welsh Government websites.

#### Infection Control and Hygiene

We have attached the current infection control and hygiene guidance for care staff at the end of this letter, but this may change, therefore, please continue to keep an eye on the Government's guidance for you as providers can be found here:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision>

#### Keeping in Touch

We will be developing a live Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, based on questions you and others are asking. Please use our dedicated email address [PCCSSCommissioning@powys.gov.uk](mailto:PCCSSCommissioning@powys.gov.uk) to contribute to this document. We will share this document on a regular basis with you.

We intend to convene another meeting on the same lines as last Tuesday via Skype/Conference Call this coming Tuesday (24<sup>th</sup> March 2020) at 9.30am. We have sent out e-invitations. We would welcome your attendance. The telephone number for the conference call is +44 (0) 1597 827188 with the Conference ID: 7563583. The agenda for that meeting will be:

- Update on COVID-19 in Powys
- Update on Business Continuity
- Update on PPE distribution and guidance
- Update on Essential Worker Status and Support
- Your Questions (sent in advance to the email address above) answered

This is a fast-moving situation and we are sharing this message on the basis of the latest available information. We will continue to share updated information as and when this becomes available.

Yours sincerely

Dylan Owen  
Pennaeth Comisiynu (plant ac oedolion)  
Head of Commissioning (children & adults)



#### COVID 19: HOME VISIT GUIDANCE General Direction:

1. Staff to carry their own liquid soap and towels for use at Service User home.
2. Staff to use a clean towel for each call.
3. Staff to place the used towel into a pillowcase or similar that can be put into the wash without having to remove the used towels prior to washing.
4. Staff to change uniform after every shift – If you do not have enough uniforms, plain polo shirt may be used with ID Home Visit Procedure:
  1. Staff to wash their hands with their own liquid soap and towel on entering the service user property – let the service user know this is what you are doing.
  2. Carry out the call – use PPE as required for the call.

#### A How -To Guide For The Removal Of Disposable Gloves

1. Pinch and hold the outside of the glove near the wrist area.
2. Peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out.
3. Pull the glove away until it is removed from the hand and hold the inside-out glove with the gloved hand.
4. With your un-gloved hand, slide your finger/s under the wrist of the remaining glove, taking care not to touch the outside of the glove.
5. Again, peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out.
6. Continue to pull the glove down and over the inside-out glove being held in your gloved hand.
7. This will ensure that both gloves are inside out, one glove enveloped inside the other, with no contaminant on the bare hands.
8. Staff to wash hands using their own liquid soap and towel prior to leaving the service user property.
9. Staff to place used towel into washable bag (pillowcase or equivalent) in their car prior to leaving for next call.

#### If the individual being cared for has symptoms of COVID-19

If the individual receiving care and support has symptoms of COVID-19, then the risk of transmission should be minimised through safe working procedures.

#### Personal protective equipment

- Care workers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids.
- Aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks should, be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.
- New personal protective equipment must, be used for each episode of care. It is essential that personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags when removed.
- These bags should, be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from any other waste within the room. This should, be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin



### Cleaning

- If care workers undertake cleaning duties, then they should use the usual household products, such as detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Frequently touched surfaces should, be cleaned regularly.
- Personal waste (for example, used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning clothes, can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.
- These bags should, be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your own room. This should, be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.

### Laundry

- If care workers support the individual with laundry, then they should not shake dirty laundry. This minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Wash items as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Dirty laundry that has been in contact with a person, who is ill, can be washed with, other people's items. If the individual does not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after the 7-day isolation period has ended; the laundry can then, be taken to a public laundry service.
- Items heavily soiled with body fluids, for example, vomit or diarrhoea or items that, cannot be washed should, be disposed of, with the owner's consent.