

11 November 2021



**Adult Social Care (People)**  
West Berkshire Council  
**West Street House, West Street,  
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1BZ**  
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Dear Colleague,

Re: **DHSC Winter Plan for Adult Social Care (21/22)**

Firstly, I would like to thank you again for your work and that of your staff at this time.

I have considered in detail the Department of Health and Social Care's Winter Plan for Adult Social Care 2021-22 and have selected a number of actions which the DHSC sets out for providers.

This is not the full list of actions, but they are of particular relevance locally.

For the full plan, please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2021-to-2022/adult-social-care-covid-19-winter-plan-2021-to-2022>

The plan includes actions for providers as follows:

## **PPE**

- Providers should make use of government-provided free PPE in line with guidance on use of PPE in [care homes](#) or [home care settings](#)
- Providers that are
  - registered with CQC should use the [PPE portal](#) to access free PPE
  - not registered with CQC (including personal assistants and unpaid carers who do not live with the person they care for) should obtain PPE from their [LRF or local authority](#) (if their LRF no longer distributes PPE)
- should contact the Unipart customer services team for urgent PPE stock requirements by calling 0800 876 6802
- should report shortages of PPE via [Capacity Tracker](#) if CQC-registered, or via their [local authority or LRF](#) (if free PPE is usually obtained via that route)
- should ensure staff are aware of current PPE guidance to enable them to work safely, including [how to put on and take off PPE correctly](#)

## TESTING (COVID AND FLU)

- All care providers should ensure all staff are aware of how to use and access the testing regimes for people with and without symptoms, including for people who have been in contact with a case of COVID-19 – staff need to understand or know how to find out when different test types or kits should be used (for example, PCR tests or LFDs)
- All residential care settings should engage with HPTs where suspected or confirmed cases of influenza have been identified and take the appropriate action in accordance with [guidance on the recognition and management of cases and outbreaks](#). This may include antiviral treatments, which are most effective the earlier they are taken, and therefore early engagement with HPTs is important for accessing these promptly.

## VACCINATION

- support and promote to all staff the importance of receiving a free flu vaccination, as well as COVID-19 vaccines (including boosters for those eligible)
- ensure that, from 11 November 2021, only workers or volunteers who are fully vaccinated or are exempt from this requirement are deployed into care homes
- report seasonal flu vaccination rates, alongside COVID-19 vaccination rates, for staff and residents in the [Capacity Tracker](#)
- encourage social care workers to get the flu vaccine as soon as they are offered it to protect themselves and the people they look after
- consult the [flu vaccination guidance for social care workers](#)
- encourage (where possible) all visitors to care homes who are eligible for the flu vaccine to get it ahead of visiting – the [annual flu letter](#) sets out who is eligible for a free NHS flu vaccine

## CARE HOME VISITING

- develop and update visiting policies that enable visiting, where it is possible to do so, while keeping residents safe – this should be done in line with published [guidance on care home visiting](#) (which covers testing, PPE and individual risk assessments)
- ensure that all residents can nominate an essential caregiver
- encourage visitors to get the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine before visiting, if eligible
- advise visitors to stay away from care settings if they have any flu symptoms
- in the case of an outbreak, stop visits in and out of the care home, unless from an essential caregiver or for an end-of-life visit

## END OF LIFE CARE

- comply with guidance published by:
  - [the NHS](#)
  - [Skills for Care](#)
  - the [Royal College of General Practitioners](#)
- ensure they make every effort, wherever practicable and safe, to enable a dying person to be with their loved ones, particularly in the last hours of life.
- If a care provider is concerned about pressures to put in place DNACPRs, they should escalate, in the first instance, using their internal whistleblowing policies.

## WORKFORCE – WELLBEING AND CAPACITY

- reinforce the message that staff mental health and wellbeing remains of the utmost priority. There are tips and advice on how employers can take care of the wellbeing of staff at work in the previously mentioned guidance

**You Matter** is available to Health and Social Care staff in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West

Email: [youmatter@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:youmatter@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Phone: 0800 1456568, available Monday to Friday, 8-4pm

Website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/youmatter/support/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/youmatter/support/)

- investigate the provision of dedicated occupational health services for staff
- undertake a workplace risk assessment with a view to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all staff. Employers should have individual conversations about COVID-19 with all members of their workforce who may be at increased risk. A [risk reduction framework for adult social care](#) has been published to provide employers with guidance on how to sensitively discuss and manage specific risks to their staff; this includes risk by ethnicity, but also age, sex and underlying health conditions. This guidance will be reviewed as new evidence emerges
- access recruitment support to fill vacancies via the DWP's [Find a Job service](#), as well as using local recruitment methods. [Free recruitment campaign materials are available on our campaign website](#). [Top tips for retention](#) have also been developed with the Care Provider Alliance and published by the LGA and ADASS Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)
- review arrangements in place to ensure they have sufficient staff to provide safe high-quality care, even in the event of increased staff absence – for example, by using the [Skills for Care's case studies and examples](#)

- continue to ensure staff receive normal wages while self-isolating in line with government guidance. The government has provided funding to support this through the ICTF
- ensure they complete the [Capacity Tracker](#) and update their [ASC-WDS records](#) to ensure effective data for planning for local, regional and national capacity issues

## **BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

- leading into winter, review and update their business continuity plans, and proactively engage with relevant local authorities or NHS commissioners and CQC if they have concerns or need support
- consider their insurance arrangements and any associated risks as part of their business continuity planning. This should include engaging with their insurance providers and/or brokers well in advance of their renewal date. Further guidance on accessing employers' and public liability insurance in the care sector is available to view on the [Association of British Insurers website](#).

I hope this has been a useful reference. A copy will be made available at the following web page:

<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/commissioning>

Yours faithfully,



**Paul Coe**  
**Service Director, Adult Social Care**