

26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

To: Domiciliary Care Providers in Worcestershire

## COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS

Dear Provider,

Further to our letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We are writing to update you with our response to the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus) which we know is placing significant strain on the health and social care system at this time and will do for many months.

As you are aware a dedicated provider support email address was set up to answer queries for all organisations that support people with care needs ([coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk)). Providers can also contact the Adult Social Care Access Centre on 01905 768053 who will redirect calls as appropriate.

We want to continue to support and reassure care providers at this time and so we took some immediate steps to do this, specifically in relation to financial support. This included a **temporary 5% increase** in payments (in addition to the annual uplift of 4.88% in April 2020). The 5% uplift will continue for as long as the grant from Central Government is provided (to date we have not been notified as to when this will cease). This was also in addition to announcements made nationally around issues such as support for the payment of Statutory Sick Pay. This short-term increase of 5% is to contribute to the additional costs you are experiencing due to Covid-19 such as inflated PPE costs.

The Council will continue to pay providers even in cases where services cannot be delivered, for example if a client is self-isolating and a call cannot be made, or you cannot deliver care because of staffing issues. For these calls please record them on the Provider Portal with your actuals as 'frustrated' and add in the comments box 'due to CV', this will ensure you are paid, and the client is not charged. We have added a one-page guide on how to record a frustrated actual on the WCC provider portal website:

[https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20732/adult\\_services\\_provider\\_portal](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20732/adult_services_provider_portal)

There are however two changes to the continuation of payments for Domiciliary Care. These changes clarify the Councils position on the payment of "frustrated calls" for the duration of the Covid pandemic. These are:

1. Reduced packages of care. You will continue to be paid in full for 4 weeks from the date on this letter even though you may be **not** delivering **all** the care calls. However, these individuals who have elected to receive less care will have their package of care reviewed weekly from now on in order for the Council to be able to make a decision as to whether a long-term change in care is appropriate (this may be a reduction in hours). Once **4 weeks** have elapsed and a **reduced level of care** is to be provided for the foreseeable future, the Social Worker will inform the provider of the change and '**reduce**' the package of care. to reflect the actual hours of care delivered. Your payments would **reduce** accordingly. with

immediate effect. After this time the Council shall rely on the terms set out in the contract between us for ongoing arrangements.

2. No care being delivered. For those individuals for whom we have agreed to continue to fund care, you will continue to be paid in full for 4 weeks from the date on this letter even though you are **not** delivering **any** care calls (for example, family may be providing the care instead). The package of care provided to these individuals will be reviewed weekly from now on, for the Council to be able to decide as to whether a long-term change in care is appropriate. Once **4 weeks** have elapsed and **no care** has been provided by you and won't be for the foreseeable future, the package of care will be terminated with immediate effect and payments ceased. This letter constitutes notice of termination as required under clause 8.1.(i) of Appendix 3 of the contract. The Council shall give you not less than seven days' notice if we require the package to be kept open (either as currently contracted or amended) in which case the Council shall pay for the agreed care package.

You will be able to bid for any new packages of care that come through the Brokerage system. In relation to new packages coming into the system we are continuing with quality assurance work so where provider do not complete actions plans or there are ongoing concerns which are not rectified in a timely manner, these contracts will be served with Performance Notices and/or Non-Compliance notices which can lead to contract termination. Hence these packages of care will be advertised to the market.

This change to processes will apply from **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020**.

Please note we are ensuring that the individual receiving care (and their families or Carers) make a fully informed decision if they decide to provide **all** the care themselves instead of you, as this is a significant decision. We advise that it may not be easy to source care later and that the package of care may be offered to the market via Brokerage, so the individual (and their family or Carer) may have a different provider delivering care in the future. The current Provider will be offered first refusal at the same tier rate if an individual wished to reinstate care.

Whilst the provider is being paid for "frustrated" calls, it is expected that providers will continue to pay staff, including staff who may be themselves having to self-isolate and therefore unable to work temporarily.

Any further specific queries should be directed to [coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:coronavirusasc@worcestershire.gov.uk) and will be answered on a case by case basis. Please also use the website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus) to obtain information and guidance.

**Elaine Carolan**  
Adult Social Care  
People Directorate  
Worcestershire  
County Council  
County Hall  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP

Yours faithfully,



**Elaine Carolan**  
**Assistant Director – Adult Social Care**