

# **Update on Care homes**

Protecting and treating people in Care Homes with Covid 19

Enabling Care Home residents to stay in touch with friends and family

# **Action taken to protect and treat people in Care Homes with Covid-19**

# Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan

## Care Well

- The recovery plan has four cells:
  1. Start Well
  2. Live Well
  3. Age Well
  4. Care Well
- Care Well is responsible for care settings, which includes **Residential and Nursing Care Homes**.
- The Recovery Plan acknowledges work undertaken in response to the first lockdown
- Preparation took place during the summer to enable homes to work in a different way within the context of an on-going pandemic and impending winter.

# Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan

## Care Well

**The care home sector, in particular, has been impacted by COVID-19 due to the early and rapid spread of virus amongst high risk and vulnerable residents and a fragile and pressurised workforce.**

**To respond to this challenge Southwark's health, care and VCS worked together in a whole system approach through the emergency period.**

**The recovery plan covers the on-going work with the care homes to plan for and respond to any escalation of covid-19 either nationally, across London, locally or within the care home.**

# Working Together

**Care Well** has identified a number of actions and partners to support the care home sector in responding to any individual home with an 'outbreak' or in the event of a second national lockdown.

The proposals here are a combination of local initiatives but within the context of continually evolving and changing guidance from DHSC /NHS(E) and Public Health England. Therefore, any plans or local agreements may be superseded by national policy directives.

The local Public Health team are in direct contact with Care Homes in the event of any Covid-19 positive residents or staff and are advising them as to the actions they should/can take. This may involve a decision to lock the home down – no new admissions, limitations on visitors and a regime of retesting for all residents and staff.

## **Data Information – Sharing Intelligence and responding to emerging issues:**

- There is a requirement that all care homes across the country complete the National Capacity Tracker on a daily basis. In relation to some basic information around business continuity and Covid-19 status.
- This includes data on PPE, positive Covid test results (outbreaks), staff numbers and absence within the homes and the number of empty rooms.

# **Data Information – Sharing Intelligence and responding to emerging issues:**

- There are new questions being added on a regular basis for example
  - a set of questions around visitors to the home
  - and flu vaccinations
- The submitted data is monitored for any trends or concerns. That are then alerted to the relevant leads within the Council (commissioning, adult social care and/or public health) and/or the CCG as appropriate.
- Care Homes are contacted for a direct conversation to confirm the accuracy of the information, to offer support and to ensure due processes are being followed.

# The Journey Covid-19 - What Changed and What Next

- We did – **Collaboration and Communications:**
  - Commissioning teams undertook daily (now weekly) touch-points and check-ins, newsletters to provide information and key guidance, and fortnightly provider forums.
  - An integrated approach to supporting older people's homes was put in place through joint working between primary care, GSTT and the Care Homes Intervention Team.
  - Health professionals endeavoured to make sure that individuals were well supplied with medication.
- **We are continuing with:**
  - **Weekly calls and fortnightly forum meetings**
  - **Dedicated GP service for the Older People Care Homes.**
  - **At Home team – community nursing (GSTT) continued to visit and support the care homes**
  - **WhatsApp group between health professional such as geriatricians and scheme managers. This practice was cited by Care Quality Commission as innovative**

# The Journey Covid-19 - What Changed and What Next

- We did – **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
  - The Council acted quickly acquiring PPE, providing the care homes with an email address for any emergencies related to Covid-19 and delivering PPE swiftly.
- **We are continuing with:**
  - **The national portal is in place and care homes have reported using it with positive results.**
  - **Some Southwark Homes have acquired sufficient PPE supply to take them through the winter.**
  - **Daily reports and monitoring through the national capacity tracker shows any home whose supply of PPE is dropping this activates an immediate conversation with the care home to ensure they have arrangements in place for timely delivery of new supplies.**

# The Journey Covid-19 - What Changed and What Next

- We did **Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)**:
  - CCG working with the Council offered IPC training to care home staff with all of the Southwark CQC registered homes taking up this offer.
  - Reporting on take up formed part of daily returns.
- **We are continuing with:**
  - **Offering more training led by the lead nurse for IPC in Southwark CCG**
  - **Establishing an 'Infection Control Link Group' to share good practice, identifying emerging problems and offer bespoke training to tackle these.**
  - **CCG reporting on numbers of staff taking up this training in place**

# The Journey Covid-19 - What Changed and What Next

- We did **Testing**:
  - Shortly before the national decision to undertake a set of 'one off testing' of residents in care homes the above health professionals with the support of KCH lab took swabs of residents in some of our Older Peoples care homes.
  - The national programme for '**retesting**' has been established in all the Older People Care Homes after some initial problems the regime is now well established.
  - However, it does stretch resources when a positive result comes through and the whole home needs to be 'retested'.
  - Offer of local antibody testing in the early summer some care homes took this offer up and a small percentage of staff were shown to be positive.
- **We are continuing with:**
  - **Public Health Southwark/CCG have a local backup systems in place if the national system falters.**
  - **Care homes have a number of routes to raise concerns locally in the event of the system breaking down.**
  - **Care homes have provided mutual aid to enable residents to move from one home to another.**

# New Admissions and Testing for Covid-19

## At the beginning:

- At the outset of the pandemic most of Southwark Older People Care Homes took new residents from hospital not knowing if the persons did or didn't have Covid-19 in line with many other care homes across the country.

## During the Summer:

- All of the Care Homes for all client groups in Southwark are clear that they will not take an existing resident or a new resident from hospital without them being tested first and receiving the results.
- They all understand the need for a period of isolation. All of the Older People Care Homes have at some point this year received new/returning residents and have experience of isolation, retesting and managing staff and residents tested positive.
- They understand their limitations and will/have declined an admission into the home if they feel unable to accommodate the person safely.

# New Admissions and Testing for Covid-19

## Current Guidelines:

- Guidelines issued on 12<sup>th</sup> October introduced ‘
  - designated discharge destinations’ for those being tested positive for Covid-19 in hospital.
  - Applies equally to potential ‘new’ residents for care home or those who live in a care home and need to return to their ‘home’.
  - Positive Covid-19 patients can only be transferred to a care home that the CQC has inspected and approved as a designated site that meets the IPC standards, supply of PPE and other relevant policies/practices are in place and meet the relevant standards.

# The Journey Covid-19 - What Changed and What Next

- **Other initiative we are doing/continuing with:**
  - **Prevention/Early Warning – Observational Tools**
    - Two nursing care homes are piloting a new approach using a national tool known as RESTORE2 it supports them to be able to talk to the GP and/or emergency services clearly stating what has changed and why they are concerned.
    - Residential care homes who have not previously used Pulse Oximeters which is a medical device that indirectly monitors the oxygen saturation of a patient's blood. QHS have offered to support this with supplying the Pulse Oximeters, training and advice on recording findings.
  - **Flu vaccination**
    - NHS has stated that staff working in care homes are a priority group and can have the flu vaccination for free
    - Care Homes are completing the national capacity tracker providing information on residents and staff who have or have not been vaccinated.
    - Some Care Homes have reported that some care staff have reported difficulties in receiving the free vaccination. The CCG are looking at how to resolve this situation. However, one care home reported that a local pharmacist near them recently made contact to offer their services when they received their next supply.

**Enabling Care Home residents to stay in touch with friends and family**

# Enabling Care Home residents to stay in touch with friends and family

## **At the beginning:**

During the national lockdown care homes stopped family and friends from entering the home and visiting.

- At that time care homes did allow some visitors if the residents were nearing the end of their life and on one occasion when an individual with dementia had fallen.
- In doing this the family members were required to wear PPE, follow infection control protocols and were always escorted to ensure the safety of other residents.
- Homes offered different forms of communications via zoom so they could see each other or simply taking mobile phones to residents to talk to families.
- Some had set up schedules for calls – zoom/traditional telephone calls as staff needed to take iPad/mobiles around to different residents.

# Enabling Care Home residents to stay in touch with friends and family

## **During the Summer:**

- The care homes continued with compassionate visits
- They all established garden visits, with protocols in place that involved infection control measures, visits by appointment and clear requirements around social distancing.
- They required visitors to complete a check list to assess level of risk. One home talked about a discussion with a family member who should on return from a high risk country be in isolation so they agreed that the visit could not happen for 14 days.
- For those families/friends who had their own difficult situations or the resident was/is bedbound the offer of virtual visits remained in place
- Homes are planning for winter visits in different ways – some homes had alternative entry points to set up a visiting area, others were putting in log cabins in their gardens or gazebos
- Initial conversations had started around exploring if Southwark care homes could enable families or friends to be recognised as key workers. Responses were mixed highlighting that this could be complicated.

# Enabling Care Home residents to stay in touch with friends and family

## **Current Position:**

- Data is being collected on visitation from family and friends on the national capacity tracker
- New guidelines have been issued by Public Health
- Being in Tier Two requires the homes to return to lockdown conditions allowing
  - A default of visits enabled by digital technology
  - Compassionate visits but with limited numbers
- Care Homes are in contact with families and friends via a variety of methods. To varying degrees of success but they continue to adapt and try different approaches. Recently one home had up to twenty family/friends attend a virtual meeting. They asked for more frequent sessions.