

INFORMATION SHEET



CBF Summary: Covid-19 Action Plan for Adult Social Care

*Published by Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), last updated
16th April 2020*

This is a long document from the Department of Health and Social Care outlining the issues that adult social care is facing during the Covid 19 pandemic, and actions taken by DHSC to address these. The action plan provides an overview that may be useful to those both providing and receiving adult social care.

Key Points:

- Under the Care Act, Local Authorities still have a duty to shape local provision of care, to ensure services remain sustainable and continuity of care is maintained. Some of their duties may be reduced if easements have been triggered. For more information see our Care Act Easements Summary on the [Government and NHS Guidance page](#)
- Advance care plans and DNAR plans cannot be applied to an entire group or care home in a blanket fashion. Individuals and their families should be involved as much as possible in decisions about their health and care.
- Everyone living in a registered care home is eligible for testing, and all *carers* whether working in a registered care home or not are eligible for testing. Individuals in supported living are *not* eligible for testing.

The social care plan is structured around the following four principles:

- controlling the spread of infection;
- supporting the workforce;
- supporting independence, people at the end of their lives, and responding to individual need;
- and supporting local authorities and providers of care.

Below are the key areas from the Action Plan that we have identified as most relevant to the families of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism:

The Care Act

- Under the Care Act, local authorities have duties to shape local provision of care, to ensure services remain sustainable and continuity of care is maintained. According to the Action Plan, they must also ensure that they

have a clear picture of all alternative local provision that could be used in the case of an outbreak.

- The Action Plan gives an overview of other guidance that is in place such as the [Care Act Easements](#). These have been triggered in some Local Authorities (LA's), for a full list of LAs which have triggered their easements, please see the CQC website [here](#).
- If easements have not been triggered in your Local Authority, please see your council's website for updates on affected services. If you are concerned about the lawfulness of this, please see our legal FAQs on [our Covid-19 Information Page](#). If you still have concerns, please get in touch via the information on [our Covid-19 Information Page](#) and we will try to address your issue.
- The CQC will only initiate a targeted inspection of services, or take enforcement action, where absolutely necessary, for example if there are concerns about the potential abuse of people with care and support needs. Otherwise all face to face inspections have stopped. The CBF along with other organisations is legally challenging this decision with the CQC, to ensure that those who are not at obvious risk are still provided with the oversight necessary for their safety and quality of support. You can read the full letter [here](#) and find the CBF public statement on our [Covid-19 and learning disability latest news page](#)

Direct Payments

- It is expected that local authorities, CCGs and direct payment holders will adopt a flexible approach in using direct payments. The aim is to give people greater control over their care and support needs. For more information on the Government's guidance around direct payments and personal health budgets, please see [here](#).

Guidance and Available Resources

- The Action Plan highlights the risk of the pandemic on unpaid carers' health and wellbeing and directs to published [guidance to support unpaid carers](#), including advice on limiting the risk of COVID-19 infection, and what to do if it occurs.
- DHSC has asked **local commissioners and providers** to provide letters to enable unpaid carers to identify themselves and their needs so that they can be met by retailers and others. This is intended to help where unpaid carers are challenged about leaving the home more frequently, or not shopping alone. We do not know if these letters have been produced and are asking DHSC to ensure that the families and carers of children and adults with learning disabilities are given official identification documents confirming their right to go out more than once and with more than 2 people. The CBF has produced [information cards for going out](#) that you can print which contains this information.

The Government has plans to publish guidance for the family carers of people with learning disabilities and/or autism, and service providers. These guides have since been produced by SCIE and are available [here](#).

Blanket Bans and Restrictions

- People in care homes and their families should be involved, as much as possible, in planning and decisions about their health and care, including end of life care, and should be supported in having honest, informed and timely conversations. If you are concerned that blanket bans or decisions are being made without family carer input about your loved one's care, please see our legal FAQs on [our Covid-19 Information Page](#) for more information on what to do about this.
- Advance Care Plans and DNAR orders **cannot be applied to any group of people in a blanket fashion**. Providers who have had this brought to their attention should contact the CQC. Anyone at risk of losing mental capacity should be supported to make personalised decisions about their wishes and arrangements. For more information, please see our [Routine Healthcare during Covid-19](#), [Going into Hospital with Covid-19](#), and [Covid19 Letter to Paramedics, Healthcare Staff and First Responders](#).

Testing

- The Government has now introduced a new scheme for testing in social care where 'everyone who needs one [a test] will get one'. We asked DHSC for clarification on what this meant and have been informed that people living in supported living arrangements are **not** eligible for testing, but those in registered care homes are. However, **all** carers, whether employed by a registered care provider or not, are eligible for testing. Any carer who requires a test should contact their local resilience forum, their associated national government department/agency, or the Department of Health and Social Care at opshub@dhsc.gov.uk, as set out in the guidance which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>.
- All residents in care homes who are symptomatic can now access testing, rather than the previously allowed first five with symptoms. Residents who have been discharged from hospital after recovering from Covid-19 should still undergo a 14-day isolation period upon returning to the care home, even if they tested negative upon discharge.
- Testing will be co-ordinated by the CQC. According to the Action Plan the CQC have already offered testing to around 11,000 care facilities. The CBF is following up with DHSC and the CQC to ensure that the numbers of those affected by Covid-19 in inpatient units is also monitored and tracked.

DHSC Plans:

- The Guidance states that the DHSC will: *'work in partnership with user and carer groups to understand the impact of COVID-19 and interventions such as Care Act easements to ensure they are not disproportionately disadvantaging those who are least able to advocate for themselves, and will closely monitor*

© The Challenging Behaviour Foundation. Registered charity no. 1060714.

www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk Registered office: The Old Courthouse, New Road Avenue, Chatham, ME4 6BE. Tel. 01634 838739

mortality and morbidity in vulnerable groups and the impact on carers. We will also hear directly from people with care and support needs about their experiences against the [Making It Real 'I Statements'](#). The CBF along with many others, participates in discussions with DHSC to ensure that the concerns and voices of family carers are heard and prioritised during this time.

- An online NHS platform will be made available to social workers with a range of resources to help individuals and their teams manage in this new situation, understand what they might need to be doing differently to support each other and pay attention to their mental and physical wellbeing. The site will contain bite-size videos as well as guides to help staff access the information quickly. The CBF is following-up to see whether this information can also be made available to family carers and considers children and adults with learning disabilities and their families.
- The Action plan states that DHSC will be launching a national recruitment campaign for social care. CQC will be involved in developing an online recruitment process and Skills for Care have provided input to make it easier for employers to access rapid online induction training for new staff. The CBF will be looking into how the recruitment campaign aims to ensure properly skilled staff are recruited and that the training is informed by families and people with lived experience.

You can read the full Action Plan for Adult Social Care [here](#). [CBF](#) Summaries of other guidance can be found on our [NHSE and Government Guidance page](#)

We aim to update summaries in line with guidance which is changing regularly, this summary was last updated on 21st May 2020.