

Care home support package backed by £600 million to help reduce coronavirus infections

- £600 million Infection Control Fund to reduce transmission of coronavirus in care homes
- This forms part of wider support for care home residents and staff, including by limiting staff movement, protecting wages and giving access to NHS personal protective equipment (PPE) training
- Each care home in England to be given a named clinical lead to provide direct care for residents
- A wellbeing package will be also launched on CARE Workforce app to support the workforce with Hospice UK and Samaritans

A new £600 million Infection Control Fund has been introduced to tackle the spread of COVID-19 in care homes in addition to £3.2 billion of financial support made available to local authorities to support key public services since the start of the crisis.

The fund, which is ringfenced for social care, will be given to local authorities to ensure care homes can continue to halt the spread of coronavirus by helping them cover the costs of implementing measures to reduce transmission.

Care homes will be asked to restrict permanent and agency staff to working in only one care home wherever possible. The funding could be used to meet the additional costs of restricting staff to work in one care home and pay the wages of those self-isolating.

Care home support package

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This £600 million Infection Control Fund will help as we continue to reduce infections in care homes and save lives.

From the very start of this outbreak, we have been working to protect our brilliant social care workforce and the most vulnerable in our society.

Our package sets out clearly the extra steps local councils and care homes should be taking as we stamp out the spread of this virus.

In further measures announced today:

- all local authorities must conduct a daily review of care homes in their

area to ensure care homes have the support they need with staffing, help with accessing PPE and other areas of operation

- the NHS will ensure that each care home has a named clinical contact to provide better access to clinical advice through weekly check-ins to review their patients, and offer direct support for staff with use of equipment and medication
- a wellbeing package for social care staff is also being rolled out today on the new CARE app including 2 new helplines, led by the Samaritans and Hospice UK. This will help support care staff with their mental health and wellbeing and support those who have experienced a traumatic death as part of their work or help with anxiety and stress

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

Our care homes, and those working tirelessly to look after our loved ones are at the heart of our fight against this invisible enemy, which is why we're doing everything we can to make sure the sector has all the support it needs to stop the spread and save lives.

Our support package introduces stronger measures on infection control and steps up clinical support to make sure there is a clinical lead assigned to every care home right across the country to offer advice and quicker support. This is an important set of measures to support care homes and their staff – to continue to do wonderful work caring for people, even at this most difficult of times.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We have already provided councils with over £3.2 billion during this pandemic so that they can respond to the immediate pressures they are facing, including supporting social care.

This new funding will be distributed to councils based on the number of care home beds in their area and will be passed on quickly to care providers. It will fund new measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus in care homes, minimise infection, keep staff and residents safe and, ultimately, save lives.

Wellbeing support

Samaritans, working with NHS England, have extended the use of their helpline to all social care workers. Social care staff will be able to speak to a trained Samaritans adviser who will provide a non-judgmental listening ear, safe space to offload and signposting to other services.

Hospice UK will also extend their bereavement and trauma support hotline to

people working in social care, with specialist counsellors available to support staff who have experienced trauma, stress or anxiety through their work. Mental health and wellbeing guidance for the adult social care workforce was recently published on the app to support staff and employers through the outbreak.

Testing

All symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents in England are already eligible for testing, and testing is prioritised for care homes that look after the over 65s. The new digital portal now enables care homes to register for the delivery and collection of test kits directly.

Workforce recruitment

Today's announcement also aims to further boost the social care workforce and work has begun to attract thousands more people into social care over the next 3 months through the new national social care recruitment campaign.

NHS support will see nurse returners being deployed to care homes through the Bringing Back Staff programme, as well providing infection control nurses to lead a 'train the trainers' approach for care homes available to every area in England. This includes advice about the recommended approach to infection prevention control, PPE usage and testing advice. This programme commenced at the beginning of May with the offer available to every area in England.

Ruth Sutherland, Samaritans CEO, said:

We are so pleased that we can offer support to even more key workers who are doing such critical work on the frontline. Our volunteers are ready and waiting to provide a non-judgemental listening ear and a safe space to offload, at a time when we know so many are under huge emotional strain.

All calls are completely confidential and answered by trained volunteers who will talk for as long as people want to, whilst also offering information about other sources of support that could be helpful.

Paul Johnstone, Deputy SRO for PHE COVID-19 Response at Public Health England (PHE), said:

We are delighted that the social care sector will get even more support in the form of the Social Care Fund, based on PHE research and emerging evidence from the World Health Organization. We are confident that these interventions will help to further reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and keep our care home residents and workers safe.

The excellent work carried out by Directors of Public Health and PHE's Health Protection Teams has already made a huge difference to the local response to COVID-19. We will continue working with NHS England and DHSC to provide advice and support to the sector.

Tracey Bleakley, CEO, Hospice UK said:

We welcome the commitment the government is making to ensure that the care workforce is to benefit from bereavement and trauma support. These dedicated, frontline health professionals face very difficult situations dealing with COVID-19 which can take a toll on their mental health and wellbeing. This is why Hospice UK is so pleased to be able to extend our services to those in social care.

Background information

- The scheme will cover frontline staff in England.
- As a result of this £600 million the devolved administrations will receive £113 million through the Barnett formula:
 - the Scottish Government will receive £58 million
 - the Welsh Government will receive £35 million
 - the Northern Ireland Executive will receive £20 million
- The allocation shares for each council are calculated as $[\text{Number of care home beds} * \text{Area Cost Adjustment}] / \text{England sum of } [\text{Number of care home beds} * \text{Area Cost Adjustment}]$. The Area Cost Adjustment reflects differences in wages and prices in different councils.
- The funding will be paid in 2 equal instalments to local authorities. We have allocated funding to local authorities according to the number of care home beds in each area, with an adjustment to reflect the costs of operating in each area.
- We will request that 75% of the initial funding received is passed straight to care homes within the local authority's geographical area for use on infection control measures, including to care homes with whom the local authority does not have existing contracts. The second payment will be contingent on the first being used for infection control. The remaining 25% must also be used for infection control measures, however local authorities are able to allocate based on need. This may involve support for domiciliary care workforce measures. To be eligible for support from the grant, providers who do not already must complete the daily care home Capacity Tracker.
- This approach ensures that the majority of funding reaches the front line as quickly as possible, while ensuring that local authorities have the flexibility to top up where it is most needed.

Further details of the [Samaritans helpline](#) are on its website.

[Allocation table for the infection control fund for adult social care](#) (PDF, 104 KB, 5 pages)