

1. Introduction

This briefing note provides relevant information to Adult Social Care Providers on novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including where to find information about the current situation in the UK, guidance for social or community care and residential settings.

2. Current Situation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

The government has announced that we are moving out of the contain phase and into delay, in response to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The UK Chief Medical Officers have now raised the risk to the UK from moderate to high.

Kent County Council (KCC) is working closely with Public Health England and has published information about COVID -19 here <https://kccmediahub.net/category/health-and-wellbeing>

KCC Adult Social Care and Health Directorate is currently operating business as usual. Some health and care services are experiencing seasonal pressures. It is therefore important to continue with existing established procedures which are designed to manage the demand on our services during periods of escalation.

The most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

Anyone with **new** symptoms:-

- a high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- a new, continuous cough

should self-isolate for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means staying at home and avoiding all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to slow the spread of infection.

The guidance for self-isolation is here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Individuals do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days contact NHS 111 online at 111.nhs.uk. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

3. Where can you find the latest information as the situation develops?

Providers can register for updates from Public Health England (PHE) via this website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

4. Guidance for social or community care and residential settings

On 25 February 2020, the Department for Health and Social Care published specific guidance for social or community care and residential settings, via this website:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19

The guidance supports social care employers in providing advice to their staff on:

- the novel coronavirus, COVID-19
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- what to do if someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a health or social care setting
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specific areas
- risk assessments for undertaking domiciliary visits or providing care in residential settings
- actions to take if staff come into contact with someone who is self-isolating or is a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19

On 13 March, DHSC released additional guidance about adult social care provision

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision>

Social distancing measures for older and vulnerable people are *not* yet in place. There is no advice to restrict or prevent access to social care services such as homecare or care homes

All providers are asked to look at their Business Continuity Plans and ensure they are up to date in light of the outbreak of COVID-19. Providers that need to trigger their Business Continuity Plan, are asked to speak to their KCC contract manager or Locality Officer.

The council is working together with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), other authorities nationally and with health colleagues to see how best we can support providers and service users, now and in the challenging weeks ahead. We have been working closely with trades associations to understand concerns and establish where difficulties may lie the future, so that we can plan for them. A helpline for social care providers is planned.

KCC thanks social care providers for their perseverance and hard work during this difficult time.