

19 March 2020

Dear colleague,

Earlier this week I [wrote to all registered adult social care providers to update them on how we continue to respond to COVID-19.](#)

Health and social care providers are facing unprecedented pressures, and my key message is that we're on your side: we are here to work with you, to listen to you, and to support you with the inevitable tough decisions you will face. Registered managers will be facing difficult decisions over the coming weeks and months, and we at the Care Quality Commission are here to support you to keep people using services and staff safe in these unprecedented times.

I am regularly briefing my teams, including on the messages I am sharing with you today, so they are clear on our approach and the ways in which they can support you going forward. If your experience is not in line with what I have outlined, please do let us know by contacting our National Customer Service Centre. We will brief our staff on any changes to legislation and work pragmatically with you to implement any changes to legal or policy advice.

We know you will be working hard to make sure you are sharing relevant information with us, while balancing the other demands you're facing at this time.

Each provider is facing a unique set of challenges, and therefore it is unlikely that we will be able to issue one-size-fits-all advice. One example is around staffing, which we know is a great concern. We never advise on absolute staffing numbers in any sector, but we can talk to you about your concerns and offer advice. Where we are making decisions that affect the entire sector, we will communicate with you – as we have been doing – to make sure everyone is updated at the same time.

I would like to assure you that we are listening to you. We are using the conversations we are having and the queries we are receiving to pick up themes so that local and national Government, and the Regional Incident Response centres can take appropriate action, as well as inform any action we need to take ourselves.

While routine inspections have been stopped, regulation still has a critical role to play and we will work in different ways to ensure the safety of people using services is maintained and that you are supported to deliver those services.

We're using technology to help us make good decisions quickly, without adding to the pressures you are facing, and we're developing new ways of working at pace. Feedback we have received so far has been invaluable and is shaping what we – and other partners – are doing. We welcome your continued feedback to help us to further improve and make sure we're getting things right.

Finally, I know that the provision of personal protection equipment (PPE) has been causing a lot of concern. I am pleased that the Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed that free distribution of fluid repellent facemasks has started. Every care home and home care provider will receive at least 300 facemasks. Providers are not required to take action: the stock will be delivered to them. The initial distribution is aimed at tiding over the rise in demand following the change of guidance on facemasks last week, and DHSC is working with wholesalers to ensure a longer-term supply of all aspects of PPE, including gloves, aprons, facemasks and hand sanitiser. Future PPE orders should be made via usual suppliers. There is also now a dedicated line for the health and social care sector. You can call on 0800 915 9964 or email supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk.

As ever, my thanks go to everyone working across adult social care for your continued commitment and dedication to ensuring people receive safe care.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Terroni
Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care