

New plan to help protect care homes from coronavirus over winter

- A new adult social care winter plan to support care homes through winter including free PPE and £546 million Infection Control Fund
- Care providers must stop all but essential movement of staff between care homes to prevent the spread of infection
- New Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care will be appointed to provide leadership to the social care nursing workforce

A new adult social care winter plan will aim to curb the spread of COVID-19 infections in care settings throughout the winter months, the Health and Social Care Secretary confirmed today.

As part of the plan:

- people receiving adult social care and care workers will receive free PPE
- a new dashboard will monitor care home infections and help local government and providers respond quicker
- a Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care will be appointed to represent social care nurses and provide clinical leadership to the workforce

Local providers must restrict all but essential movement of staff between settings to reduce transmission, supported by an extra £546 million for the Infection Control Fund. This will help care providers pay staff full wages and enable staff to work in only one care home.

This brings the total funding for infection control measures in care homes to over £1.1 billion and underlines the government's commitment to ensure adult social care has the resources it needs to keep residents and staff safe.

The government is prepared to strengthen monitoring and regulation by local authorities and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), including asking them to take strong action where improvement is required or staff movement is not being restricted. This can include restricting a service's operation, issuing warning notices or placing conditions on a provider's registration. Further details of how the winter plan will be enforced will be set out shortly.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

We are entering a critical phase in our fight against coronavirus with winter on the horizon. Our priority over the next 6 months is to make sure we protect those most vulnerable receiving care and our incredibly hard-working workforce by limiting the spread of the virus and preventing a second spike.

This winter plan gives providers the certainty they need when it comes to PPE and provides additional support to help care homes to

limit the movement of staff, stop the spread of coronavirus and save lives. We will be monitoring the implementation of this carefully and will be swift in our actions to protect residents and colleagues across the country.

The new Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care role will provide clinical and professional leadership, while upholding and raising standards among the care workforce. Recruitment will begin in October to ensure the department and sector can benefit from the professional expertise the new role will bring.

To improve understanding of where infections are taking place in care homes, a dashboard will be introduced as a single point of information for local, regional and national government to monitor outbreaks and measures being implemented to reduce it.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately, said:

Our brilliant care workers have been tirelessly looking after our loved ones throughout this pandemic, and COVID-19 rates have come right down in social care through the summer. With cases beginning to rise now, we must take the strongest possible action to stop the virus and protect people.

The creation of the Chief Nurse for Social Care is also an important step and will provide leadership to social care nurses and the wider care workforce who often work unseen. The skills and compassion of our care workers must be fully recognised and supported.

The unveiling of the winter plan will be supported by the publishing of the Adult Social Care COVID-19 Support Taskforce report highlighting the effectiveness of the fund and the [care home support package](#).

Chair of the Adult Social Care COVID-19 Support Taskforce, David Pearson, said:

A test of any country is the degree to which it supports and enables those who need care and support to stay safe and to lead the best lives they can. This report draws from expertise from across the social care sector and sets out the actions that should be taken to help keep people safe while maintaining their independence.

I would like to pay thanks to the huge involvement from the social care sector in the taskforce and in the development of this report and indeed in aligning closely with the winter plan. Close co-ordination between local and national bodies within the sector is critically important to the success of the sector and will play an important part in keeping people safe and healthy in the winter

months ahead.

The report will also look at how we can learn from the first phase of the virus and sets out a number of recommendations to the government to prepare the sector and the workforce for winter.

Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Luke Hall MP, said:

We're doing everything we can to ensure councils are prepared to tackle coronavirus throughout the winter months.

These new measures, including providing free PPE to care homes and new ways to track care home infections, will make a huge difference in limiting the spread of the virus, supporting those on the frontline with this important work.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive, Care England, said:

We welcome the government's focus on care homes and will work with them to implement the winter plan to ensure the best outcome for residents of care homes and their families.