

Healthwatch Worcestershire
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Paul Robinson,
Chief Executive,
Worcestershire County Council

By Email

30/04/2020

Dear Mr Robinson,

Re Care and Nursing Home and Domiciliary Care Sector in Worcestershire

As you know Healthwatch Worcestershire provides an independent voice for people who use publicly funded Health and Social Care Services. We do appreciate the additional burdens that the Covid-19 Pandemic has placed on the NHS and the County Council, and we have no wish to add unnecessarily to that burden.

Nevertheless, given the level of local and national debate we are seeking assurances on behalf of the public about the care and nursing home sector and domiciliary care services in Worcestershire. This will enable us to provide accurate information and reassurance to the community on these issues. We would therefore appreciate a response to the following questions.

1. Can you confirm how arrangements are being made by the Local Authority, and its partners, to ensure that PPE is available to care and nursing home and domiciliary care staff, and that supplies are sufficient to meet Government Guidance and ensure the safety of residents, patients, service users and staff?
2. What alternative, appropriate accommodation has been put in place for people who have tested positive for Covid-19 who require isolation on discharge from hospital, or other circumstances, where this cannot be achieved by local care providers?
3. Has this provision been used yet in Worcestershire? If so how many times to date?
4. Can you confirm that the current arrangements for testing meet the latest Government guidance that tests will be available for all care and nursing home residents and staff, whether symptomatic or not of Covid-19? If not when will this provision be in place? Can you also confirm the current average time for homes and operators to receive the results of these tests?
5. How are residents in care and nursing home settings being provided with additional support for their mental health and emotional wellbeing, given the additional strain generated by the Covid-19 pandemic?
6. How are people in receipt of domiciliary care, in particular those who are a. shielding and b. vulnerable being provided with additional support for their mental health and emotional wellbeing, given the additional strain generated by the Covid-19 pandemic?



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7. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have duties to shape local provision of care and ensure services remain sustainable and continuity of care is maintained. What steps have the Council taken to secure the current and future sustainability of the care and nursing home and domiciliary care sector?
8. Are there plans in place, or in development, to ensure this duty is met and continuity of care can be maintained?

Could you please provide us with copies of all information sent to providers during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic so that we can be fully aware of actions taken and being planned by the County Council, and its partners, in the light of the increased pressures on these key services.

We have noted the Government's commitment to provide additional funding to support meeting the cost of Covid-19 to the social care sector. It would be useful to know how this additional funding has been used in Worcestershire.

We will have an agenda item on these issues at our next Public Board Meeting to be held on 28th May 2020. If you could reply by **Monday 25th May 2020** this would be very much appreciated. As is our usual practice we will be publishing this letter and your response on our website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John J Taylor', written in a cursive style.

John J Taylor
Director, Healthwatch Worcestershire