

## COVID-19 advice for people purchasing care and support using a Direct Payment

Bi-borough Adult Social Care has put together the following FAQ sheet to support service users, employers and carers who may have queries around Direct Payments, employment and minimising risk during Coronavirus (COVID-19). As government advice is changing regularly, we strongly advise that you follow advice on the government and NHS websites.

[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

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

Please remember that your payroll and Employers Liability Insurance providers will be able to assist with any employment queries.

### What advice should employers give to carers to minimise the risk of infection?

- wash your hands with soap and hot water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get back home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
  
- Disposal of waste:
  - Personal waste (for example, used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths should be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.
  - These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.

Public Health England recommends that the best way to reduce any risk of infection is good hygiene and avoiding close contact (within 2 metres) with any potentially infected person where possible.

## **How can I access to personal protective equipment?**

### **For service users who show no symptoms:**

If the individual receiving care and support has no symptoms, then no personal protective equipment is required apart from normal good hygiene practices.

General interventions may include increased cleaning activity and keeping property properly ventilated by opening windows whenever safe and appropriate. Care workers should follow the advice above on hand hygiene.

### **For service users who show symptoms:**

Carers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids.

The council understands that being able to purchase equipment with Direct Payments is unrealistic. We are working with NHS England to provide PPE to Direct Payments users and are planning to distribute these across our Bi-Borough sites. Further information will be provided when we have a confirmed plan in place.

## **Will the Council be checking on “vulnerable” individuals who receive a Direct Payment, or is it business as usual?**

There is no need to do anything differently at present. Residents are expected to continue receiving their usual care and support package until they display signs which indicate that they may require additional support. The Council will be contacting all Direct Payment users to ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

## **What should I do if I or someone I care for needs additional support?**

If you or someone you know needs additional social care and support, please contact the Adult Social Services line on 020 7641 1444 or 020 7641 1175 for Westminster City Council, 020 7361 3013 for The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council, or email either [adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk) or [socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk). The team discuss the options for available support with you.

## **What happens if I can't get the care I need?**

If alternative support is required, please contact the Adult Social Services line on 020 7641 1444 or 020 7641 1175 for Westminster City Council, 020 7361 3013 for The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council, or email either [adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk) or [socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk).

## **What happens if I am self-isolating, or my carer is self-isolating or unable to get to work, will they still be paid?**

Mark Bates Ltd has contacted all Direct Payment users who have a valid Mark Bates Ltd Home Employment policy, with important information and guidance to follow. This includes advice regarding both employers and employees rights during this time. A copy of the Mark Bates Ltd guidance can be found on our People First website:

<https://peoplefirstinfo.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-information/guidance-for-direct-payment-employers-and-pas/>

Individuals who have a valid policy with another provider are advised to contact them for information directly.

## **What advice can we give to carers that carry out weekly shopping and are unable to buy items such as toilet rolls, hand wash etc?**

Carers are advised to complete shopping calls early in the morning where possible to avoid crowds.

1. Some stores such as Morrisons have started using dedicated time slots for specific age groups and disabled people to provide more help to the elderly and vulnerable customers. Stores are set to continue this offer for the foreseeable future until the coronavirus outbreak has been contained. Sainsburys are also providing all over-70s and those with disabilities priority booking of their online delivery slots from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. If your carer requires assistance with identification to allow them to shop at these priority time slots, please contact **[ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk)**
2. Ask family, friends and neighbours to support you and use online services. If this is not possible, then the public sector, business, charities, and the general public are gearing up to help those advised to stay at home. If you need help, please send us the details or phone us on: 020 7641 1222.

## **What options do people have if they are unable to go to the bank to take out cash to give to their carers as a result of the self-isolation guidance given by the government?**

if you are having difficulties passing on cash to your carers for your shopping, please contact the Adult Social Services line on 020 7641 1444 or 020 7641 1175 for Westminster City Council, 020 7361 3013 for The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council, or email **[ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk)**

**Please see our People First website for further employment advice:**  
**<https://www.peoplefirstinfo.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-information/>**

**For more information and advice about Direct Payments, please contact Adult Social Services on:**

If you live in Westminster: 020 7641 1444 or 020 7641 1175 or email [ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ASCpersonalisation@westminster.gov.uk)

If you live in Kensington and Chelsea: 020 7361 3013 or email: [socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk)

Information from:

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