

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## Richmond and Wandsworth Governance Arrangements

### Who is the lead contact for Covid-19 issues in the Council?

The Director of Public Health is the lead for both councils. Information on Richmond Council's response to Covid-19 is available [here](#) and information on Wandsworth's response is available [here](#). Any enquiries relating to adult social care and care providers should be sent to [providercvquestions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:providercvquestions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk).

### What is the emergency procedure for mass infection?

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils have a Resilience Forum that has implemented a Multi-Agency Pandemic Infectious Disease Plan. This plan will be adapted in line with Public Health England advice as the situation develops. Currently, the advice for all providers is to follow the Public Health England guidance published [here](#).

### Please may you send us your Housing Business Continuity Plans?

Please find the link to the Corporate Resilience Plan [here](#).

## Council Functions

### How will you be sharing information in this crisis?

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils will continue to have regular communications with providers. Specific questions can be sent to [providercvquestions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:providercvquestions@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) and will be responded to regularly. All communications will be reviewed as the situation develops. We encourage providers to communicate with each other and to share resources where necessary as the situation develops.

### How is the virus going to affect council functions such as assessment, brokerage and finance?

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils are implementing business continuity plans. Services will be continually reviewed for priority to ensure that changing service provision is managed effectively.

## Service Users

### What should we do if a service user has Covid-19?

Please follow the current guidance for home care providers [here](#), supported living providers [here](#) and residential providers [here](#). Please find general guidance from Public Health England [here](#). All providers in Richmond and Wandsworth are asked to familiarise themselves with this guidance and check regularly for updates.

For home care providers, if carers on arrival at a property suspect the service user has contracted Covid-19 and the episode of care cannot be rescheduled, they should follow the guidance on care home provision, specifically the section covering "If the individual being cared for has symptoms of COVID-19". This guidance is available [here](#). If the service user's support needs to be amended or suspended, please contact the Access Team on 020 8891 7971 (Richmond) or 020 8871 7707 (Wandsworth).

### Is there any guidance to help us communicate with service users?

Providers are advised to consult the guidance [here](#) to ensure consistent communication. Please find the easy read version [here](#). We recommend that you use reassuring language that states you will continue to do everything possible to make sure that essential services continue.

Please also check the Richmond Council site [here](#) and Wandsworth councils site [here](#), which are frequently updated with information and partnership working with key voluntary sector organisations.

### Is it safe to receive a service user transferred from hospital?

Yes, it is safe. [Government guidance on Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): admission and care of people in care homes](#) states that "Hospitals around the country need as many beds as possible to support and treat an increasing number of COVID-19 cases. This means the NHS will seek to discharge more patients into care homes for the recovery period". Importantly, "negative tests are not required prior to transfers / admissions into the care home."

Upon discharge, care homes should follow the guidance below which is also available [here](#) (pg.14):

#### **If a resident has no symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 but is no longer showing symptoms and has completed their isolation period.**

**What care is required upon discharge?** The care home should provide care as normal.

#### **What care is required upon first sign of symptoms?**

- Provide care in isolation if symptoms occur within 14 days of discharge from hospital. (The 7 days isolation period usually applies but care home residents are a particularly vulnerable group and their immune response may differ from younger normally healthier individuals. Therefore, a 14-day period of isolation is recommended for residents in care homes).
- Resident does not leave room (including for meals) for 14 days after onset of symptoms or positive test.
- Staff wear protective equipment & place in clinical waste after use.
- If symptoms worsen during isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact resident's GP for further advice around escalation and to ensure person-centred decision making is followed.

#### **If the resident has tested positive for COVID-19, is no longer showing symptoms and has completed an isolation period:**

**What care is required upon discharge?** The care home should provide care as normal.

**What care is required upon first sign of symptoms?** N/A.

**If the resident has tested positive for COVID-19, is no longer showing symptoms but has not yet completed isolation.**

**What care is required upon discharge?** Provide care in isolation.

- Resident does not leave room (including for meals) for 14 days after onset of symptoms or positive test.
- Staff wear protective equipment & place in clinical waste after use.

**What care is required upon first sign of symptoms?** N/A.

If the person tests positive or they develop symptoms, then please follow the guidance for care homes [here](#). Specific guidance on the use of PPE in domiciliary care can be found [here](#) and in care homes [here](#).

Some service users are finding the current restrictions hard to understand. Do you have any guidance around Mental Capacity during this period?

Please find government guidance for caring for adults who lack the relevant mental health capacity [here](#).

If there is any reason to believe that the person may lack capacity for any aspect of agreeing to their care and support arrangements, including the need to self-isolate, social distancing or shielding then a Mental Capacity Assessment (MCA) should be undertaken and recorded. Please note, there should always be a presumption of capacity unless there is a reason to suspect this is not the case. If the MCA indicates that the person lacks capacity to make the decision, then a best interest decision should also be made, and the recording should capture the views of all key family and professionals. This should suffice in terms of action taken to keep people safe, during the pandemic. However, in some circumstances, additional legal protection may be required:

- In residential, nursing homes and hospitals, if the person is deemed to lack capacity then an application should be made to the for a standard authorisation to the DOLS team via [dols@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:dols@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk).
- In the community, depending on the nature of the applied restrictions, a discussion should take place with the commissioner of the care arrangements on whether further action needs to be taken.

Where the person has capacity and poses a serious risk to others (displaying symptoms and interacting closely with others or behaving in a dangerous manner such as spitting) then the Police or Health Protection Team should be contacted. Your local Health Protection Team can be found using this [link](#).

For others who have capacity and present a low risk to others, we would advise a conversation with the individual and using accessible information resources. Please find easy to read Mencap information [here](#).

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

When do we need to use PPE?

Each service should have its own infection control procedures. Please ensure you are fully up to date on government advice on PPE [here](#), specifically in domiciliary care [here](#) and in care homes [here](#).

What support will you give us in obtaining PPE?

If you are an organisation who is commissioned by Wandsworth Council/ Richmond Council to provide services on our behalf, or you work in partnership with the Council on the COVID19 response,

or you are a care provider in the borough providing services which need PPE to borough residents, we aim to support you in sourcing PPE when you are in emergency need (supplies of 3 days or less).

The Council is not a supplier itself of PPE and we do not hold any relationships with suppliers to secure PPE for you. Please note: it is expected that you have undertaken step 1 under the 'Accessing PPE Supplies' section below before approaching the Council for support.

## **Accessing PPE supplies**

### **1. Normal supply chain and other wholesalers**

You must try to obtain your PPE from your usual supplier or wholesaler in the first instance. A list of additional suppliers as listed by the Government that you can try is also provided here. Organisations are expected to undertake their own due diligence before using any suppliers not known to them.

### **2. Contact the local authority**

If all the above suppliers are unable to help and you need an emergency supply of equipment, please send an email to us at [ascphppe@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:ascphppe@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) with the following information:

- Confirmation that you have approached your normal suppliers and the 7 Government wholesalers
- Let us know the date you put an order in through your normal channels, for what items and quantities, and estimated delivery date
- Please ensure you include the following information in your email request for emergency supplies:
  - Provider Name / Service name
  - Delivery Address
  - Contact Name and job role
  - Contact Phone Number
  - Contact Email Address
  - Quantities of the PPE items required to last you for one week only: gloves (indicate size – small, medium, large), Type IIR masks, disposable aprons, hand sanitiser (NB quantity varies each week depending on availability, e.g. 60 ml, 100 ml, 500 ml, 5 l.)

We will then screen your request and may contact you for further information. We endeavour to supply PPE to meet urgent critical need through various routes, with a referral to the local resilience forum (LRF) being one of these.

NB: The LRF is focused on fulfilment of emergency and immediate requests, where PPE is required in under 72 hours. Please note the LRF do not have access to the full lines of stock held at other large wholesalers or distributors. Through this we aim to provide you with a weeks worth of PPE, but please note that delivery will be with whatever items can be fulfilled, as this is dependent upon stocks made available to the London region. Raising a request does not guarantee that it can be resolved immediately.

PPE can be collected from Council collection points by appointment:

- Frogmore (Wandsworth)
- Richmond Civic Centre (Twickenham)

The Council may be able to deliver to some services in exceptional circumstances.

Do continue to complete the London ADASS Market Insight Tool with your PPE stock levels during this time.

### **3. South West London Mutual Aid**

If steps 1 and 2 are not successful, please submit a request for SWL Mutual Aid: <http://swlpp.uk/>. Information on this is in the attached documents.

#### 4. National Supply Disruption Response

Providers who have an urgent requirement for PPE, which they are unable to secure through any of the steps above should contact the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR) via the helpline: **0800 915 9964\***

\*this number is serviced 24 hours a day 7 days a week and is a freephone number in the UK.

#### Can you provide essential products, such as hand sanitiser and paper towels?

The shortage of some products is a national issue and what we can do at a local level is limited. We are raising this issue at the Councils' Emergency Planning Meetings.

#### What PPE should care staff be using when visiting clients in their own home?

Public Health England has published guidance on the use of PPE in home care services [here](#).

This guidance advises that a facemask is always used when providing care, even when the care worker is not within two metres of the service user or the service user does not have symptoms. Other PPE, such as eye protection, aprons, gloves are dependent on the task you are completing. Please see the table on page 4 of the guidance, available [here](#), on what PPE is required for different tasks. Please remember that PPE is only effective when used in combination with [hand hygiene](#) and respiratory hygiene and standard infection control procedures.

### Testing

#### What testing is available for care staff?

Testing arrangements are moving fast and can be confusing. Full up-to-date information on the testing arrangements, how they can be accessed, and how essential workers can self-refer, can be found by clicking this [link](#).

Care homes will receive information on testing their residents directly from CQC. If there is any additional information the Council can supply, we will post it here.

### Expectations of providers

#### What are the Council's expectations of all providers?

We expect all providers to:

- Enact and then regularly review their business continuity plan, identifying issues, risks and implementing mitigations.
- Ensure they are compliant with the recommended infection control measures and follow their organisational plan for this.
- Risk assess each service user on an individual basis and regularly update those assessments to respond to changes.
- Prioritise the most vulnerable people and most essential services.
- Contact the Access Team on 020 8891 7971 (Richmond) or 020 8871 7707 (Wandsworth) if an individual service user needs a temporary change in the support provided.
- Work with us to seek alternative solutions where there is difficulty in providing necessary support to a service user.

We also encourage providers to communicate with each other and to share resources where necessary as the situation develops. We recognise that some administrative or non-essential functions within provider organisations may be delayed.

## Care Homes

### How should residential and nursing care providers respond to the crisis?

Public Health England guidance for care homes has been published. All providers in Richmond and Wandsworth are asked to familiarise themselves with this guidance and check regularly for updates. There is specific guidance on the use of PPE in care homes [here](#).

## Home Care

### How should domiciliary, home care and extra care providers respond to the crisis?

Public Health England guidance on home care provision has been published [here](#). All providers in Richmond and Wandsworth are asked to familiarise themselves with this guidance and check regularly for updates. There is specific guidance on the use of PPE in home care services [here](#).

## Day Care

### How should day care providers respond to the crisis?

We understand that most day centres have closed to protect service users and staff. We appreciate that you all strive to support vulnerable people during the crisis in the best possible way and may be seeking alternative arrangements to support service users.

We would encourage all day care providers to discuss with us their proposals for alternative arrangements and would expect them to:

- Prioritise the most vulnerable people and most essential services.
- Risk assess each service user on an individual basis. Please contact the Council's commissioning team who will provide you with a template to be completed. This should highlight recommendations if more homecare provision is needed on a temporary basis. The RAG template should be emailed to the Access Team and Commissioning Team at the same time on [access@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:access@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) and [ASCommissioning@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:ASCommissioning@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk)
- Undertake risk assessments before community outreach activities take place.

If a day service is considering any form of service suspension, please contact the Quality Assurance and Contract Monitoring Team immediately at [QualityAssurance@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:QualityAssurance@richmond.gov.uk) (Richmond) or [QualityAssurance@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:QualityAssurance@wandsworth.gov.uk) (Wandsworth). If a service closes, we will be asking the provider to redirect all available staff to the care of people in the community following a discussion with Quality Assurance and Contract Monitoring Team.

Day centres are not registered with the CQC as this is not a regulated service, and they may now choose to provide services to people in their own homes, however they must not directly provide personal care, for example toileting, bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, etc. Risk assessments should be completed for the home visits, provider is satisfied they are able to minimise the risk to the individual of COVID19 and appropriate PPE should be worn. Any support delivered in the home should be on the basis of a best interest decision.

We would expect all providers who are still operating day centre services to:

- Ensure they are compliant with the recommended infection control measures and follow their organisational plan for this.
- Risk assess each service user on an individual basis and regularly update those assessments to respond to changes.
- Contact the Access Team if there are any safeguarding concerns

Public Health England guidance on social care settings has been published [here](#).

### Should new referrals and trial days be postponed?

For older people services, referrals and trial days should be postponed and the Council will work with the care provider on any changes to this as the current circumstances evolve.

For learning disability services, please contact the Commissioning Manager to discuss your individual service and arrangements.

## Supported Living and Housing Support

### Should evictions occur in Supported Living and HSPS services?

All providers should be avoiding evictions at this time, unless it is for anti-social behaviour or the person is a danger to the project.

### Can Supported Living and HSPS providers move service users who require 24-hour care to better resourced schemes?

This is allowed as a temporary measure, with the agreement of the service user who retains a tenancy for the property they will vacate. This will be undertaken on a case by case basis with the respective social worker, service user, advocate and medical advisor. It will be agreed for a set timeframe. Furthermore, a written record of the planned move must be provided to the commissioning lead on the contract. If additional funding is required as a result of the move, this must be requested prior to, or as soon as possible after the move.

The above will also be applicable for service users who require transfers between supported living schemes.

During any move between commissioned schemes, actions must be taken to minimise the risk of infection whilst maintaining care arrangements. Please follow government guidance on infection control [here](#).

## Staff Recruitment and Support

### Are social care staff key workers?

All those working in frontline social care roles or supporting the work of home care, care home or day care services are considered key workers. The government has clarified who is a key worker and the information can be found [here](#). There is currently no register of key workers in either borough.

### What is the council position on DBS checks during this crisis?

During this period, we are allowing some flexibility for providers in hiring and deploying staff, for example by allowing staff to be deployed across different care settings or between care providers. This is in accordance with the Local Government Association Guidance on Social care provider resilience during Covid-19 ([here](#)) and the Disclosure and Barring Service checks guidance from the Care Quality Commission ([here](#)).

The DBS Update service allows for individuals to take their DBS certificate from one job to the next. We would expect employers to check a DBS certificate status online in line with DBS requirements of being legally entitled to carry out a check and have the worker's permission. Please see the DBS Update service website for information on this [here](#).

### If public transport is suspended, can we obtain parking permits?

Residents or those who are providing vital care, support or services to help during the Coronavirus pandemic can apply for a parking dispensation by emailing: [parking@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:parking@wandsworth.gov.uk) (Wandsworth) or [parking@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:parking@richmond.gov.uk) (Richmond). Care workers should send their request providing vehicle make, colour and registration from a work email address and proof of employment for example, photo of their staff identification.



### Can the Council help care staff to access priority shopping?

After considerable discussions with supermarkets, the councils will not be producing badges or letters that will support care workers or unpaid carers to access designated shopping times. This is because the social distancing guidance is putting considerable demand on these designated hours and the supermarkets cannot safely accommodate more footfall. However, some stores are recognising letters from employers or the Carers Centre.

Both councils are working with smaller grocers to develop click and collect services. Please see the list of businesses involved in each borough on the main site page. Many have systems in place to allow shopping to be picked up by a third party.

### Have supermarkets been contacted to remind them that social care staff are key workers?

Yes, the Council and others have lobbied supermarkets on this issue.

## Direct Payments

### What should happen if a PA is required to self-isolate?

Current guidance for direct payment users and PAs can be found [here](#). If a service user is at risk due to their PA being unable to support them, contingency plans should be mobilised. Contact the Access Team on 020 8891 7971 (Richmond) or 020 8871 7707 (Wandsworth) should assistance be required with alternative arrangements.

### If an employer is self-isolating should they continue to pay their PA?

Yes, a key priority is to ensure continuity of care and to ensure PAs have the necessary income so that they do not leave their job at this critical time. The Council will continue to pay the direct payment (DP) to the service user/PA employer. This will ensure that they are able to pay for all the PA's salary.

Official guidance issued by the government states: Where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion – and correspondingly not furlough them. This also applies to non-public sector employers who receive public funding for staff costs. This can be found at [here](#). Further advice can be found in the FAQs at [here](#).

If the person in receipt of the direct payment has any concerns, they should contact the Access Team on 020 8891 7971 (Richmond) or 020 8871 7707 (Wandsworth).

## Community and Voluntary Support

### Do you welcome mutual support arrangements between providers to meet the needs of vulnerable residents?

Mutual support is key to protect the most vulnerable residents. Several of you have contacted us about working in partnership with other providers and delivering additional services, particularly closed day centres with staff available. We would like to say thank you for your dedication to keeping the vulnerable residents of Richmond and Wandsworth safe.

Actions to contribute to partnership working include:

- Firstly, contact your service users and make sure they are getting the support they need.
- Secondly, work with other providers to help relieve the burden on their staff where possible. If you do not have links with other providers, please contact your commissioner who will explore opportunities around mutual support.
- Thirdly, we are coordinating support to our most vulnerable residents by working closely with local voluntary organisations. If you have resources available which you are unable to fully



use, please notify your commissioner and we will review whether these can be linked into the wider community response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Please find further advice from the government [here](#).

Please also remember that for all visits, follow general hand hygiene and advice (NHS Dos and Don'ts) to stop the infection spreading: [here](#).

### How we can access local volunteer networks?

We continue to work through our main community and voluntary sector coordination services in both boroughs:

- Richmond Community and Voluntary Sector (RCVS) – [action@richmondcvs.org.uk](mailto:action@richmondcvs.org.uk) or 020 8843 7945
- Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Coordination Service - [julie@wandcareall.org.uk](mailto:julie@wandcareall.org.uk) or 020 8516 7768

### What help is available to support service users with essential shopping?

- In Richmond, volunteer support with food shopping is being coordinated through Richmond Community Independent Living Services (CILS). Please contact them on [advice@richmondaid.org.uk](mailto:advice@richmondaid.org.uk) or call on 020 8831 6464.
- In Wandsworth, residents can be referred for volunteer support with food shopping via the Councils' Community Hub by calling 020 8871 6555.

Priority will be given to people who do not have any support, so if you would normally do shopping on behalf of service users, we would ask you to continue with this if possible. Supermarket stock levels are returning to normal and item restrictions are being relaxed, although access to online shopping is still difficult and the queuing systems mean that shopping times will be longer than usual.

Alternatively, community-based organisations are able to register for the Good Sam app through which you can match vulnerable residents with an NHS Volunteer directly. Click [here](#) for guidance on registration before using the referral form which can be accessed [here](#).

A number of local shops are also offering click and collect options. Please see the list of businesses involved in each borough on the main site page.

## Unpaid Carers

### What support is available for unpaid carers if they are unable to complete caring duties while ill or self-isolating?

Current guidance for social, community and residential care providers from Public Health England has been published [here](#). We recommend that any guidance given to carers is taken from this document and they are asked to familiarise themselves.

Should a carer be unable to continue with their caring role, either through self-isolation or illness, they should immediately contact the Access Team on 020 8891 7971 (Richmond) or 020 8871 7707 (Wandsworth). Due to anticipated high demand for support and limited capacity, priority will be given based on the availability of family members or friends who may be able to assist on a temporary basis.

## Finance

For detailed information on financial support for providers and how to apply please consult the specific site for Richmond [here](#) and Wandsworth [here](#).

### Is there any emergency funding available?

Any funds made available to the Councils will be used to support our pandemic response. Each situation will need to be considered on a case by case basis, given the diversity of providers and services. Richmond and Wandsworth Councils recognise the financial and cash flow issues, so please find further information on the webpages linked above on how to apply for funding.

### Are there grants available for the voluntary and community organisations?

Information on grant funding for organisations involved in Covid-19 response is available on the council websites for [Richmond](#) and [Wandsworth](#) and is being updated regularly.

### If services and support are now online or via telephone, should payments change?

Payments should continue as normal, as we encourage all providers to work with us to seek alternative solutions. We understand that it is very challenging to provide the necessary services as usual, however each provider should have business continuity arrangements. We expect these to be implemented and reviewed regularly.

### Will invoices be paid?

Please send invoices electronically and avoid sending hard copies. This will ensure that invoices are paid as quickly as possible. The invoices should distinguish between business as usual and amounts related to the impact of COVID 19. We are looking at ways of accelerating payments and avoiding unnecessary delays.

### If a service user cancels their care because of the virus, will you pay us?

This will be managed under the terms of the service specification and contract terms and conditions.

### What happens if our costs increase, can we increase charges?

We will consider requests for support due to increased costs associated with Covid-19. This is detailed on the council websites for [Wandsworth](#) or [Richmond](#).

Please do not unilaterally increase the value of invoices, as this will result in disputes and delayed payments. We will also adhere to PPN 02/20, which offers council suppliers protection against loss of income where there is reduced activity attributable to Covid-19. Once the crisis has passed, we will require full reconciliation and providers should provide the evidence for their increased costs.

### Can any adjustments be made to the payment process?

We are looking at ways of accelerating payments to avoid delays. We are aiming to operate business as usual when it comes to payments. Please send all invoices electronically.

### Will client contribution be applied for clients not attending services?

We will not apply client contribution for those not attending services. However, if the client attends multiple services and are unable to attend one of these, client contribution will still be applied to the services they are attending.

### Can the client contribution increase planned for April be delayed?

The contribution uplifts for all our service users will go ahead as planned for the beginning of April 2020. Letters from the Financial Assessment Team will be sent out notifying service users of increased contribution levels. We appreciate that visits may not be possible, however, standing order uplifts that can be done electronically should be.

### Can the Council help with Statutory Sick Pay costs related to Covid-19 and in excess of 14 days?

Each request for increased costs will be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of the evidence supplied by providers.

### Will annual charge rates for domiciliary care services increase?

Any increase in the hourly rate for domiciliary care services will be outlined in the service contract.

Are there any emergency funds available to increase personal budgets if a client requires emergency care?

Any requests for additional funds are being considered on a case by case basis. Please contact your social work team who will be able to help you with this process. All social work teams are focusing efforts on ensuring efficient contingency plans are in place.

Can a Shared Lives carer access additional funding if they are self-isolating with the person they support?

Shared Lives carers are requested to keep a record of any additional support hours that they have provided. For example, as a result of day centre closures. The councils will consider these requests on a case by case basis, provided there is evidence.