

18 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Home Care, Supported Living and Independent Living Financial Support

It looks increasingly likely that Covid 19 will place significant strain on the health and social care system over the coming weeks. We realise that you are likely to experience increased staff absences during the outbreak due to illness, self-isolation and caring responsibilities, at precisely the time when the challenge presented by the virus will be at its height. We want to pre-empt this by providing substantial and urgent financial support and empower you to make the right decisions for your staff, service users and other vulnerable residents of Essex. We have therefore taken unprecedented urgent action under the County Council's constitution to enable us to do this.

ECC will be making the following key adjustments to our commercial arrangements with you:

1. ECC will pay for total commissioned hours at an organisational level but will enable actual care hours delivered to flex down by up to 25% (actual delivered hours of care being no less than 75% of that commissioned). This will be implemented without financial penalty. This tolerance is on the premise that all service users under the charge of the Care Provider are safe and appropriately cared for.
2. ECC will pay for up to an additional 25% contact time for each service user without the requirement to obtain upfront approval. ECC will empower care providers to take a risk-based decision for each service user during this period and can do so without the need to complete and receive authority upfront.
3. ECC encourages mutual co-operation and collaboration between care providers, the voluntary sector, individuals and other organisations to ensure our most vulnerable residents as safe and appropriately cared for. Any commercial or other considerations need to be agreed between those organisations collaborating or through normal subcontracting arrangements. We do not require prior approval for any subcontracting or mutual aid arrangements but expect providers to be sighted on and agree to the principles laid out in our Mutual Aid Approach document.
4. Any requests for relaxation of points 1 and 2 above over and above 25% tolerance level will need to be considered on a case by case basis and will require written approval.
5. Reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be relaxed.

6. We will ensure you have secure cash flow during the coming months and are not financially disadvantaged by staff absenteeism or from being flexible about care delivery. If for whatever reason, you are unable to submit your invoices in a timely manner, please notify us and we will calculate your previous 3 months invoicing cycle in order to make an emergency payment to you, thus supporting your cash flow position. We would also like to reassure you that all our systems are electronic and can be accessed remotely by our staff and providers.
7. We will of course provide further payment quickly where you are able to take on extra care packages over and above your current case load, as per your current terms and conditions.

At the present time, these interim arrangements will be in place for up to four months. They will be reviewed and amended as appropriate during the four month period, and should we need to consider further arrangements for Providers beyond this time period, we will do so and communicate the details of this to you at the earliest opportunity.

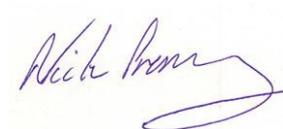
If despite the above, your organisation is still experiencing difficulties, please email providerresilience@essex.gov.uk

We hope in making these changes to our commercial arrangements that this will give you the security and flexibility to support the needs of as many people as possible, whilst not being financially disadvantaged by the need for people to self-isolate appropriately.

We will shortly share our Mutual Aid Approach document and Frequently Asked Questions document, which will provide further details on the commercial aspects and include expectations about financial record keeping in during this period.

I hope this provides you with the reassurance that we will do everything in our power to support you during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely



Nick Presmeg
Executive Director for Adult Social Care

Please Reply to: providerresilience@essex.gov.uk
Internet: www.essex.gov.uk