

**Carer Briefing – 28.04.20**

**Introduction**

It has been a few weeks since we last sent out a briefing to you to share with you what’s happening in the organisation.

It would be fair to say it has been a very busy few weeks as there are large volumes of information coming through from the Government on a daily basis that we are working our way through and reviewing to ensure that we are actioning what we need to do and making sure we are following the most up to date and relevant information.

**General update**

As many of you will know we have suspended Skills group day service and also significantly reduced our delivery of 121 support in the Localities. We are delivering about 40 hours a week of 121 support, having liaised with the local authority to reach an agreement as to why certain support should be continued during this time.

Most of our service users are self-isolating, as very many of them fall into the vulnerable group and we are making welfare calls to them, prioritising those that live alone or with parents and carers. The purpose of these calls is for us to keep in touch with people at a time, which by the very definition will be isolating for individuals and families.

The calls are also enabling us to discuss any concerns or worries people may have and ensure that people are coping. Where we are picking up that people are struggling, we are sharing that information with Social Care and we will discuss with them how best we can help.

**Cheddle Lodge**

There has also been a lot of media attention focusing on Care Homes and the impact of Covid-19 over the last few weeks. Because of this further guidance has been issues by Public Health England for Care homes, regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the steps to be taken should there be an outbreak of Covid – 19 in the home.

Because of this, staff at Cheddle Lodge are now wearing masks for the duration of their shift as well as the normal PPE such as aprons and gloves when supporting the people living there. Cheddle is also being supported by the Team leaders and DSOs from Skills and the Fast Response team and Locality managers normally based at Meridian House. This is working well and has ensured that we have additional staff resources we can pull on quickly if we need to cover shifts etc.

We know this is a difficult time for the families of the people living at Cheddle Lodge, as you haven’t been able to call to see your family member since the service went into self-isolation on the 13.03.20. We are making use of Skype, emails and WhatsApp to keep in touch and to reassure you about your loved one but equally do not hesitate to contact Cheddle lodge directly at any time.

**Testing for Covid-19**

At the Government briefing on 23.04.20, further information was provided in relation to the testing off essential workers, which would include staff within Supportability. The information provided by the Government as of the 23.04.20 was;

* The biggest widening of access to coronavirus testing made possible due to substantially increased testing capacity
* Essential workers with coronavirus symptoms can get tested, helping them return to work if the test is negative
* Broad range of testing methods being rolled-out to increase accessibility, including home testing kits, mobile testing sites and satellite testing kits
* New campaign to provide clear information for essential workers on how to get a test

All [essential workers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) in England, and members of their households, who are showing symptoms of coronavirus (within the first 3 days of symptoms) will be able to get tested. This will mean individuals and people they live with, will have the reassurance of knowing whether their symptoms are caused by Coronavirus and can decide whether they are well enough to return to work.

Supportability have provided an information sheet to all staff within the organisation providing information as to how they can access testing should they or a member of their household have symptoms of the Coronavirus.

As was to be expected, there has been a surge of people/organisations trying to access the registration service for testing since this went live on Friday last week and as you may have heard in the media, the system has been suspended throughout periods of the day over the weekend.

Having access to testing will be a real help and support to staff and their household in terms of being able to access early testing if showing signs and symptoms, offering some reassurance to them and their household re their health and wellbeing. It is also expected that testing will be extended further to include people living in care homes, which again is to be welcomed, although there is no indication of when this is likely to be currently.

**And finally……**

Our aim is to maintain regular contact with you during this time. If you have any questions, worries or concerns about your service from us then please do not hesitate to get in touch via our On call number which is 07976 704535. Our on call will be happy to signpost your call to the most appropriate person within the organisation.

We want to ensure that we are supporting you, our service users and our staff, during this unique period by providing relevant information about what’s happening within the organisation and the wider impact of Government directives and decisions. We would again like to thank you all for your continued support to the organisation - it is very much appreciated as always.

Senior Leadership Team

Supportability