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|  | Adult Social Care  Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust,  Stott Lane,  Salford  M6 8HD  Telephone:0161 631 4777  E-mail:social.services@salford.gov.uk |

We hope that you are keeping safe and well during these difficult times. This letter is being sent out to everyone who receives a direct payment. As the Covid pandemic continues, we realise that this can bring challenge and uncertainty, this letter gives some updates and also clarifies how to contact us if you require any information, guidance or support. Most of the information is for everyone who receives a direct payment, however there are updates specifically for those that employ their own Personal Assistants (PA’s)

## Flexibility

We have built greater levels of flexibility into our direct payments process to ensure that you continue to receive the care and support you need and keep safe. For example, you are now able to employ a family member who lives with you to be your Personal Assistant (PA) if this reduces risk of infection or is a better solution for you because your usual PA is unwell or self-isolating. You are also able to use your direct payment more flexibly to meet your outcomes if restrictions due to the pandemic are preventing you from doing your usual activities. Please contact us if you wish to discuss other options for using your direct payment. It is important that you always keep receipts to show how the money has been spent.

The government website has more guidance on direct payments during the Covid pandemic and gives more examples of how you may be able to use your direct payment differently during this period.

[**www.gov.uk/coronavirus**](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) and search for **direct payments**. **Improvements to our direct payments**

**Have your say and help make improvements to DP’s in Salford**

Following an engagement event in March 2019 to hear your views on how we could improve our direct payments, we have made some changes to our policy, for example how self-employed PAs can be used and more flexibility about how you choose to manage your account. We would like to update you on the changes and hear your feedback. We will be posting an update on the Salford Council website in December, which will also explain how to feedback your thoughts on what we are doing.

If you would like to contribute to shaping direct payments in Salford please let us know using the ASC Contact Centre details at the bottom of this letter. We are going to be co-producing a guide for DP recipients during the pandemic. There will be further opportunities to share your views on all aspects of DP’s in Salford so please do let us know if you would like to be involved or would like us to contact you directly about future developments.

## Employing your PAs while they are sick or self-isolating

We will continue to make direct payments to you at the usual value throughout this period. If you receive less care as a result of Covid-19, we will not lower the amount paid to you. This includes any reduction in care because your PAs have been off sick or unable to get to you.

In return for the consistent payments we can provide to you, we would ask that you continue to make payments to your PAs as you usually do, even if they have provided less support to you. This should help to ensure that your care is not disrupted in the longer term and allow you to retain your current arrangements.

We ask that if your PA is eligible to receive support from central government sources such as Statutory Sick Pay, The Coronavirus Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme if shielding or the Self Isolation Grant, these options are used in the first instance. Any money received through these schemes and benefits should be deducted from any additional expenses that are claimed.

We have extended this arrangement to run until **31st March 2021**.

## Key worker status for all PAs

All personal care assistants are considered key workers. This means they’re eligible for things like care for their children at local schools, and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed that PAs are key workers, no matter what tier a local area is in. This means that PAs can continue to deliver care in your home and are encouraged to do so providing they can do it safely (with PPE and other infection control measures).

## Employing your own PAs – Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Your safety, and those who provide care and support to you, is vital. We want to ensure that all direct payment recipients in Salford employing PAs have access to the appropriate PPE and testing for those who provide care and support for you.

You and your PA can read about staying safe and using PPE correctly at the government’s PPE Hub.

Go to **www.gov.uk** and search for **personal protective equipment hub**, where you will find:

* PPE use for non-aerosol generating procedures
* Illustrated guide for community and social care settings

Go to **www.gov.uk** and search for **how to work safely in domiciliary care** for more information.

If you do not have internet access, we will arrange for you to receive a paper copy of the information.

### Access to PPE

If you have a supplier for PPE then you should order your PPE using this supplier.

If you are running out of PPE for your PAs and are unable to get more supplies, the council’s infection control team may be able to provide some until you can get more. You can contact them through the adult social care contact team (please see contact number below).

For those of you who are receiving PPE from infection control a social worker will be making contact with you to review how you are managing with the PPE you are being provided with.

We can reimburse you for the cost of extra PPE that you are using because of Covid-19. Please keep your receipts and complete the attached form. You can either email the completed form to [**SCO.Covid-19-Finance@srft.nhs.uk**](mailto:SCO.Covid-19-Finance@srft.nhs.uk) or post it to

Matthew Greene, Finance Department  
Turnpike House, 631 Eccles New Road, Salford M50 1SY

Please make sure to include your receipts.

Providing you with additional PPE does not change the employment situation of your PA, with you remaining the employer.

**Disposing of used PPE**

It’s essential that PPE that has come into contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms is stored securely within rubbish bags that can be thrown away. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept away from other waste.

The bag should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.

Waste that has not come into contact with anyone that has COVID-19 symptoms can be disposed of normally.

### Covid testing for Personal Assistants

All direct payment holders can self-refer for testing if they’re displaying symptoms. You can do this through the government website:

[**https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test**](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

If you or your PA believes that they have symptoms of Covid-19, then you should follow the government guidance around isolation. This will also affect any members of your household or your PA’s household. If any member of the household, visitors, staff or staff family members displays symptoms, **please contact 0800 952 1000** to notify the council, gain information on referral for testing, and to liaise regarding the results. A call back will be arranged to discuss with public health about suspected case(s).

**The test should be within three days of symptoms and must be no more than five days after the person developed symptoms.**

### Health checks for PAs

Salford City Council’s Health Improvement Service are offering free health checks for PAs. Available at either Pendleton or Eccles Gateway, these 20 minutes checks provide your PA with a personalised ‘health MOT’. Members of the Health Improvement Service are on hand to offer further advice and support. The health check are by appointment only by calling 0800 952 1000 and select option 2. Please do pass this information on to your PAs.

## Developing a contingency plan

We recommend that everybody with a direct payment has a contingency plan, to ensure their needs can continue to be met if their support is at risk of breaking down because of COVID-19. There is a template on the government website that you can use. Penderels also have information on contingency plans on their website and .can support you with your contingency planning.

Please see the government website for the contingency plan template:

**www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments**

## Other support available to you in Salford

### Spirit of Salford Helpline and useful information

Lots of organisations and people in Salford are pulling together to help and have set up a Spirit of Salford helpline.

If you have questions or worries about

* Food shopping.
* Getting essential medication.
* Getting fuel (if you are on a pre-paid meter for gas or electric).
* Looking after pets. and how you will manage, please call

0800 952 1000, Monday to Friday 8.30am - 6.00pm or [**www.salford.gov.uk/spiritofsalford**](http://www.salford.gov.uk/spiritofsalford)

### Domestic abuse and keeping safe

Domestic abuse is more than physical violence. It can include, but is not limited to: coercive control and ‘gaslighting’, economic abuse, online abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse.

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call 99955. This will transfer your call to the relevant police force who will assist you without you having to speak.

### National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Call for free 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

### Keeping safe

If you’re not sure about an offer of help during these times, ask the person to leave details and talk to someone you trust about it. Don’t give out bank details or PIN numbers. Don’t invite volunteers into your home or offer payment in cash or goods. If the situation feels wrong or it seems too good to be true, stop and think about it.

If you are worried that someone is trying to take advantage call Salford’s Adult Social Care service on 0161 631 4777 or email [worriedaboutanadult@salford.gov.uk](mailto:worriedaboutanadult@salford.gov.uk)

* Adult social care contact team: [social.services@salford.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@salford.gov.uk); 0161 631 4777
* Penderels Trust: www.penderelstrust.org.uk; [salford@penderelstrust.org.uk](mailto:salford@penderelstrust.org.uk); 0161 743 3592
* COVID-19 Testing: covid19.testing@salford.gov.uk; 0161 793 3585
* Skills for Care: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk) (search for information hub)
* www.gov.uk and search covid social care guidance

Yours sincerely



Cath Gormally

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| **PPE Costs for People Using Direct Payment** | | | | | | | | |  | |
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|  |  | | **Name of Person Completing form:** | |  | | | |  | |
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|  |  | | **Email contact details:** | |  | | | |  | |
|  |  | | **Telephone** | |  | | | |  | |
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| **Payee Name:** | | **Address 1** | | **Address 2** | | **Address 3** | | **Address 4** | | **Postcode** |
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|  | **Bank Account Details** | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | **Sort Code** | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | **Bank Account** | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| **Date Purchased** | **Supplier** | | **Type of PPE (E.G. Masks, Gloves, Gowns etc.)** | | **Quantity Purchased (Number of Units)** | | **Total Cost (For all Units)** | | **Invoice Number / Purchase Order Number / Quote Reference** | |
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