



COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

COVID-19 QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

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Community Support Services

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES **INCLUDING REPORTING**

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Specific Policies and Procedures have been implemented and updated regularly as information has changed throughout the pandemic.

These include:

- **Covid-19 Policy**

This policy provides employees with important information about the Covid-19 outbreak. It explains the vital steps Community Support Services have taken to support employees and the individuals supported.

- **PPE Policy**

This policy provides employees with the most recent important information around the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the Covid-19 outbreak and explains the vital steps Community Support Services have taken to protect employees, people who use our service, their family members, and visitors.

- **Covid-19 Testing Policy**

This policy provides employees and the people who use our service with clear instructions and guidelines of how to complete Covid-19 tests.

- **Essential Nail Care Guidelines**

This policy was introduced to enable staff to support people who use our service to continue with nail care when close contact beauty / podiatry services had to close.

Illustrative guidelines and posters have been distributed throughout the company for employees and the people using our service regarding what and when to wear PPE along with hand washing technique posters and any relevant informative posters issued by Public Health England.

Easy read documents and posters for the people who use our service where applicable have also been made available.

REPORTING

Community Support Services continue to submit daily figures on the NHS capacity tracker regarding Covid-19. We report how many domiciliary individuals who use our service have a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19.

We also report how many employees are unable to attend work due to Covid-19.

The daily reports also include staff numbers of first, second, booster and flu vaccinations.

Information booklets and posters continue to be ordered from Public Health England to promote ongoing campaigns, and these are sent out to Supported Living houses and distributed throughout the company buildings.

From information gathered so far for Winter 2021/2 28 employees and 20 people who use our service opted to have the flu vaccination.

111 staff have received their Covid-19 first vaccination, 105 second vaccination and 62 booster vaccinations.

Since testing commenced in May 2020 and up to January 2022 26 individuals who use our service and 57 employees from a workforce of 122 have tested positive for Covid-19.

This illustrates, despite the high transmission rates within the country and peak periods we have continued to keep our workforce and the people we support safe with robust policies and procedures and infection prevention control measures.

This information is gathered from databases that have been created for the purpose of the reporting. This information has also been used to supply information to the wages department to enable staff to receive Covid-19 sick pay.

When Community Support Services engaged with the national testing programme in November 2020 to complete a one-off round of testing this data is also included.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk Assessments have been implemented and updated regularly as information has changed and new situations arise throughout the pandemic. These include:

- **Employee Risk Assessments**

- 1) *Identify Covid-19 risk levels to employees with under-lying health conditions.*
- 2) *Identify the risk of Covid-19 exposure and bringing it into the workplace.
Where employees were identified as medium to high-risk individuals, risk reduction plans were implemented.*
- 3) *Return to work after an isolation period or after a 12-week isolation (Shielding) period to assess and manage risks.*
- 4) *Individual PPE risk assessment for those employees identified with a medical condition.*
- 5) *Individual return to work risk assessments for employees who have been Covid-19 positive, a close contact with a positive person and shortened isolation after a positive result.*

- **General Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments were implemented to highlight potential risks and the risk reductions measures put in place for:

- 1) *Offices*
- 2) *Premises*
- 3) *Reception*
- 4) *Training*
- 5) *Visitors*
- 6) *Christmas events*

- **Outreach**

RAG-rating (Red-Amber-Green) was undertaken and all, but essential Outreach services were postponed during the initial phase of the pandemic whilst strict lockdown rules were applied.

Where Outreach support continued for some individuals, a risk assessment was then implemented to keep people who use our service and employees safe.

- **Supported Living**

Risk assessments were implemented to highlight potential risks and the risk reductions measures put in place for:

- 1) Christmas visits*
- 2) Overnight visits*
- 3) Holidays*
- 4) Shopping*
- 5) Transport*
- 6) Visitors to the properties*

- **Day Services**

Risk assessments were implemented to highlight potential risks and the risk reductions measures put in place for:

- 1) Employees*
- 2) Individuals attending*
- 3) PPE*
- 4) Activity sessions*
- 5) Christmas events*

INFECTION CONTROL

- **Infection Control Grant**

To reduce infection rates a grant was received from the local authority. This enabled the following to be provided:

- 1) *PPE*
- 2) *Infra-red Thermometers*
- 3) *'Fogger' machines to disinfect the office, Day Services and Supported Living houses in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak*
- 4) *Employment of a dedicated Covid-19 Co-ordinator*
- 5) *Paperless IT system for the company (Bespoke Portal)*
- 6) *Additional IT support for employees working remotely*
- 7) *Laptops to enable office employees to work from home*
- 8) *Webcams for remote meetings to take place*
- 9) *Employee Uniform including wash bags to store the uniform in at the Supported Living houses where the employee works*
- 10) *Employee Bum Bags containing PPE for use in emergencies when supporting individuals in the community*
- 11) *Full income payments for employees in isolation*
- 12) *Employee taxis to reduce travelling on public transport*
- 13) *HD Tablets to enable Supported Living individuals to keep in touch with family and friends*
- 14) *Automatic hand sanitiser machines for Supported Living houses*
- 15) *Colour coded chopping boards for Supported Living houses*
- 16) *Washing powder for employee uniform to be washed at Supported Living houses*
- 17) *Isolation Gazebo if any individual presented Covid-19 symptoms whilst attending Day Services*
- 18) *Employees were paid for a period of undertaking regular lateral flow and PCR tests*

- **PPE**

At the start of the pandemic, Community Support Services immediately ordered and paid for PPE and fabric masks to be made for every employee. These were made due to a result of national shortages of appropriate PPE.

Following the introduction of free PPE supplied by the Government we have ensured stock levels are maintained, and PPE is ordered weekly through the NHS to provide maximum protection for employees and the people we support.

The PPE we hold is:

- Aprons
- CPR Masks
- Glasses (Protective)
- Gloves
- Gowns
- Hand Wash
- Headbands (For mask comfort)
- Masks
- Sanitiser
- Shields
- Shoe Covers
- Thermometers
- Visors

All employees who support the people who use our service were issued with a bum bag. This bum bag is for staff to carry containing emergency first aid PPE. Included in the bag is: Aprons x2, Emergency CPR Face Cover, Gloves x2 pair, Masks x2 & 100ml Santiser. When stock needs replenishing staff contact the office.

To reduce the risk of infection and the need for travel, a stock tracker has been created to monitor each Supported Living house's use of PPE monthly.

Every 4 weeks each house receives a delivery of PPE although they can contact the office for more stock if required e.g. If a tenant has a medical issue that requires the additional use of PPE this is factored into the distribution.

- **Day Services**

Our Day Service setting closed following guidance from the local authority in March 2020 through until July 2020 and then closed again in August 2020 and finally reopened in September 2020.

Risk Assessments were implemented and 'Bubbles' created so that the same individuals attended our Day Services on the same days.

Our employees wear PPE at all times whilst they are in the building and infection prevention control measures are continuously reviewed in line with Government guidance.

- **Outreach**

RAG-rating (Red-Amber-Green) was undertaken and all, but essential Outreach services were postponed during the initial pandemic.

Where Outreach support continued for some individuals, a risk assessment was implemented to keep people who use our service and employees safe and to reduce the risk of infection.

From 53 individuals who use our Outreach service, 13 remain inactive for Outreach support, due to the pandemic.

- **Supported Living**

All employees who work in the Supported Living houses follow the PPE guidelines when supporting individuals.

Employee rotas are produced to ensure the same staff work in the same houses where possible.

Information was supplied to the tenants to help them understand the Covid-19 rules including easy-read documents, posters etc.

Risk Assessments were put in place to keep the individuals safe and reduce the risk of infection.

COVID-19 TESTING AND VACCINATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND EMPLOYEES

- **National Testing**

In November 2020 Community Support Services took part in the National Testing Programme for Supported Living.

Seven properties were chosen and both tenants and employees who work within them were tested. Consent was obtained by all participants.

21 tenants and 31 employees were tested between 13th November and 1st December, all tested negative.

- **Weekly Testing**

Weekly Covid-19 testing for Community Support Service employees began on the 14th December 2020. With an imminent vaccination programme due this was an immense task to coordinate due to the number of employees involved.

To prepare for this a Testing and Vaccine Coordinator position was created, and the following were completed:

- Webinars attended
- Tracking register created to include information of employees, dates tested, and results received
- Four tests collected or delivered to employees which included an information pack containing an introductory letter explaining why the tests take place, step-by-step guidance, easy read guidance (Where required) and priority post box locations.
- Consent forms created and distributed for where employees need assistance registering tests online.

There are currently 117 employees testing weekly by means of a PCR test.

- **Vaccinations**

First vaccinations commenced on 9th January 2021, second vaccinations 23rd March 2021, and boosters 16th September 2021.

To date we now have the following employees vaccinated:

First vaccine - 111

Second vaccine - 105

Booster - 62

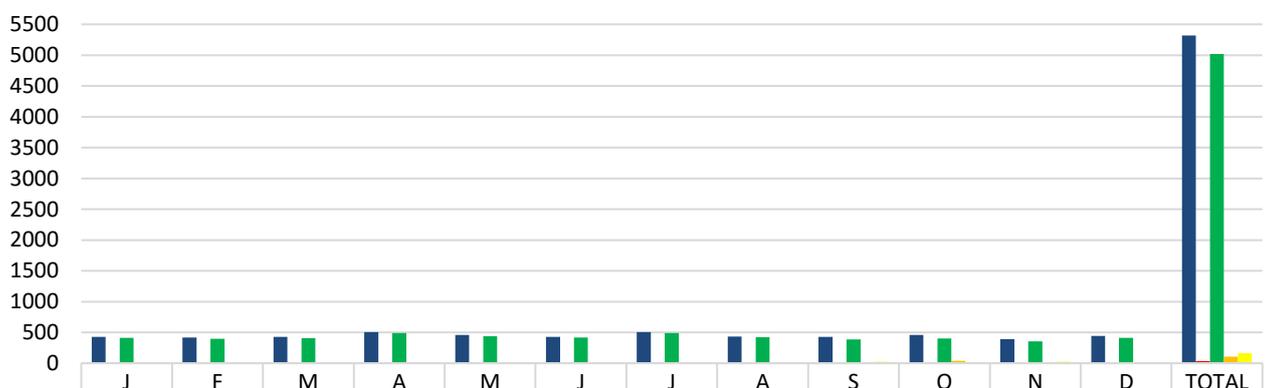
On 6 January 2022, the Government made new legislation, approved by Parliament, which amended the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Regulations”). This extends the scope of mandatory vaccination requirements for staff beyond registered care homes to health and wider social care settings in England. The vaccination as a condition of deployment includes front-line workers, as well as non-clinical workers not directly involved in care but who may have face to face contact with individuals who use the service. The VCOD regulations allow a grace period for compliance and the requirement will come into force on 1 April 2022.

When the information was first released in November 2021, Community Support Services initiated a managed process of engagement with staff who had declined the vaccination, this involved meeting with each of them and having a preliminary face to face conversation to explain the company position and offer further information relating to the Covid-19 vaccination which included the offer of a clinician to hold a Q&A session. Through these conversations we quickly identified a very small number of employees who had made the decision to not have the vaccination. These employees will remain in employment until 31st March 2022.

Given the changes in clinical evidence the government is revisiting the balance of risks and benefits that guided its original decisions to make coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination a condition of deployment. They are currently seeking public views on revoking provisions which require COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of deployment in health and social care settings.

This consultation ran from 12:45pm on 9 February to 11:45pm on 16th February 2022 and the final decision will be announced by the Government before the 1st April 2022. (Update 23.02.22)

CSS STAFF TESTED FOR COVID-19 AND RESULTS 2021



COMMUNICATION

- **Day Services**

At the start of the pandemic our Day Service led the way by arranging weekly Zoom calls with the local authority Contracts department along with other day service providers in the area to provide support and share information experience and good practice.

When Day Services closed, a Facebook group was created for individuals to keep in touch with each other.

FaceTime calls were made, and competitions held to keep people motivated and connected whilst shielding.

When able to do so, meet ups took place at the local moor with small groups of people who attend day services.

We continue to connect with people who are unable to attend Day Services via social media and attend Zoom calls with local authority and other Day Services in the area to ensure we are implementing the necessary protection measures.

- **ZOOM Team Meetings**

Team meetings took place daily and minutes taken between office staff when working from home at the beginning of the pandemic.

Supported Living House Managers whilst national restrictions were in place had weekly Zoom team meetings with minutes taken with Supported Living Managers.

A 'What's App' group was also created amongst the House Managers to keep each other updated. This continues to provide a source of communication.

The Registered Manager of the company continues to chair monthly Registered Care Manager meetings inviting various parties such as the I.P.C.T and M.C.A to take part and provide the latest up to date information.

The Registered Manager also keeps updated with fast changing information from the Skills for Care Facebook group.

- **VIP Passports**

Community Support Services assisted the local authority by completing and submitting VIP Passports for the individuals who use our service in the event any person was hospitalised due to Covid-19.

- **Wellbeing**

When Outreach support was postponed, office staff were allocated individuals to telephone weekly to ensure they were well and to assure them if they needed any assistance, they could contact us and to generally keep in touch with them.

Day Services also undertook wellbeing calls to the people who use the service.

An anonymous wellbeing questionnaire was issued throughout Supported Living to ask opinions on how employee's emotional wellbeing had been recognised.

Most employees felt supported throughout the onset of the pandemic, but some felt they could have had more contact from Senior Managers. As a result of this every staff member was contacted and asked if they would like to receive a wellbeing call and from which Senior Manager.

Staff were asked what their preferred method of communication was regarding appraisals/supervisions. This has since been recorded on the CSS portal and all appraisals/supervisions have continued throughout the pandemic.

Where concerns were raised these were addressed individually.

All wellbeing offers from various outside sources were collated and shared to all staff via the company portal.

TRAINING

- **Employees**

Throughout 2021 we closely monitored the transmission rates of Covid-19. When these were low and with robust Covid-19 risk assessments in place, we re-introduced face to face training for new and essential practical topics, this is our staffs preferred training method.

However, we continued to blend our learning offers to remain compliant using Community Support Service's bespoke online training booklets.

Training booklets were created for the following courses to be completed online:

- *Confidentiality & Data Protection*
- *Covid-19 Awareness*
- *Equality & Diversity*
- *Fire Safety (Including Evacuation Policy)*
- *Food Hygiene Awareness*
- *Health & Safety*
- *Infection Control*
- *Medication*
- *Mental Capacity Act*
- *Safer People Handling*
- *Safeguarding Adults*

By completing training this way, it has enabled staff to develop their learning around different subjects that will enable them to provide outstanding support to the people who use our service, and this has enabled the company to continue to maintain compliance of mandatory subjects during unprecedented times.

Face to face training:

- *Care Certificate*
- *Emergency First Aid at Work*
- *Supporting Relationships and Sexuality*

- **Individuals**

We have partnered with King's College, London, and Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities to train individuals who use our service to be mentors and deliver peer to peer online Mental Health Awareness sessions (Pass-It-On) with a view to rolling this online training offer out to individuals we support and other care provider services in the area from 2022.

We continue to diversify our learning offers and utilise digital platforms. We recognise people's mental health has been hugely affected throughout the pandemic and by having peer to peer mental health awareness sessions supports individuals to recognise and understand how they can improve and maintain their own mental health.

COVID-19 / PPE KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENTS

In November 2020 Covid-19 / PPE Knowledge Assessments were conducted with 112 employees, 8 staff were not assessed to due long-term sickness and maternity leave.

The following key points were reported by the assessor who conducted the assessments.

- It gave the assessor the opportunity to reinforce the changing of masks at regular intervals
- The purpose of introduction of uniform and following the process implemented regarding when to change the uniform to reduce cross contamination
- An opportunity to reinforce keeping bum bags stocked whilst out in the community
- Most importantly provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and gain clarification around Government changing advice and where this can be located.

The survey was accepted well by employees, and we received a good response, and it has been good for us as a company to confirm we are supporting everyone to stay safe.

The knowledge assessment was again completed in 2021 by 88 employees, 6 staff were not assessed to due long-term sickness or being new members of staff.

This was to ensure our employees remain consciously aware of the requirements to keep themselves and others safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The outcome of this repeated assessment confirms that staff continue to have good knowledge and practices regarding the use of appropriate PPE.

SUMMARY

- **Communication**

Communication between all parties such as the Government, Local Authority, CQC, Health & Social Care, Public Health England and Skills for Care has been vital during the pandemic.

All communication channels are open to provide everyone with key points and changing information.

- **Information Overload**

Information has been received from the Government, CQC, local authority Contracts department, Health & Social Care, Public Health England, and Skills for Care and many more channels on a daily / weekly basis.

The vast information received has often been duplicated which has made it extremely difficult and time consuming to review, absorb and decipher in a timely manner. As an organisation, we have needed to identify the appropriate and relevant information in relation to our service. This has been a huge task and we initially raised this as a concern to the local authority at the beginning of the pandemic. The authority reviewed the feedback and implemented changes to their communication channels. A provider update is now sent out on a fortnightly basis, streamlining all information.

- **Preparation**

Preparation is fundamental to the success of the company progressing through the pandemic. Forward thinking is crucial for the implementation of smooth processes and procedures. Flexibility in evolving Policies & Procedures as situations and scenarios evolve has been instrumental in preparing for the challenges Covid-19 has brought.

- **Sharing Information**

During the pandemic we have continued to work closely with other services, health professionals and government bodies to ensure the information regarding the people we support is accurate and consistent. It has been extremely useful to share advice, experience, and information amongst various providers across Calderdale via Zoom calls. As a result of chairing these calls, we have identified that there are some inconsistencies with regards to information sharing and we have provided feedback to the local authority.

- **Consistency**

Community Support Services have always recruited, trained, and developed employees in the same way. This has enabled us to maximise our staffing potential throughout the pandemic and move staff into different settings they would not normally work in without impacting the quality of service we provide.

This also ensured that minimum employees were furloughed through the first year of the pandemic, and no redundancies were made.

- **Wellbeing**

A key focus for Community Support Services has been to ensure all employees have remained positive and felt appreciated. There have been a number of small actions that have contributed to this. Senior Management arranged surprises such as:

- Pamper gift packs presented to Supported Living House Managers to show appreciation of their continued leadership.
- Office staff received home-delivered sweets and bottles of wine.
- CSS 'Super Hero' thank you cards containing a 'Care' badge were sent to all employees' home addresses.
- Sweet boxes delivered to each Supported Living house for tenants and employees.
- Community Support Services hold an annual Care Awards evening for employees. As this could not take place in 2020, category voting by all employees took place online and a virtual award ceremony was recorded by the Service Director for all employees to view.
- An annual Christmas bonus was received in 2020 and 2021 by all employees despite financial challenges the company have faced during the pandemic.
- Wellbeing questionnaires distributed to Supported Living employees in 2020 to identify how they were managing and feeling through the unprecedented times. The overall responses highlighted that staff felt supported and safe.

- Community Support Services hold an annual Care Awards evening for the people who use our service. As this could not take place in 2020, on Christmas Eve morning, Supported Living Managers delivered Christmas presents to each of the Supported Living houses for the tenants.
- Once restrictions had lifted and infection risk reduction measures were introduced the annual Care Awards returned in 2021 along with the Day Service Christmas party luncheon and on Christmas Day, a Christmas lunch was held for the people we support who live on their own and both these lunches were cooked by Supported Living Managers. This boosted the morale of people who use our service and staff who support them.
- In 2021, Christmas gifts were distributed to all Supported Living tenants.