

Date: September Edition

Provider Newsletter: No 39

Dear Provider,

Welcome to our latest newsletter, we hope this keeps you up-to-date on our current news and provides some useful information.

Do you have anything you would like to share? Please let us know and we will feature it in forthcoming newsletters.

Awaiting packages of care:

The team will continue to send out weekly emails regarding what is on the awaiting care list. Please contact the brokers if anything changes and you have more capacity. Demand continues to increase: thank you for all your efforts into recruiting to help meet this demand.

Kickstart:

This Government scheme was launched in September and supports employers with offering placements to young people at risk of long term unemployment. Funding is available to cover employee set-up costs and NMW for up to 25 hours per week, and as the programme's focus is to improve the longer term employability prospects of these individuals, ongoing support and training is essential. With Devon and Plymouth's Chamber of Commerce, we have submitted an application to access this programme on behalf of Devon Cares providers and during the All Provider call on Friday, will be inviting interested providers to join us in a Teams call to take this forwards.

Monthly provider conference calls:

Devon Cares hosts an all provider conference call on the first Friday of every month. We aim to invite speaks of interest on these calls and rely on you to inform us of topics you are interested in. This month we have SWASFT and the Trust's Tissue Viability nurse speaking, and Tash Koerner will be providing an update on work with the DWP and Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce to support with the ongoing recruitment challenge.

Friday 2 nd October 11:00 – 12:00
Friday 6 th November 11:00 – 12:00
Friday 4 th December 11:00 – 12:00

Hubs conference calls:

These calls give providers the opportunity to discuss any case-management issues they want to escalate with packages of care. It also enables providers to discuss PoC and where it would benefit both providers to swap. We share hub-level data in these meetings.

Please put the following dates in your diary ☺

- Zone 1 – Thursday 8th & 22nd October at 2pm
- Zone 2 – Tuesday 6th & 20th October at 2pm
- Zone 3 – Wednesday 7th & 21st October at 2pm

Agenda and confirmation of contact details will be circulated the morning of the meetings.

A careworker perspective: working during Covid:

Many thanks Andrea from Time2Care. Andrea has shared her experiences to inform others of the realities of working in care, to support the recruitment drive.

Life-Giving Work

I've come to regard my close brush with Covid-19 as a blessing rather than a curse.

As a care support worker for Time2Care, I don't mind admitting that when my boss Chris Beer told me I'd attended a client who had tested positive for the virus, my heart sank. Sadly, this client died three days after I'd given him close-proximity personal care – and my heart sank again on the realisation that Coronavirus really was a life/death possibility for everyone.

Prior to this event, when news of Coronavirus was only just breaking, I'd like to say that Chris had made a point of catching me in the office, drawing me to one side and saying "I will never put a single member of my staff in danger – which is why I am working so hard to ensure you all have the correct PPE to wear."

*I tried to console myself that since I'd been wearing the PPE he'd secured for us, I'd be just fine despite my direct contact with an infected individual. But my own wellbeing was of course my concern/priority, and while I weighed up the facts and the statistics, I spent three or four nights tossing and turning on the question: Am I infected or not? **Am I going to die?** At the age of 56, I was considered more at risk than some of my younger colleagues – so of course I was afraid. In truth, I was VERY afraid.*

I knew if I was infected I'd show symptoms within 10-14 days, but the anxiety that accompanied the question that kept popping into my head was too stressful, as was the process of somehow waiting for the symptoms to arrive... I took my temperature twice daily. Burned incense to make sure I could still smell it. Made garlic sauces to ensure I could still taste!

I needed to know one way or another, so I finally opted to take a test.

I drove to Exeter on eerily empty roads for the test, and remember enjoying the gorse blossom in bloom – and just knowing I had an excuse to get out of Bideford if I was stopped by the police in Lockdown. "I'm going for my Covid test, Officer!"

Although I was told I'd receive a result in 1-2 days, I in fact waited for four full days, which compounded the anxiety I'd experienced the previous week.

It may or may not be of interest to note that I meditate every day, and in previous work posts I have been known as "the calming influence in the office..." But in truth, I was a mental basket-case during what felt like one of the longest 10 days of my life last April.

It was also the first time I'd lied to my mother since I was a child... She knew something was up, kept prodding me for answers, and I didn't tell her. I didn't actively lie, but lied by omission to my Mama, who is my best friend.

On receiving the long-awaited "NEGATIVE" result, the first thing I did was call her to joyfully spill my beans! And we laughed and cried... But couldn't meet up to hug!

Close inspection and deliberation about this experience has taught me a great deal about the things I value in life, and how I operate. I've learned about life and I've learned about myself.

Coronavirus has taught me that in the scheme of a great, big global context, how I feel and even whether I live or die is of very little significance... If I'd been worried about that, I would have shared my fears with my mother – but I stayed calm, kept my head, and my first instinct, borne out of my care for her, was to protect a vulnerable 80 year old.

I feel blessed that I continue to be able to do this on a daily basis – not just for my Mama, but the many clients I serve for Time2Care.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I have learned from my Covid reflections is the great gift being of genuine service to others is. It was a gift to have served the client who passed from the virus. It was a gift to have shared life and living with him, albeit briefly... To know he served in Aden during the war as my grandfather did. To know he had a fabulous collection of pocket watches he delighted in showing me. To understand his asthma was partly caused by all the sand storms he'd driven through during his time in Yemen. To know that even though he had been a soldier, he was afraid of spiders and snakes. To witness his devotion to his collie-dog.

And my final reflection? The very fact that I am writing this suggests that nobody ever really dies – of Covid, or anything else. This client still lives in my memory.

Service to others is an underrated power – and joy. It's life-giving.

And the reason I didn't catch the virus from this client is because I wore the PPE my boss supplied me with.

Coronavirus has taught me gratitude – for MANY important things in life – and the surefire knowledge that PPE works!

PPE:

Please ensure you are accessing your PPE through Clipper. If the amount you are receiving is insufficient please make this known through your daily sitrep report.

It is not known how long PPE will be available through Clipper, there is a recommendation that this continues until March 2021 through this has not yet been confirmed.

Emergency PPE is still available through DCC; you will need to complete a short online form available on this page: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/providerengagementnetwork/document/personal-protective-equipment>

Help NHS Test and Trace by downloading the new NHS COVID-19 app:

The new **NHS COVID-19 app** is available to us all from Thursday 24 September. It's free to download, and it's got some clever features.

It's to support the **NHS Test and Trace service**, so its major benefit to the public is in helping to trace people quicker when they've been in proximity with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. That way, they can be advised even sooner to self-isolate and take any other appropriate steps.

Your phone will alert you if you've recently been to a venue where there's been a person who has tested positive, and the message will give you advice on what steps you need to take next, based on the level of risk.

There are some [other clever features with the app, and you can read about them on the NHS website](#).

[The app is available to download now, via the covid19.nhs.uk website](#)

Please note, there are times when you and your staff will need to 'pause' using the app, for example, when wearing PPE to deliver care. In this situation, you're already protected, so it is highly unlikely that you would catch the virus. Use the '**pause contact tracing**' function on the app so that the contact tracing part doesn't work, or you could switch your phone off.

Remember to turn contact tracing back on once you leave this situation. You can pause contact tracing within the app by moving the contact tracing toggle on the home screen.

QR codes and social care:

Providers are no doubt aware that new guidance has been published outlining the expectation to display a NHS QR code poster at certain venues for use with the new NHS COVID-19 app. Whilst this requirement does not apply explicitly to adult social care settings, such as care homes and day centres, the government encourages you to create a QR poster for the entrance of your venue if it is one that is visited by members of the public and has a space where people congregate together in close proximity for extended periods of time. Given that care settings are routinely collecting information about visitors, the addition of the QR poster is likely to be beneficial. You will still need to offer a manual option for recording visitors' contact details for people who do not have a smartphone or do not want to use the NHS COVID-19 app.

Further information about creating a QR poster can be found on [the government website](#).

Health and Social Care employer forum:

Exeter College would like to invite you to join an employer forum on Tuesday 20th October from 2pm until 3:30pm.

As a provider of education, it is vitally important that we offer a delivery model that supports your future workforce to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you require.

Discussion points will include:

- Reviewing current curriculum including digital needs
- Teaching, learning and assessment support
- Priorities in Health and Social Care provision
- Evolving job roles of the future
- Job/training/work experience opportunities in the region
- Current challenges and opportunities
- Creating the Workforce of the Future

Please reply to heidiamor@exe-coll.ac.uk to receive a zoom link.



The flu virus kills thousands every year.
The flu vaccine is the best protection
for you and those around you.

JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB
Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.



Protect your team from flu this year:

This is anything but a typical year due to the potential impact of flu and COVID-19 circulating at the same time. In order to help entitled staff to access a **free** flu jab, Devon County Council have produced a letter, which can be presented to pharmacists or their GP confirming that entitlement. It's now more important than ever that we act to protect ourselves, our teams, our families and clients from getting flu.

We have been alerted to concerns that vaccinations are not available to care staff. We have followed up on these concerns and are reassured that this is only due to vaccines not currently being available in those GP surgeries, and delivery is expected soon.

New Manager Webinar:

30-minute webinar for new managers in social care and those managers who haven't engaged with Skills for Care before.

The webinar will introduce you to the support and resources that Skills for Care offers care organisations in England. You will hear about how Skills for Care can support you with recruiting and developing your staff. We will also explain the support available to help you effectively lead your organisation, develop best practice and keep up to date. You will be shown where to find things on our website and have an opportunity to ask questions to a panel of Skills for Care staff.

[Register for a place](#)

Minor Injuries Units to reopen

Bideford Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) is to reopen in early October, and Ilfracombe MIU will also reopen in the coming months.

Exeter & East Devon online health & care jobs fair

Hosted on Facebook [@ProudtoCareDevon](#) page

Come along and speak to local employers, apply for jobs on your area, and see what opportunities are available from nursing to admin, support worker to cook plus many more.



Natasha Koerner (Head of Service)
01271 337823/07971 822521

Vicky Hancock (Operations Manager)
01392 388060

Jill Thorne (Care Broker) – Zone 1 Champion
01392 388825

Rachael Jeffery (Care Broker) – Zone 2 Champion
01392 388826

Tanya Campbell (Care Broker) – Zone 3 Champion
01392 388824

Lisa Reynolds (Devon Cares administrator)
01392 388827

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George King – Devon Cares Finance
01271 314023

If you are experiencing any issues with NHS mail then please contact our IT Service Help Desk. The Help Desk is manned 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

NHS IT Service Help Desk
0300 123 1722



www.devoncares.co.uk

Provider Briefing