Support with answering the ESF questions – Adult Social Care Services

This guidance will be updated regularly in the light of feedback and experience.

REMEMBER: the main way we will gather information from providers is in our conversations with them when working through the monitoring and engagement tool. **Requests for information and documents will always be exceptional.**

Planning

Check the information we already hold about services when completing the ESF planning tool (e.g. whistleblowing information stored in CRM). Also consider information from external sources, such as other stakeholder organisations and professionals.

When using the ESF Tool
Always remember that the primary way to answer the questions is through conversation with the provider. The table below shows the ESF questions together with supportive conversation prompts for discussing them with ASC providers, and sources of support that may be able help them if they're experiencing difficulties.

Please note in particular Skills for Care's support offer to registered managers. Managers can find out more about it at these links and phone numbers:

Skills for Care's COVID-19 resources for registered managers:
- [Advice line](#) for registered managers and other frontline managers
- [Recorded webinars](#) on COVID-19 related topics and guidance
- Local [WhatsApp groups and virtual network meetings](#) for registered managers
- [Facebook group](#) for registered and front-line managers
- Guidance and funding related to [essential training](#).
- [SfC advice line](#) for managers 0113 241 1260 / [RMAdvice@skillsforcare.org.uk](#)

1. Safe care and treatment	
1.1 Had risks related to infection prevention and control, including in relation to COVID-19, been assessed and managed? • *How do you keep up to date with current Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance/practices?* • *Have your existing IPC arrangements been reviewed and amended in response to the pandemic – have you needed to make any changes?* • *How are changes in guidance and processes being communicated to staff?* • *How is COVID-19-related training being provided?*	[Link for providers to find their local health protection team](#) [Gov UK COVID-19: guidance for stepdown of infection control precautions within hospitals and discharging COVID-19 patients from hospital to home settings](#) [Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for supported living](#) [Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for home care provision](#) [Government guidance on infection prevention and control](#)

	[Government guidance on Covid-19: how to work safely in care homes](#)
	[Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance: admission and care of people in care homes](#)

1.2 Were there sufficient quantities of the right equipment to help the provider manage the impact of COVID-19?
 	
• *Are you able to get hold of supplies of PPE and equipment?*
  o *Are these Of an appropriate standard?*
  o *Are you able to get hold of enough PPE to meet your needs?*
  o *If no, what could be improved?*
• *Do you know where to get PPE supplies and information?*
	[Government guidance on using appropriate personal protective equipment](#)
	
	[Government guidance on Covid-19: putting on and removing PPE – a guide for care homes (video)](#)
	
	[HSE guidance on Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)](#)
	
	[Gov UK Guidance: COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)](#)
	
	[NHS letter to health and social care providers re guidance on supply and use of PPE 20 March 2020](#)

1.3 Was the environment suitable to containing an outbreak?
 	
• *What environmental issues have you identified in relation to managing the pandemic? (e.g. people moving around a care home, social distancing and access to hand gel in a DCA office?)*
• *What changes have you made to the layout / environment to manage environmental safety? For example:*
  o *Alternative use of premises and areas*
  o *Additional signage*
  o *Ensuring COVID positive / non-COVID people using your service avoid contact with each other where possible.*
	[Government guidance on Covid-19: how to work safely in care homes](#)
	
	[Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for supported living](#)
	
	[Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for home care provision](#)

1.4 Were systems clear and accessible to staff, service users and any visitors to the service?
 	
• *Where changes were needed so that the service could provide care to both people with and without COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed diagnoses:*
  o *How do you share information about health and safety risks with staff, people using your service and any visitors?*
  o *How do you ensure staff, people using your service and visitors understand the arrangements (e.g. signage, accessible information, information on your website)?*
	[Government guidance: Supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
	
	[Government guidance: Digital innovations tested to support vulnerable people during COVID-19 outbreak](#)
	
	[SCIE: Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and the COVID-19 crisis](#)

o How have you supported vulnerable people and those with communication requirements i.e. accessible information needs?	
1.5 Were medicines managed effectively? • *Has COVID-19 impacted your ability to manage medicines? E.g.* o *Sufficient medicines in stock?* o *Medicines stored/transported safely?* o *Future supply of medicines assured?* o *Service users' prescriptions are assured?* • *Have you encountered any challenges when working with your local healthcare professionals, including community pharmacies?*	The Framework for enhanced health in care homes v2 March 2020 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) advice on COVID-19 emergency legislation to enable supply of controlled drugs NICE guidelines on managing medicines in care homes NICE guidelines on managing medicines in care at home MHRA Yellow Card scheme: guidance for healthcare professionals, patients and the public
1.6 Had risk management systems been able to support the assessment of both existing and COVID-19 related risks? • *How are your existing systems coping with assessing new risks presented by COVID-19, as well continuing to review existing risks?* • *Have you taken any new action in response to new and emerging risks, including but not limited to those posed by COVID-19?* • *Have there been any significant events related to COVID-19? If yes, how is learning from these being identified and shared?*	Government guidance on Covid-19: how to work safely in care homes Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for supported living Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for home care provision HSE guidance on safety in care homes HSE guidelines on equipment safety in care homes

2.	Staffing arrangements

2.1 Were there enough suitable staff to provide safe care and treatment in a dignified and respectful way during the COVID-19 pandemic? • *If the pandemic has affected your ability to staff the service, what action have you taken to manage this?* • *Have you been able to make sure that people get care and support from workers with the right knowledge and skills?* • *How are you making sure that new staff and any volunteers have been safely recruited and appropriately inducted?* • *How are you ensuring that staff are still able to work in a way that respects and maintains people's dignity?* • *How are you proactively supporting staff who may be at increased risk of getting COVID-19*	Disclosure and Barring Service updates to support providers during Covid-19 Skills for Care's COVID-19 resources for registered managers: Advice line for registered managers and other frontline managers Recorded webinars on COVID-19 related topics and guidance Local WhatsApp groups and virtual network meetings for registered managers Facebook group for registered and front-line managers Guidance and funding related to essential training. SfC advice line for managers 0113 241 1260 / RMAdvice@skillsforcare.org.uk

(including: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues, older colleagues, pregnant women, returnees, people with underlying health conditions)?	Skills for Care: Core and mandatory training for social care

2.2 Were there realistic and workable plans for managing staffing levels if the pandemic leads to shortfalls and emergencies?
 	
• *Do you have plans for responding to unforeseen and critical staff shortages?*
• *How would you escalate concerns if you were unable to provide a safe service?*
• *Have you engaged with local system arrangements and agreements for staff sharing and other contingencies?*
  ○ *Do you have confidence in the arrangements?*
  ○ *If you've used them, are they proving effective?*
	Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for supported living
	
	Gov UK guidance on COVID-19 for home care provision

3. Protection from abuse	
3.1 Were people using the service being protected from abuse, neglect and discrimination? • *How are you managing restrictions that might deprive people of their liberty? (Note: not just relating to managing COVID-19)* • *How do you ensure that people's diversity and human rights are recognised and respected?* • *Has the pandemic affected your ability to protect people?* • *How have you enabled people to stay in contact with family and friends? (methods, frequency.)*	Statement on advance care planning during the covid-19 pandemic Guidance on decision-making and mental capacity DHSC guidance on the application of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) during Covid-19 The Framework for enhanced health in care homes v2 March 2020
3.2 Had the provider been able to properly manage any safeguarding incidents or concerns during the pandemic? • *Have your local safeguarding arrangements and systems remained effective?* • *How have you identified and supported particularly vulnerable people during the pandemic? (e.g. older isolated people, victims of domestic abuse, children who are at risk etc).* • *How would you escalate any concerns?*	Public Health England guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable.

4. Assurance processes, monitoring and risk management	
4.1 Had the provider been able to take action to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff? • *How are you supporting and protecting the health and safety of staff during the pandemic?* • *How have you managed challenges to staff wellbeing during the pandemic?* • *What changes have you made to ways of working to support your staff and ensure their safety?* • *How do you make sure staff are provided with suitable emotional support (e.g. counselling)*	DHSC guidance on coronavirus testing for staff HSE guidance: RIDDOR reporting of COVID-19 https://www.nhsconfed.org/news/2020/04/action-needed-to-mitigate-covid19-risks-to-bme-communities-and-staff
4.2 Had the provider been able to implement effective systems to monitor and react to the overall quality and safety of care? • *How are 'business as usual' processes and systems being managed?* • *Has the pandemic impacted your ability to monitor the overall quality of care?* • *Are there any unique pressures that are challenging your usual systems?* • *How are you keeping up to date with relevant standards and guidance relating to the delivery of care during the pandemic?* • *Have you been able to develop effective contingency plans relating to COVID-19?* • *Have any areas of improvement been identified and actioned*	Social Care Institute for Excellence: Quality assurance resources and services
4.3 Is the provider able to support staff to raise concerns during the pandemic? • *Have you put any extra measures in place to support and encourage speaking up?* • *How are you ensuring that leaders are accessible to staff and service users when needed?* • *How have you managed to promote team working, for example, team meetings?* • *Have any areas of improvement been identified and actioned?*	CQC and National Guardian joint statement: Safety and speaking up during the COVID-19 emergency

4.4 Had care and treatment provided to people being sufficiently recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic? • *Has the impact of the pandemic affected the ability of staff to keep records?* • *Do staff get the information they need to provide care and support?* • *Has the impact of the pandemic led to changes in how records are kept and shared?* • *Are you experiencing any barriers to sharing or accessing information with other providers?*	NHS X information Covid-19 information governance guidance Covid-19: Information governance advice for the social care sector

4.5 Had the provider been able to work effectively with system partners when care and treatment is commissioned, shared or transferred?
 	
• *How effectively is information being shared across the system?*
• *Is planning and partnership working effective? E.g.*
  o *Effective hospital discharges?*
  o *Co-ordinating care with other partners (e.g. GPs, district nurses, LAs, etc.)*
	Data management and preparedness for COVID-19 related information sharing
	
	The Framework for enhanced health in care homes v2 March 2020
	
	COVID-19 response: Primary care and community health support care home residents - Letter from NHSE/I 1 May

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Government guidance on COVID-19 for residential care, supported living, and home care providers

Government guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19): admission and care of people in care homes

NICE guidelines on managing medicines in care homes
NICE guidelines on managing medicines in care at home

HSE guidance on safety in care homes

HSE guidelines on equipment safety in care homes

Skills for Care: Core and mandatory training for social care

Social Care Institute for Excellence: Quality assurance resources and services

Data management and preparedness for COVID-19 related information sharing

Government guidance on COVID-19 for supported living and home care

Government guidance on using appropriate personal protective equipment

Government guidance on Covid-19: how to work safely in care homes

Government guidance on Covid-19: putting on and removing PPE – a guide for care homes (video)

Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance: admission and care of people in care homes