



**Adult Social Care
Surrey County Council
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2DN**

27th March 2020

Dear Sir / Madam,

We are writing to you because you receive a Direct Payment from us. COVID-19 is affecting everyone in different ways and we want to provide information that may help you as someone who arranges their own care and support.

Self-isolation and paying your Personal Assistant (also known as PA)

In line with what the Government is telling us, we must all do what we can to slow down the spread of Corona-19 virus.

Therefore, if your personal assistant has COVID-19 symptoms and/or is having to self-isolate due to being in close contact with relatives/friends who have symptoms, they will not be able to provide you the support you employ them to provide.

Given these are exceptional circumstances, we want to urge you to continue to pay your personal assistant at their usual rate of pay for the duration of their isolation or period of illness. This will also apply if you need to self-isolate because you have COVID-19 symptoms and or are having to self-isolate due to being in close contact with relatives/friends who have symptoms or you have been advised by the NHS to “shield” yourself.

During this time of absence, we recommend that your usual contractual sickness arrangements remain in place (e.g. the worker keeping regular contact with you and notifying you of any changes in their circumstances).

If you're not able to make short term informal arrangements for the support you need in your personal assistant's absence, get in touch with your social care team on the contact details provided at the end of the letter, to discuss what alternative arrangements may be available and help you get them in place, including additional funding if needed.

If your PA is self-employed we recommend you contact Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) for specific advice on the following contact details:

Surrey Independent Living Council
Astolat, Coniers Way, Guildford GU4 7HL

Telephone: 01483 458 111
Email: admin@surreyilc.org.uk

Support not provided by the Agency you use

We understand that there may be times given COVID-19 that the Agency (for example home care agency) is unable to provide you with all the support you need because they do not have sufficient staff to do so. You should only pay them for the support they actually provide. We encourage you to stay in touch with them so the agency can keep you updated about their availability to provide your support.

If you are unable to make alternative short-term arrangements and require support to do so, get in touch with your Social Care Team (contact details provided at the end of the letter) to discuss options that may be available. If you require additional funding for alternative arrangements, this will be provided.

Purchasing support from an organisation

If you use support from an organisation (for example a day centre), please continue to pay them even if you are not able to use the service (for example you may have COVID-19 symptoms and/or is having to self-isolate due to being in close contact with relatives/friends who have symptoms).

If you use support from an organisation that is not able to operate in their usual way because of Covid-19, you can ask the organisation to support you in different ways for the time being, for example, rather than attending a day centre for day time activities, someone from the day centre could support you over the phone or come to your house.

If the organisation does not continue to support you, you are not expected to continue to pay them. You can use your direct payment to make short-term alternative arrangements yourself or contact your social care team (contact details provided at the end of the letter) to discuss what else may be available.

COVID-19 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

There has been much discussion in the media regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Not every situation requires PPE. For many (people without symptoms supported by workers who are fit and well) maintaining the recommended hygiene routines is sufficient.

PPE for Agency employed staff

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided by the worker's employer. Therefore, any Agency you use should provide their care workers with the appropriate equipment needed to perform their role.

If you have any concerns, in the first instance, approach the Agency concerned. For general guidance in relation to Personal Protective Equipment, please contact Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC).

PPE for Personal Assistant(s)

To help you decide on what you may need to provide your Personal Assistant(s), we have included a table based on current Government guidance (COVID-19: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings guidance – Check guidance regularly for changes).

COVID-19: PPE as required by national guidance (20 March 2020)

Non-Healthcare settings

(National guidance covers residential/nursing homes, supported living, home care providers, hostels, day care centres)

Scenario	PPE				Additional items	
	Disposable plastic apron (single use)	Disposable gloves (single use)	Fluid repellent surgical mask (single use)	Disposable eye protection (single use)	Disposable bags (for waste)	Hand Hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitiser)
Well staff visiting well clients	x	x	x	x	x	√
Well staff providing close personal contact* to ill clients (registered residential care and nursing homes, supported living, home care providers)	√	√	√	√ (where risk of splashing)	√	√
Well staff helping ill clients but NO close personal contact (hostels and day care centres)	x	x	x	x	√	√
Well staff cleaning areas where ill clients are/have been	√	√	x (unless visible bodily fluids)	x (unless visible bodily fluids)	√	√

* Close personal contact such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene, contact with bodily fluids

National Guidance:

- [COVID-19: Residential Care, Supported Living and Home Care guidance](#)
- [COVID-19: Hostels and day centres for people rough sleeping guidance](#)
- [COVID-19: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings guidance](#)

If you need to provide your Personal Assistant with PPE, you can use your direct payment to buy what is needed at a reasonable cost. Contact your social care team if you are concerned that you do not have enough money in your Direct Payment account to do so.

Because of increased demand and widely publicised shortages, some sellers may charge excessive amounts for this equipment. If you would like some guidance as to what is reasonable or have any queries about PPE, please contact SILC on 01483 458 111 or admin@surreylilc.org.uk.

Surrey County Council is trying to bulk buy supplies of Personal Protective Equipment and will make these available to those who employ personal assistants as soon as possible.

Letter of Authorisation for Key Workers

Personal Assistants

Personal Assistants are an important part of the frontline workforce and as such are considered in Surrey to be Key Workers. Given the tighter rules around people leaving their own homes, your Personal Assistant may be asked for proof of their role when for example, shopping or collecting medication on your behalf.

Surrey County Council is working with Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) to create a letter of authorisation for Personal Assistants. If you would like to provide your PA with a “Letter of Authorisation” contact SILC providing their:

- (i) name
- (ii) address
- (iii) email address if possible.

Every effort is being made to set this up rapidly so that Personal Assistants can receive them as quickly as possible. SILC can be contacted on 01483 458 111 or admin@surreyilc.org.uk.

Agency Workers

Agencies should provide the worker with something similar that confirms they are employed by them as a key worker.

Increase in hourly rate provided to employ Personal Assistants

Finally, we want to make you aware that from 1 April 2020 Surrey County Council is introducing a new standard hourly rate (Monday – Sunday) of £10.75 per hour for employing Personal Assistants. This rate will be used to calculate your personal budget for employing personal assistants. We will write to everyone who currently employs a PA at the end of April to provide more information.

If you do not currently employ a PA but might be interested in doing so, please contact your social care team.

Yours sincerely,



Mikki Toogood
Senior Manager (Direct Payments Lead)
Adult Social Care

For general information and advice in regards to Coronavirus please visit Surrey County Council web page.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus>

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT SOCIAL CARE – KEY TEAM CONTACTS

Social Care Team	Telephone number	E-mail address
Elmbridge	01372 832695	elmbridgelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Epsom and Ewell	01372 832360	epsom.ewelllocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Guildford	01483 517262	guildfordlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Mole Valley	01372 833456	molevalleylocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Reigate and Banstead	01737 737179	reigate.bansteadlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Runnymede	01932 794800	runnymedelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Spelthorne	01932 795292	spelthornelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Surrey Heath Locality	01276 800205	surreyheathlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Tandridge	01737 737500	tandridgelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Waverley	01483 518990	waverleylocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Woking	01483 518859	wokinglocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Countywide Transition team	01276 800 270	transitionteam@surreycc.gov.uk
Mental Health Central Duty Team	0208 5478030	mh.centraldutyteam@surreycc.gov.uk
People with Learning Disabilities and Autism team	01483 404770	learningdisability.admin@surreycc.gov.uk
Sight for Surrey	01372 377701	info@sightforsurrey.org.uk