

8 October 2020  
Our Ref: PM/emacs/kk

Dear Care Home Provider

I am writing to you about winter planning during this time of COVID-19, to share with you key areas of concern we have found during our recent inspections of care homes and to support you to prepare well.

I and all my colleagues in the Care Inspectorate recognise the extraordinary effort and work of health and social care workers across Scotland in meeting the unprecedented challenges of the worst public health crisis in living memory. For the social care sector, the past months have been extremely challenging for all of us. We have all learnt many lessons from what has happened.

Over the past few months, we have undertaken a significant number of inspections. Some of these we have undertaken with inspectors from Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NHS public health staff. These inspections have focused particularly on infection prevention and control, personal protective equipment (PPE), staffing and wellbeing. Of course we have seen some really good practice, but we also identified some common themes of concern and it is important we let you know about these so you can make sure you manage these correctly.

When we have identified serious concerns, these have often been about:

- infection prevention and control practice and learning
- use of PPE and disposal of waste
- supporting people with physical distancing
- supporting wellbeing and staying in touch
- management of uniforms
- laundry management
- domestic cleaning staff and cleaning products used.

Other areas of practice identified during our inspections to consider include care planning, anticipatory care planning and end-of-life care; healthcare planning and medicines management for individuals, hydration and nutrition; and the importance of leadership and training during this time.

COVID-19 will be with us throughout winter and this presents further challenges and risks to the most vulnerable. We need to consider the potential added impact that influenza, norovirus and other winter viruses may have on people experiencing care, and the services and staff who care for them.

I urge you to plan and prepare now, to anticipate and mitigate any risks. Take account of all relevant national guidance and address the areas that I have highlighted above. Of course, we want to support you to do this and I have included links to relevant guidance below, including resources developed by SSSC, NES and the Care Inspectorate to support the workforce. We will continue to update you on developments and guidance, on our website COVID-19 pages and in our Provider Update emails to you.

Thank you for all that you and your staff teams are doing. We see the challenges services face and how hard you have been working throughout the pandemic. Please take care of yourselves and be assured, we will continue doing all we can to support you to deliver high-quality care.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter MacLeod', written in a cursive style.

**Peter MacLeod**

Chief Executive

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## Links to relevant guidance

The following links are carefully selected to help you with the topics covered in this letter. The organisations below offer further resources and continue to update their websites with the latest official national guidance and information on COVID-19 so it is important to visit them regularly.

**NHS National Services Scotland** has published the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#). Section 1.7 of the manual covers [safe management of linen](#).

**NHS Education for Scotland (NES)** COVID-19 TURAS has produced [COVID-19 learning materials for staff](#) working in health and social care.

**NHS Inform** has guidance on [physical distancing](#).

**Health Protection Scotland** has [guidance for social or community care and residential settings](#). This includes [Information and Guidance for Care Home Settings](#). They have also produced [workforce learning resources](#) to support the COVID-19 response, a [care home outbreak checklist](#) and [guidance for stepdown of infection control precautions and discharging covid-19 patients from hospital to residential settings](#). They also have guidance on [COVID-19 PCR testing in care homes and the management of PCR test positive residents and staff](#).

**Scottish Government** has published [COVID-19 clinical and practice guidance for adult care homes](#). They also have [visiting guidance for adult care homes](#) and [FAQs on face masks and face coverings in care settings](#).

**The Care Inspectorate** has a guide to [supporting people to keep in touch when care homes are not accepting visitors](#) and guidance on [dementia care during the pandemic](#). We also have a [COVID-19 safe practice in care homes poster](#) and a poster on [the enriched model of psychological needs](#).

**The SSSC** has a [range of resources](#) developed by SSSC, NES and the Care Inspectorate to support the workforce. These include infection control in a community setting, death and dying, and health and wellbeing.