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**To All Service Providers Contracting with  
Oxfordshire County Council**

**Stephen Chandler  
Corporate Director for Adult  
Services & Housing**

11 May 2020

Dear Colleague

**COVID-19: Supporting Social Care Services to Maintain Capacity and Viability  
(Adult Social Care) – Further payment in May 2020**

In my letter dated 15 April 2020, I explained that the Government has provided funding to strengthen support arrangements given to people vulnerable to COVID-19, including those needing social care. This is to support providers and provide assurance about service delivery both during the COVID-19 period and beyond.

Linked to this, on 8 April 2020 the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services published a joint statement, following discussions with national care associations, setting out how councils can take action to support providers as they manage through this crisis.

***Temporary Increase to Funding***

To ensure all services are supported in an equitable way, and consistent with the approach advocated by the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Council has paid all contracted providers and people with direct payments an additional sum of money to support costs arising from COVID-19. This equated to 10% of the total average monthly payment from December 2019 to February 2020 where a provider was continuing to support service users funded by the Council in April 2020.

This payment will have been received by you on 28 April 2020 and it covered the period until 30th April 2020.

The additional funding was in recognition of the cost pressures caused by COVID-19, and is expected to support costs including:

- a) higher dependency levels,
- b) higher staff sickness absence rates,
- c) higher administration costs due to greater volatility of support packages, and
- d) costs relating to additional personal protective equipment.

Following on from this we have again reviewed the local and national position and have now agreed to make a further payment under the same arrangements and using the same calculation to cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020. We are aiming to process this by the end of the week commencing 18 May 2020 and the payments should be received by you on or around Tuesday 26 May 2020.

In due course we may require providers to evidence via open book accounting the use of the funding to support COVID-19 costs and we reserve the right to recover funding where that is considered necessary.

### ***Service Sustainability Fund***

Whilst we do expect the above payment to support you in the cost pressure areas stated above, we appreciate that these are challenging times. Therefore, alongside this we will continue to operate the Service Sustainability Fund to respond to very exceptional circumstances, including where a provider is experiencing issues with on-going financial viability and is deemed to be 'at risk' of failure.

I would ask you to alert us to any significant financial issue or concern at an early date so that we can respond accordingly and in good time. In such a case we will work with the relevant provider on an open book accounting basis to agree what action can be taken to support them. This is something we have done in the past and it is something we will continue to do in the future.

Should you wish to discuss such arrangements with us you can do so by contacting the Quality & Contracts Team using [ascCOVID19@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ascCOVID19@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or by telephoning your usual contact in the Quality & Contracts Team. All communications will be dealt with in confidence.

### ***Personal Protective Equipment***

As noted in my previous letter the Government expects providers to secure PPE through normal 'business as usual' routes and this is described in recent information published on the Council's website.

[http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/coronavirus/PPE\\_ManagementProcess.pdf](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/coronavirus/PPE_ManagementProcess.pdf)

Where the council needs to assist with the provision of PPE my previous letter noted that a charge would be deducted from future payments. If you have received PPE from the council in April 2020, and the total value is above a de minimis level of £50, a breakdown of the items provided and a charge for those purchased by the council (at the cost price of items) will be shared with you and offset against future payments.

The cost of on-going PPE provision from May onwards will be offset against future payments or invoiced to the relevant provider where that is not possible. Further information about this will be shared with all Oxfordshire care providers later this week.

In the meantime, please e-mail [urgentppe@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:urgentppe@oxfordshire.gov.uk) if you require emergency\_PPE supplies.

## ***Reviewing the Scheme***

As we noted previously the Council will be continually monitoring its progress and reserves the right to amend the above should this prove necessary. We will continue to review both the local and national situation, and any updated guidance towards the end of May 2020 will confirm any further support in June 2020.

## ***Contact us using our dedicated contact points***

We have created two dedicated contact points for suppliers to contact us and these are described below

### ***1. General COVID19 Enquiries***

We have established a dedicated contact point specifically for providers to use for any general (non-PPE) matter that is COVID-19 related. In this respect please use [ASCCovid19@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ASCCovid19@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for any general COVID-19 issues you want to raise. It is important that you use this email address so that we can be sure that your enquiry is tracked and dealt with as soon as possible.

### ***2. PPE – Request for Emergency Supplies***

Should you have a request for an emergency supply of PPE then please use the [urgentppe@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:urgentppe@oxfordshire.gov.uk) email address. We have logistic arrangements in place to respond to requests on a same day or within 24 hours arrangement.

Both email addresses are monitored constantly and we will do our utmost to address enquiries as soon as we possibly can.

Finally, I do want to thank you all for your fantastic work over the last weeks and that of your staff. We now appear to be entering a different phase of our response to the COVID-19 situation and I know that operational pressures will continue over the coming weeks; as ever we are grateful for the commitment you and your staff display and your willingness to go the extra mile for the people we all support in Oxfordshire.

Should you have any enquiries or need general support and advice outside of the above then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



**Stephen T Chandler**

**Corporate Director of Adult and Housing Services**

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