

March 2020 - Trust Homecare

Dear Service User and Family,

### **COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Outbreak and your Homecare Service**

We are writing to provide you with reassurances about the work and planning that we have been doing to support you around the evolving concerns of **COVID -19** (Coronavirus).

We are monitoring the situation as this unfolds on a daily basis and are working with official agencies to both inform and act on the latest guidance.

Initially, the most important part of our planning has been to remind all staff of the importance of frequent and good hand washing technique using soap and running water. This is singularly the best way to avoid the spread of infection. Alcohol gels can be used in addition to hand washing and in circumstances where water and soap are not available.

***You can help by ensuring that the staff who come to visit you have ready access to wash their hands in your home with soap/hand wash and water and kitchen roll to dry their hands.***

***It is also very important that if the person receiving care or anyone else living in the household develops symptoms of the virus, which are a fever, a new persistent cough or difficulty breathing, that the homecare office should be advised promptly and before the next scheduled visit. Contact numbers are detailed below.***

Staff will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) which is gloves, aprons and, where required a facemask for delivering care in the same way as usual.

Facemasks are not required in most cases and will not be worn routinely by staff. However, when the person receiving care has symptoms of the virus, or has tested positive, staff will wear a mask.

When the person receiving care has symptoms of the virus, or has tested positive, staff will wear a mask and goggles in addition to their gloves and aprons.

It is essential that the PPE is disposed of safely. Staff will place it inside a regular plastic bag which will be placed inside a second plastic bag, and ensure that it is tied securely.

Staff will attach a sticky label to the outside of the outer bag detailing the date and time that it was tied. The bag **must** be stored securely for 72 hours (3 days) before it can be

placed in a normal household bin. If you are unable to manage with placing in the bin please advise your Care Worker who will do this for you.

### **How might your care be affected?**

As we face increasing pressures due to the spread of the virus we will be required to reorganise our staff from their normal routines to redirect care on a priority needs basis. This means that we may have to:

- Alter the time of your care
- Make a temporary change to your regular care worker.
- Make arrangements with you to combine some care calls
- Contact you, your family or informal carers to make specific arrangements to support us to meet your care needs.
- Use extra safety equipment and precautions if you should be unfortunate enough to contract the virus.

We understand that families may be keen to help in any way they can during these exceptional circumstances. Therefore, if you are able to provide temporary support to your relative in anyway, which would relieve pressures on our service, please speak to either your Trust named worker or the Domiciliary Care Department, on the appropriate number below:

Ballymena	028 2563 5567
Antrim	028 9442 6002
Causeway	028 2766 1800
Mid Ulster	028 7936 6983
Larne	028 2826 6145
Carrick	028 9331 5966
Newtownabbey	028 9085 5355

Please use out of hours number 028 2531 7171 from 6pm-11pm on weekdays, and 9am-11am on weekends and Bank Holidays.

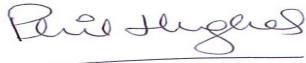
We will be monitoring the situation daily and will advise you of any actions that we may need to take. Our primary concern is ensuring that your care is delivered safely. We would assure you that where changes are required to maintain safety, this will be in line with the best advice.

Once the current situation has passed, we will work with Service Users and families to re-establish the care package, taking into consideration any change in need and the

availability of the care providers. The impact of the pandemic may mean different workers would be required to provide care at the point it is re-established

**Thank you in anticipation of your help in keeping everyone safe.**

Yours sincerely



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**Ms Phil Hughes MBE**  
**Director Community Care**