

**Please see the following list of FAQs. If you have further queries after reading these please contact the Direct Payments Team through First Point of Contact on 03456789044**

### **How do I keep up to date with national guidance and information as it changes regularly?**

To sign up to receive national alerts and updates regarding Coronavirus COVID 19 visit the [Gov.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

### **Where can I find information from our local councils?**

The councils will be hosting information for care providers, public and other businesses on their websites available here:

- [Shropshire Council](#)
- [Telford and Wrekin Council](#)

### **What is the up to date guidance for the public?**

[Gov.UK - Covid 19 information for the public](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget)

There is also specific guidance for people using direct payments:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget>

## **Funding and pay**

### **What do I pay my PAs if they have to self-isolate due to symptoms associated with the coronavirus (COVID 19)?**

The council agreed locally to pay PAs (employed and self-employed) full pay for a period of up to four weeks. If a longer duration is required, please email [personal.assistants@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:personal.assistants@shropshire.gov.uk) with an overview and someone from the Direct Payment Team will contact you to review and discuss.

If you do not have the money available in your direct payment to pay your PA plus any additional provision, while one or more PA is self-isolating or poorly with the virus, call First Point of Contact 03456789044 as there is provision for contingency payments.

## **Covid 19 Testing**

### **If my personal assistant or family carer has COVID 19 symptoms can they get tested?**

Yes, there is a process for testing in Shropshire please see:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/14924/process-pa-covid-19-testing.pdf> for further information about eligibility and applying. If you are unable to make a referral please call FPOC 03456789044 for support.

There is also National testing available including home testing for further information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>.

Care agency staff will get tests arranged via their care agency.

## **Care and Support**

### **If we have a situation where we cannot source support what should I do?**

We'd like you to think about 'what if' and have contingences for example:

- Could the level of support currently offered be reduced or stopped?
- Could a PA support in a different way that doesn't require physical attendance at the place of work?
- Could technology help – for example Skype conversations?

We need to understand the impact of this on you and your family, and if any additional care is required please contact your social care team directly, or First Point of Contact – 0345 678 9044.

If it's out of hours, please inform Shropshire Council Emergency Duty Team (EDT) – 0345 678 9040.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

### **PPE supply emergency helpline**

A PPE Supply Emergency helpline is available for PAs requiring emergency PPE when "business as usual" supply channels have been exhausted.

This service is for care sector providers such as GPs, Care Homes, Domiciliary Care Providers and PA's. The service has been created and will be run collaboratively between Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin's Health providers and Local Authority's.

For those using the service, a PPE pack designed to see providers through a few days of their specific needs will be provided wherever possible.

The PPE Supply Emergency helpline form is available 24/7 here [www.shropshire.gov.uk/ppiform](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/ppiform) and the information gathered will be used to deal with your request as quickly as possible.

Alternatively, please use the Helpline Number: **0345 678 9080**

The helpline number is open Monday to Friday 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am – 1pm excluding Bank holidays

There is also an email address if you need to amend a request or for other PPE related concerns – please note, that you should consult national guidance before contacting this email address:

[STWPPE@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:STWPPE@shropshire.gov.uk)

**Please note** – the quickest way to get support will be to complete the online form and we urge those who can use that option.

It is important that usage of PPE equipment across the independent sector is in line with national guidance which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>.

### **What are the arrangements if I or a member of my family tests positive with Covid 19?**

Please refer to advice given in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision>

It details minimising risks of transmission through use of PPE, cleaning surfaces and laundry.

This is an evolving situation and we are working across multiple agencies to ensure that people are safe and well cared for in every situation, including our care staff across the county. Updates will be posted here as soon as they become available

### **What do I do if I or a member of my family has symptoms associated with Covid 19 but they have not been tested or confirmed e.g. someone is prone to chest infections and currently has a cough, but has not been tested?**

If you are able follow the Government’s general advice to self-isolate for 7-14 days.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/>

If not find out if you are eligible for a test

Who can be tested from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested> - see this link for instructions for self-referral.

“Our priority is testing patients to inform their clinical diagnosis.

We are also testing:

- all essential workers including NHS and social care workers with symptoms (see the full list of [essential workers](#))
- anyone over 65 with symptoms
- anyone with symptoms whose work cannot be done from home (for example, construction workers, shop workers, emergency plumbers and delivery drivers)

- anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus and lives with any of those identified above

Additionally, we are testing:

- social care workers and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms) both to investigate outbreaks and, following successful pilots, as part of a rolling programme to test all care homes
- NHS workers and patients without symptoms, in line with NHS England guidance”

If you require essential care and someone in the household is experiencing Covid 19 symptoms

It will be a conversation between you and your PA(s) whether they are willing to continue supporting you while you or a household member is experiencing Covid 19 symptoms. Where direct care is being provided in a home setting where any member of the household is a possible or confirmed case Public Health England have advised the following PPE is used every visit.

- Single use disposable gloves
- Single use disposable apron
- Single or sessional use fluid resistant surgical mask (type IIR)
- Eye/face protection to be risk assessed (is there a risk of splashing?)

Where PPE is required but not available please think about whether you can be supported by family members, or manage with remote support, such as telephone support. Or contact the PPE Emergency helpline as stated above.

**In the event of increasing numbers of people 'self-isolating' do the councils have any contingency support to offer resources or financially to cover this period?**

We're looking at options around urgent response solutions. Situations will be looked at on an individual basis so contact your social care team or the First Point of Contact in the first instance that you are struggling to manage with your current support.

**Current guidance recommends that employers undertake risk assessments with staff who are themselves in the higher risk group. Additional risk assessment for supporting employers in their own homes may also be required, especially when they are also high risk and/or present with symptoms. Is there a particular risk assessment that we should be using?**

We do not have a specific risk assessment template that we would like you to use. As risk assessments are specific to individuals and situations, we would expect employers to use their own format or adapt existing risk assessment paperwork to suit their own situation. We are developing a simple generic risk assessment which will be published here as soon as it is available.

**Can I employ a family member who lives in my household to provide care as an “exceptional circumstance” during the COVID 19 crisis?**

In the event that your usual PAs are unable to provide care for a short time, and you are unable to arrange contingency plans ie. Phone support, family members, reduced support etc, please contact your social care team or First Point of Contact 0345 678 9044 to help with finding alternative support.

If after all alternative options are exhausted, a member of your social care team will discuss your individual situation and agree a timescale for the exceptional circumstances to be in place to allow a household member to support you for a short time.

If you are self-isolating as a household this will be for up to 14 days. Your PA is still able to carry out some tasks such as shopping, errands, medication delivery etc.

You will need to provide your family members details to your payroll provider to set them up as an employee. If your family member is school age [legal restrictions to hours of employment apply](#).

**I need my PA to pick up my groceries and medication for me. Can I provide my PA with identification if they need to prove that they are a paid carer providing support if social distancing measures become more stringent?**

We advise that you do as much shopping online as possible and arrange your pharmacy to deliver medication. This is not possible in all situations. We can provide ID for PAs or family carers. Please contact your local social work team directly or First Point of Contact 03456789044. If you are finding it difficult to organise food shopping or medication collection, please call the dedicated Covid-19 helpline. The Helpline is 0345 678 9028, and is available from 8am to 6pm weekdays, and 9am to 1pm Saturdays. Each caller will be asked for details of what they need and, if required, this information will be passed on to a Community Reassurance Team for further action.

**I'm concerned about struggling to source cleaning and/or other supplies, can you advise?**

Please refer to guidance on infection control, including information about what cleaning products can be used to maintain basic hygiene (see 'What are the arrangements if I or a member of my family tests positive with the coronavirus (COVID 19)?' - below)

When cleaning you should use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these are very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, handrails, remote controls and table tops.

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external household waste bin.

**Other useful information**

- [All current coronavirus \(COVID 19\) guidance produced by HM Government for health professionals and non-clinical settings](#)
- [Guidance for Residential Care, Supported Living and Home Care](#)

- [NHS Information about the virus and how to protect yourself](#)

Related information

- [Information for carers during the coronavirus pandemic](#)