

10th April 2020



Rt. Hon. Helen Whately, MP
Minister of State, Minister for Care

Dear Minister,

Three weeks ago many of us were sat in Victoria Street with you as the COVID-19 pandemic was unfolding. The speed at which events have occurred since then has been unparalleled.

At that meeting we stated that our priorities were PPE, testing and resources. Events and the experience of the last three weeks have not changed our view of these priorities.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is desperately needed on the front line and the deployment of the LRF deliveries this week along with the opening of the Clipper distribution channel should address this priority for the next few days.

We urge you to ensure that, as demand increases, and more people for whom we care display symptoms, the distribution channels have sufficient supply to meet the needs of the sector.

We know the Secretary of State's plans to increase the testing capability over the next three weeks, and fully accept that NHS ICU staff who exhibit symptoms should be the next priority. However, we urge you to prioritise the testing of people discharged from acute care to our sector to both protect those already in our care, our staff, and the state. Discharges of unknown COVID-19 status will result in avoidable deaths and subsequent litigation. It goes without saying that our staff should also feature in that priority list for testing.

Resources are fundamental to maintain a viable care sector and providers are investing in equipment, staff, and additional costs which are necessary to keep the sector operational in this vastly changing landscape.

We cannot impress on you strongly enough that these resources must reach the frontline within days to engender the confidence that the chancellor's words produced several weeks ago of doing "*whatever it takes - that promise applies just as much to social care as it does for the NHS.*"

The detail of the basis for these emergency payments can be negotiated later with each Local Authority, the priority is the safety and care of the people we support and the social care workforce, and the stability of the sector. By that, we mean our ability to purchase the PPE and meet the other necessary costs during this pandemic, and to ensure we pay our staff on time. Any late payment would prove disastrous to individuals and providers.

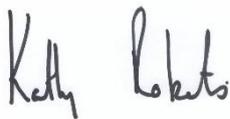
We know the long and hard hours your officials have worked over the last few weeks, and the complexity of your officials working across so many ALB's and organisations. We are

aware that there are only limited numbers of your staff who actually know and understand the care sector, as opposed to health, that is why we encourage co-production.

True co-production would address this major issue, ensuring that we do not have to come back to your officials, time and again to seek clarifications and produce frequently asked questions. The revised infection prevention and the Care Home guidance being the latest two examples. We welcome a dialogue to ensure that we expedite these matters as efficiently as possible to make sure the sector has the most appropriate guidance to hand as the situation and the science develops.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you for the benefit of the people we care for and support.

Yours sincerely,



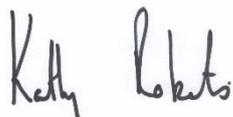
Kathy Roberts,
Incoming Chair, Care Provider Alliance
E: kathy@amhp.org.uk

Status: We believe this letter is in the public interest and as a consequence it could be released as a public document.

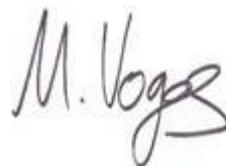
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