



Knowsley Council

Whole Life Commissioning Team
4th Floor Huyton Municipal Building
Archway Road
Huyton
L36 9YU

Our Ref: HW/JW

12 January 2021

Dear Provider,

Day Services

I am writing to you following the latest Government announcement about a further Lockdown in England, which came into effect on Wednesday 6 January 2021. This decision followed a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions and case rates across the country.

Whilst it is recognised that there is a requirement for people who have identified care and support needs to continue to have access to support, the Governments National Lockdown Guidance states that:

- you must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary
- if you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local - unless it is necessary to go further
- stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live

I understand the key role that day services provide in supporting individuals and their families. However, in light of the current National Lockdown position, we ask that you review attendance at your day service and reduce attendance levels significantly, in order to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.

We recognise the additional pressure this will place on families; however, we feel this action is necessary due to the significant increased risks of contracting the COVID-19 virus at this time. Case rates in England trebled during December, and Government scientists have confirmed the new variant of COVID-19 is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible. In Knowsley rates have more than doubled in a week, from 212.8 per 100,000 on 24 December 2020 to 597.2 per 100,000 population as at 1 January 2021.

Whilst day services are permitted to operate, the expectation is that they will do so with significantly lower numbers than prior to this current lockdown. This relates to services operating both indoors and outdoors.

The fewer service users attending services reduces the risk of transmission for those that absolutely must attend.

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Service users should only attend day services where it is absolutely necessary, such as where their family are key workers and there is no alternative support or, where not attending day service would adversely affect the service user's mental health or result in carer breakdown. With this in mind, we ask you to risk assess each service user and offer services only to those in absolute crisis and at risk of carer breakdown. We ask that you forward this list to us **by 4.00 pm on Thursday 14 January 2021**. We also ask that you identify additional numbers of service users attending from other authorities, so that we may assess the risk of transmission.

In order to support you to encourage service users to stay at home, we will continue to pay for commissioned care, regardless of whether the service user attends or not. Service users paying by direct payments will have the choice, subject to provider terms and conditions, as to whether to choose to continue to pay for your services, if they chose not to attend. Where a service user chooses to continue to pay for your services and not attend, we will continue to pay their direct payment, unless they decide that they need to use their direct payment for alternative support.

If you provide services to Knowsley residents, whether you are located in Knowsley or not, our advice is that you should strongly discourage service users from attending your service during this lockdown, and only accept service users where it is absolutely necessary.

You must retain documentation of the requests for service users to attend and their reasons and your risk assessment of these individuals.

You must revise your risk assessments and communicate these with staff, service users and their families. You should follow national/ local advice on infection prevention including use of PPE, operating regular enhanced cleaning, and maintaining 2 metres social distancing. You should limit numbers of service users to a maximum of 15 at any one time, and operate bubbles of no more than 6.

Please ensure that service users are not accessing other day services. Knowsley's policy now is that service users should choose one provider that they want to attend, and stick with them until the end of lockdown (initially mid-February) to prevent virus transmission.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Williams
Head of Service – Whole Life Commissioning