

16. Clinical and health care support for care homes residents during COVID-19 Pandemic

Support from GP practices

GP practices remain the first point of contact for medical queries for care homes and will continue to provide the same high level of care and support. GPs along with the wider multi-disciplinary team know their patients well, including the complexities of their care needs, and are best placed to advise on ongoing COVID-19 and non COVID-19 related matters and the right care for people. GPs and the wider primary care team including district nurses will continue to provide personalised and individual care to residents, for all their health needs, working alongside care home staff.

Seeking advice about support from GP practices

For all NEW suspected COVID-19 patients, care homes are asked to contact 111 where calls will be triaged promptly or contact local GP practice or care home liaison team as per local guidance. Please be assured that 111 staff will ensure that your call is directed quickly to the most appropriate route, and they will link in to any existing local arrangements to ensure care home residents are assessed promptly, alongside any further health protection actions which may be required to support you.

If a resident with or without suspected COVID-19 condition is deteriorating care home staff should contact their local GP practice / care home team for advice and support or phone 111 depending on local arrangements. If out of hours then they should call 111.

GP practice and multi-disciplinary team support during the pandemic

Care home staff should inform the GP or link nurse if they have a significant concern about their residents. GPs and community teams will visit in person only when there is an absolute clinical need to do so, but in most cases will provide advice over the telephone or using digital technology (such as near me) to reduce the potential risk of bringing any infection into the home. This will also be the case for reviews carried out by out of hours services.

If a resident requires a face to face consultation, the GP or a member of the multi-disciplinary team will require to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for all patients. GP practices are working closely with the new COVID Hubs (where the Covid 111 calls are handled) and the Covid assessment centres (where patients are seen for assessment, if needed).