



Department of Health & Social Care

Clara Swinson CB

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4th May 2020

Geraldine Nosowska, Chair
Ruth Allen, CEO
British Association of Social Workers
Wellesley House
37 Waterloo Street
Birmingham BS 5PP

Dear Geraldine and Ruth,

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd April 2020.

As the national, professional association for social workers, we are grateful for your feedback and are keen to work with all professions to respond to the pandemic. Social care is at the frontline of our response to COVID-19, with social workers playing a central role in battling the effects of this virus whilst continuing to advocate and care for the most vulnerable in our society, as well as their families and carers. The department is very grateful to social workers and their wider teams, and our Secretary of State has recently issued a letter on 27th April thanking the profession alongside the Secretary of State for Education.

We are working closely with local authorities, care providers and people with lived experience to make sure that the whole adult social care sector is able to continue responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. To help achieve this, we are working closely with Mark Harvey and Fran Leddra, the Chief Social Workers for Adults, who continue to represent the needs of the profession and work closely with the sector and yourselves.

We are aware of the concerns about the use and supply of PPE in the adult social care sector and are continuing to produce and update guidance where necessary. We have issued [updated guidance](#), available on GOV.UK, on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to local authorities and care providers. We recognise that the incidence of COVID-19 varies across the UK with different Local Resilience Forums experiencing different risks at any one time, and so this updated guidance is intended to be interpreted dependant on local and professional assessment of risk.

This guidance is applicable to social workers. There is no current evidence to suggest that this guidance is inappropriate for the social work profession, and as such there are no plans to produce bespoke guidance for social workers beyond what is currently set out in Government policy. Social workers are expected to primarily perform their statutory duties and avoid any visits which are not absolutely necessary. Where visits are necessary, they should be consistent with the updated PPE guidance.

We know you and the profession will be anxious about how best to carry out your duties, protect the most vulnerable, and prepare for the longer-term impact on the people you care and support. I know that the Chief Social Workers for Adults, Mark Harvey and Fran Leddra, are in regular contact with you, and will be able to further discuss the concerns you raise above and best support the profession through this time. I am copying this response to them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clara Swinson". The script is cursive and fluid.

Clara Swinson
Director-General for Global Health