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Issued via email

Martina Anderson, MLA
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Your Ref:
Our Ref:

Date: 30 March 2020

Ms Anderson,

Thank you for your email of the 27th March. The Minister has asked me to directly respond to you.

You may be aware guidance for the Care Home sector was published on 17th March. It covers the issue of PPE and it sets out:

'If neither the care worker nor the individual receiving care and support is symptomatic, then no personal protective equipment is required above and beyond normal good hygiene practices.'

This reflects advice from infection control specialists at the Public Health Agency, and is in line with guidance issued by Public Health England and the World Health Organisation.

The guidance sets out the PPE that is required when patients are symptomatic and also asks Trusts to work with homes to help address any challenges in accessing PPE or in staffing homes. The guidance remains under constant review to ensure it reflects best practice and the most up to date information.

Officials have been in contact with the Western Trust, who have been in close contact with Owen Mor throughout the weekend. Their support to the home has included:-

- Issuing a letter to all independent providers on 20th March from the Trust Chief Executive setting out a single point of contact approach through which homes can access support for PPE.
- Asking all homes to provide daily information on their contingency planning around areas such as symptomatic residents and staff absence to inform daily monitoring and support as appropriate.
- The provision of a significant uplift in PPE from the Trust on Friday 27th March. We understand this has been further supplemented over the weekend.

- Provision of Trust managerial and clinical support over the weekend through their Acute Care at Home team, with medical and nursing input.
- Provision of Trust advice on infection prevention and control, including management of COVID-19 positive residents into one area and providing a link with PHA health protection who have provided additional advice.
- Frequent communication with the responsible person for the Home, Una McDonald – who we understand has acknowledged the level of support provided by the Trust.
- Priority access for the home to the local COVID-19 testing centre on Monday 30th for Owen Mor staff who are symptomatic.

We will continue to stay in touch with the Trust as the situation develops. I hope my response reassures you on the support being given to the home but I am happy to discuss further as necessary.

Yours sincerely



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DIRECTOR - MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITY & OLDER PEOPLE

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