

Voices From The Front Line
Helpline Report
By Eileen Chubb©

Our previous Helpline data can be viewed here [Covid 19 Social Care Crisis](#) We continue to support previous helpline callers. It should be noted that we continue to receive on-going concerns from all these staff.

In the last week there were 38 **new** calls to our helpline.

11 from staff working in the home care sector. This is a big increase in calls from this sector compared with the previous two weeks.

14 from staff working in residential care homes. (Homes Without Nursing Care)

13 from staff working in Nursing Homes.

All information has been anonymised to protect confidentiality and any specific information which may identify has been removed. This week I have focused on the concerns being raised by carers working in the community.

Home Care Staff

Staff supporting people in the community are all raising concerns about PPE, staffing shortages, pressure to work if unwell, lack of management support and the knock-on effect of all of the above on the standard of care being given.

“You have on many shifts more clients being added to the list, you are given aprons and gloves which is not enough to last the shift, by the time you arrive halfway down the list you are forced to wear the same apron and gloves or wear none at all depending on who you want to protect the most, yourself or the client, it should be both but it’s not either of us”

“We are attending to peoples personal care and also preparing food and drinks, if you change your gloves more than once on a visit you will not have enough”

“ When we go into a new client we are not given much information if the person has recently been discharged from hospital we are not told if they have the virus, there is no extra protection at all just the aprons and gloves, if we ask the office if the client has Covid we are told they do not know”

“Most shifts we have extra clients and it has always been hard work but now I come home so tired that I am going back to do the next shift and am exhausted before I start”

“I feel we are out here alone, there is no support at all its like we just have to get on with it, I feel frightened all the time but there is no one to talk to about the fear, we are working in isolation and it’s so hard”

“ I look at the news and see the PPE being worn by the NHS and I am really frightened as we have nothing at all, not even gloves, what are we supposed to do, you have to wash your hands in the clients house and sometimes these places are very dirty, no soap or a dirty towel is all that’s there”

“We have to drive to each client each time I keep saying to myself don’t touch your face as I could not wash my hands properly before I left the last client, my steering wheel needs to be wiped but I only have baby wipes that I bought myself, I cant get hand gel anywhere not at the prices they are charging for it, I cant afford it and the company do not provide it”

“ We have no PPE, we have to drive from place to place and sometimes I stop at a shop so I can wash my hands, I feel like I am going to run out of luck soon because its only luck that has kept me safe so far, when I go to each client I ask myself will I harm them by carrying this virus into them on my clothes or hands, I never went into care to harm people”

“I feel that home carers have been forgotten no one cares about us not the government or anyone certainly not my employer they only care about money, everyone else is told be careful, but we are delivering care we can not stand two metres away”

“Not all the carers visiting a client’s house are good, they do the minimum and leave and don’t care about washing their hands or changing gloves”

SUMMERY

The staff who contact us really care about their clients and its heart-breaking to hear their story's. This week I have focused on home care because I want these amazing carers to know that they are not forgotten, hopefully telling their stories will force those in government to act now. Its shameful that people committed to caring for the vulnerable have been placed in this position in the first place. They work for private company's not the NHS, they are not Doctors and Nurses but the work they do keeps people alive. The staff who contact us want to go to work, they just want to work safely; I do not think that is much to ask.

Perhaps there is a millionaire who will provide the PPE these staff deserve to have.

Note to Government: All those contacting us want PPE supplied directly by Government because they all feel that giving their employer funding to purchase PPE would result in very little difference. Perhaps this says much about those at the top of the care industry.

Eileen Chubb