



11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Re: COVID-19

Dear Family Members and Friends

I hope you and your families are keeping well and staying safe.

As I am sure you are aware, closing our doors to visitors in March was one of the most difficult decisions we have had to make, and we understand the impact that this has had on you and our residents. We understand that this period has been difficult and has continued for longer than any of us expected and we are mindful that many of you are very keen to see your loved ones. As the spread of the virus remains unstable and the national lockdown unpredictable, the risk to our residents is still very much present.

As the situation has continued to progress, we have been working tirelessly in co-operation with the local Health Protection Team and in-line with Government guidance and would like to reassure you that our teams are doing their utmost to ensure the safety and well-being of our resident community.

Although national precautions have restricted our residents from socialising within the community, our teams have been working extremely hard to ensure every resident continues to enjoy all aspects of their daily lives by regularly hosting a wide array of games, activities, and events and we have strived to keep you involved and updated through our Facebook and social media accounts. While we understand that it is not the same as physical contact, we have endeavoured to make communicating directly with your loved ones during this time easy by establishing new communication hubs and launching a Skype, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Zoom account. We are extremely grateful to all those who have shown continued support and willingness to work with us in new and creative ways during this uncertain period.

While we are hopeful that, as the effects of the virus begin to slow, we will be able to open our doors fully again, we must remain vigilant for now and cannot relax any of the preventative measures implemented by our staff for the foreseeable future. This means that the following measures are still adhered to across our services:

- All PPE guidance as suggested by the Government and Public Health England is strictly adhered to including the use of fluid resistant masks, gloves, and aprons
- We continue to source PPE to ensure that we have sufficient levels to prevent the spread of the virus throughout our services plus extra to add to our stocks to ensure we are prepared for any future spikes in COVID-19 cases.
- Staff temperatures are taken and recorded at the beginning of every shift and anyone with a high temperature is sent home
- All staff uniforms are left at the service to be washed daily to prevent contamination from outside
- Social distancing protocols are implemented for both staff and residents in shared living spaces and operational areas
- Duty rotas are formulated to incorporate a staff grouping strategy to ensure certain groups are always working together
- All staff training has been either postponed or has been conducted virtually

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- All staff have completed refresher training in hand washing, infection control, and PPE
- Staff are tested weekly including agency staff, and residents are tested monthly subject to consent in accordance with Public Health England guidance
- Stringent cleaning protocols are in place and followed daily
- Strict infection control protocols are in place
- All meetings now take place remotely via Microsoft Teams
- We remain in close contact with the National Care Association, local Health Protection Teams, CQC, and quality teams and take part in webinars and virtual conferences to ensure we remain up to date with local and national guidance
- Robust and detailed risk assessments, including environmental risk assessments and staff risk assessments, have been conducted and are updated regularly to reflect changing circumstances
- All measures are taken to reduce the use of agency staff and staff working across services

Our main priority will always be the safety and well-being of our residents and we understand the importance of visits from loved ones for our residents' well-being. We are hopeful that you will soon be able to visit our homes with the assistance of strict precautions which will be published when visiting is permitted. In the meantime, we will continue to encourage and support virtual communication.

We could not be prouder of our amazing team and their dedication and commitment and we are extremely grateful for the kindness that has been shown by many throughout this period. Our profound thanks go out to the wonderful members of the community who have shown their support through this time and the family members and friends who have continued to show patience and understanding.

We will always welcome your ideas, suggestions, and feedback and welcome you to contact our teams if you would like to discuss anything.

Please stay safe and take care

Kindest Regards

Gary Claffey  
Director

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