

**16 March 2020**

**Covid-19 update**

Dear Residents, Relatives and Colleagues

I wanted to write what I imagine will be one of many updates on Covid-19 and how we propose to manage the ongoing and challenging situation that this viral outbreak presents.

As you will be aware last Thursday morning, we took the decision to close our homes to all but essential visitors. Please be assured that this was not an easy decision, and we are fully aware of the emotional challenges that this presents for our residents and their relatives.

Following the briefing from HM Government today it is clear that this decision will continue to stand.

Our aim is to work within the guidelines to try and minimise the risks posed by Covid-19. The current focus on those over the age 70 is perceived by many as a blunt measure. However, what is clear from data available is that frailty is a significant factor. We must assume that our Residents fall into the most frail category, and need to be protected as far as possible from coming into prolonged contact with the virus.

We will continue to work with people on a case-by-case basis where visiting is concerned. Clearly there are some key events coming up in the calendar including Mother's Day and some significant birthdays in the home. We will work with you to ensure that you are able to visit, but these visits do need to be restricted to one visitor per resident, and visits must be confined to residents' own rooms. There will be no communal activities.

During these visiting windows we will also be taking visitors temperatures on entry to the home and those with a temperature higher than 37.8° will not be allowed access to the home. Whilst in the home we would request that people do practice 'social distancing' by keeping a safe space (2 metres) apart from our staff and other residents.

I also need to make one more request of you to help us to operate more effectively over the coming period. I absolutely understand that you will be concerned, and will want to call the homes to ask after your loved ones. But it would be most helpful to us if one family member acted as the main point of contact for this and then shared the updates with the rest of the family.

Currently, we are getting multiple calls from various family members and friends for each resident throughout the day, and this is placing a considerable burden in answering the phones continuously. If we could limit this a little that would be incredibly helpful. We will of course contact you if we are in anyway concerned about a resident.

We are also working hard to find the best ways of keeping in touch through social media and Skype calls or similar. It's not going to be easy, but we will keep finding ways of keeping you all connected.

It is clear that guidance will be changing regularly over the coming weeks and months, and we will keep reviewing our approach. In no way would we seek to keep people apart for longer than required.

I know that this is a very worrying, stressful and confusing time for all of us, but as a son and brother, please believe me when I say that we make these difficult decisions with our residents' best interests at heart.

Thank you all for your support and understanding.

Richard Adams

Chief Executive Officer