



19 March 2020
Covid-19 update

Dear Residents, Relatives and Colleagues

Following on from the previous update on the 16th March, I am writing to advise of a further change to our visiting policy. Following a rapid increase in confirmed cases of the Covid-19 virus, including a case within a care home in Hampshire, we are now requesting that only essential visits are made to our care homes.

Previously we advised that on Mother's Day we would allow one visitor per resident, however given the change in the current guidance and increasing progress of the virus, we would like to close our doors to all but essential visitors. I know the word 'essential' has been used a lot in the current guidance, but I would ask that we are all very honest with ourselves about what is really essential (not just in terms of visiting care homes). If you do feel that your visit to one of our homes is essential, and wish to visit the home please contact the Home Manager to discuss this and book an appointment.

We will continue to make best use of technology to keep everyone connected, and will purchase and update equipment as needed to provide the best virtual experience that we can. Please do keep in touch with us through our Facebook pages. We will also be launching a Twitter account soon to help people keep up to date with developments and changes.

Clearly this policy is very far removed from how we would normally operate and we are very aware of the emotional upset that this change will cause, however we have a duty of care to all residents who live in our homes and we believe that this is safest course of action. We will continue to review this policy and issue further guidance in what is an everchanging situation.

It is inevitable that there will be an increase of media coverage of care homes and how the Covid-19 virus is impacting on homes over the coming weeks and months. I want to make it clear that we will always communicate transparently and honestly with you, and ask that you do not take what you see and hear in the press as a given truth. I know that to many of you

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c/o Keith Willis Associates, Gothic House, Barker Gate, Nottingham NG1 1JU

this will be obvious, but I just wanted to issue this gentle reminder before things start to escalate.

I know that there has been a lot of news coverage of the last 24 hours about workforce and peoples' jobs being put at risk, especially those from the hotel and leisure sectors. Please believe me that this is not the case in our homes, and we are increasing the number of staff we have available as much we can.

In fact, given the strain that will be placed on the health and social care workforce over the coming weeks and months, if you know of anyone who finds themselves without work please do ask them to get in touch with their local care homes (including us) as there will be opportunities for short term contracts and other work.

There are some tough times ahead, but we are working hard to make sure we have good plans and contingencies in place. As always, we will do our best for you all.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Richard Adams
Chief Executive Officer