

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE 2 JULY 2020

Dear Relatives and Residents

I would like to take this opportunity to update you about how the Coronavirus outbreak is affecting the care home.

I know that you are all worried about the current situation so I would like to reassure you that our leadership team takes this responsibility very seriously and is doing everything possible to keep our residents safe. You will see that our isolation and infection control policies have been considerably escalated following UK gov advice.

Due to the fast pace of change during the pandemic, we are monitoring public health advice, regularly reviewing policies as necessary and making changes within our homes. This does create even more work for our team so I would like to ask you for your understanding about any issues this may cause. I would like to record my personal thanks to our hard-working team who are maintaining full rotas and continue to provide the best care possible to all our residents.

We understand the value of sharing information and we have drafted a Q&A below to help answer some of your questions. This information will also be made available to relatives via our Conniston Care web site www.connistoncare.co.uk

Thank you for your patience at a time when we recognise it is extremely hard for families and residents who are not able to enjoy visits as usual to see loved ones.

Yours sincerely

Paul Milner (Director)

Q: Why are most residents being asked to stay in their rooms ?

A: As per UK government guidelines, all individuals are being asked to practise social distancing where possible. This means keeping a distance of at least 2 metres between you and another person. The aim of this is to try and stop the spread of the virus. This means we have asked all residents to stay in their rooms as much as possible, including mealtimes.

Q: How is this affecting residents' social life ?

A: We understand staying mainly in rooms is affecting our residents social lives. However, we are trying to mitigate this with rotating invites to participate in activities with strict social distancing. Activities will be limited but continue although this may get more difficult. We will be arranging entertainers to perform in gardens, weather permitting, for residents to enjoy from their rooms or lounges.

Q: How can I contact a loved one ?

A: We have acquired more mobile phones and iPads to enable telephone calls and Facetime/Skyping contact with friends and family members. If you would like further information, please contact a staff member.

Q: What coronavirus precautions are you taking ?

A: Our whole team is trained and experienced in rigorous infection control and PPE (personal protective equipment) procedures. Although this is for more typical virus outbreaks such as influenza, the principle is the same but now with an even more robust approach. In addition to this, we are now taking all residents' temperatures twice daily and staff are isolating at home when necessary in accordance with government guidelines. We currently have plenty of PPE stocks and are maintaining strict infection control procedures.

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Q: Have residents and staff being tested ?

A: Tests have been undertaken and we have recently communicated these on a transparent basis. We recognise that even with testing now available, it is not always possible to confirm at any time if Covid-19 is present in care homes, regardless of the level of testing available.

Q: Are you taking new admissions ?

A: Yes, UK government has asked care homes to continue to take admissions. However, all new admissions will receive 14 days of precautionary isolation care, regardless of test results if they are available.

Q: Why is the isolation period now 14 days and not 7 ?

A: This follows new UK government advice to all care homes.

Q: What if a resident has coronavirus symptoms ?

A: If a resident develops coronavirus symptoms, we will immediately start precautionary isolation care for 14 days and contact NHS 111. The care team will provide support through the illness as much as possible. If symptoms persist or health deteriorates at any time, then we will take medical advice and have further discussions with you. Admittance to a hospital may become necessary.

Q: What if relatives can't get through to the home's phone to get an update on a resident ?

A: Our home is extraordinarily busy right now so please be patient. We ask for your understanding and help by nominating one lead family member to call the home for a health update who will share the information with your other family members.

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Q: Will residents still be going on trips or be allowed outside the home with relatives ?

A: Not until further notice. We are sorry but this is against government guidelines currently but will be kept under review as these will change in the future.

Q: Will external service contractors still visit ?

A: Yes, when it is absolutely necessary and when our maintenance staff can't resolve a problem requiring immediate attention.

Q: What if team sickness and self-isolation gets worse ?

A: We are currently maintaining full rotas with our amazing team working extra shifts, plus limited agency use and recruitment. We may need to ask the non-care team to help carers. If team absence worsens and falls short of our rota, we will have no alternative but to prioritise care over other activities.

Q: Who can volunteer to help ?

A: We would be pleased to hear from any person with no significant health issues who would like to help. Contact the home manager who can take details.

Q: How long will this last ?

A: There is no definite answer to this question but the government's social distancing measures have slowed the spread of the virus. We will continue to do everything to support and protect all of our residents and team and will always follow advice from the authorities.