

Wessex Care 4th COVID-19 Briefing

Welcome to our fourth briefing and to the Spring month of May.

Our amazing teams continue their dedicated support of all our residents and community customers. To our new starters we welcome you at this challenging time. Please be patient with us all if your induction isn't quite a smooth as we would want but it will be non the less instructive. However please speak up if you are concerned or don't understand something we are always here for you.

Pauline the Clinical Director can be found most days either in Kimberly West or at Castle View. Jodie the Operations Director can be found at Kimberly East and Christian the Business Director and I can be contacted at the Head Office just down the road from Kimberly West & East Care Centres.

To our resident and their loved ones we say thank you for your continued support, this is so so important to our teams. We hope Malcom and the Welfare teams are helpful in keeping you in touch as well as all the amazing activity's they have been arranging using a range of technologies.

Current position of all services.

Testing has started within Kimberly West of six resident's part of a pilot scheme. All six residents where potentially symptomatic although the symptoms were already part and parcel of the presentation of their underlying medial conditions. Four tested positive and two negative.

The four testing positive have been corralled within one of our pods with staff entering and existing using full correct PPE requirements including donning and doffing procedures as advised by the Public Health England. We have all PPE required and with a sustainable stock level.

The source of this infection remains unknown and in reality will continue to be unknown until a national testing and tracing scheme is put in place. It is also likely that as testing becomes more accessible, there may be many more residents and indeed staff that test positive but for whatever reason remain asymptomatic other than their normal underlying health condition presentation.

We have been in regular contact with Public Health and having reviewed all the measures we have taken, and continue to take, they have confirmed that we are doing everything we could and should do to combat this virus.

From the available national evidence it is clear that some or all care services in some capacity, just like the hospitals and other care settings, could have COVID-19 but are not currently showing clearly obvious symptomatic signs.

KW residents testing positive all continue to present as their ongoing underlying multiple health conditions have with little or no difference.

We have maintained imminent palliative care, loved one, visits and we intend to ensure wherever possible that this continues.

Kimberly East successful transition into the first Hospital Discharge Support Unit in Wiltshire and there patient numbers have continued to grow with the first discharges to home or onward care setting happening this week.

Again a huge thank you to all the staff who have moved around our different services without complaint. Without them we would never have archived the setting up of the HDSU or maintained the ability to continue providing a service to new admissions and discharges across our services. Thank you all; really special bunch of dedicated carers, as are those staff who have moved away from family's, children and loved ones and into staff accommodation to be on hand to care for all our residents; we can only say thank you, thank you so much.

Employee support remains as stated previously; there is also various discussion going on between Government, Council and Social Care sector leaders to agree financial support for social care staff self-isolating as an instruction from their GP [three months] and staff self-isolating following presentation of symptomatic illness. We will adjust wages accordingly when we have confirmation of what this additional financial support looks like and how we access it. However we will as a minimum double statutory sick pay in all cases related to COVID-19 concerns and then alter the payments when we have confirmation of the extent of the social care support funds.

Testing is the key theme for us and I was looking forward to sharing some good news. However after a promising start where the process was managed locally this stopped on Friday the 1st May to be replaced with a national scheme which has been a disaster. We have test kits available for our residents but can't use them because we can't get confirmation of when they will be picked up. We need to register our company to organise staff testing but when we have tried there is an auto email response which stated they are experiencing excessive demand and they will respond at some point. That was on Saturday and we have heard nothing since. This has been raised nationally by everyone from the Council to the trade associations.

Hot press: just been informed Care Homes will have a dedicated portal from next week to be announced today.

Discharge from Hospitals to care home testing is now well established and there is no discharge without a negative test. If they test positive for COVID-19 they will be discharge to our HDSU at Kimberly East where they will be cared for until they are clear..

All admissions to any of our homes other than the HDSU will be barrier nursed in their room for a minimum of 14 days as an additional precaution. All admissions to the HDSU will automatically be barrier nursed until clear of the virus and then they will be discharged home or to another appropriate service.

Please be assured we have and will continue to do everything in our power to care and protect our residents, community customers and employees while supporting the NHS and Social Care colleagues.

Pauline, Matthew, Jodie & Christian

Directors