

Wessex Care Briefing 9 (03/12/21)

This will be our last Briefing of 2021 and as we write there are a range of changes which have been announced as part of the concerns regarding the new Omicron COVID 19 variants. Including the availability of the booster inoculations for all adults over 18, compulsory wearing of masks in shops and on public transport and of course the increased travel restrictions.

We should note that for our teams, who are fully vaccinated, most of which have also received their booster and flu jabs, the above changes will have little impact as they are already working at a higher level with regard to Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and have continued to wear masks while at work and for many choose to have continued this when in any near contact out with work. Our residents and community customers are mostly similarly protected. So, we have in place, with our UV-C air and surface decontamination, fogging disinfection and advanced IPC, an armoury of defences in which to defend our Wessex Care family with the hope that should anyone contract COVID, flu etc they are much less likely to be seriously ill.

It remains a vital part of this protection that all visiting family's and friends take the IPC & PPE requirements extremely seriously as you are not only acting to protect your loved one and or friend but every other resident, member of staff and indeed yourselves. We all need to work closely and cooperatively to keep everyone as safe and well as possible.

We will of course keep a close eye on developments and respond accordingly but we are pleased to confirm that since our last briefing we have seen no in home infections, one staff member asymptomatic positive test and isolating and a small number of staff self-isolating because their children have had a COVID 19 contact at school.

As most will be aware, we have moved in October to a new approach to visiting and to date other than some initial teething problems and the initial support work this has been very successful so big thank you to all our visitors particularly our families and friends for your commitment to getting this right and we hope you have therefore enjoyed the greater flexibility in visiting arrangements. As a reminder here are the key bullet points:

- Move of responsibility from one of us checking and controlling visiting and the documentation, IPC & PPE requirements to the individual who is visiting.
- This new system will be audited.
- Every visitor will be required to sign up to a visiting code of conduct, as before, but this will place the onus on the individual to comply with a set of requirements.
- There will be visitor stations with all paperwork and equipment necessary to comply with the IPC requirements before ringing the doorbell for entry.
- Provide proof of double vaccination (all visitors except resident families and emergency personnel). We will still strongly encourage all family and friends visiting to ensure, if they can be, that they have been double vaccinated and to inform us of their vaccination status.
- To have carried out their own LFD tests and recorded result prior to any visit or entry to home. You can order test kits from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/> or we are happy to give you a box from our head office. Tests are to be registered at: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> and the UON for the home you are visiting needs to be inputted: The Kimberly's (West & East) – 10120699, Little Manor 10171940, Milford Manor – 10079630, Holmwood – 10020337. Of course, a negative result is required. If you

are a new visitor this may require attendance at the head office in advance for initial test, instruction and provision of test kits.

- Record at the new Visitor & IPC station being place outside the entrance to each service, required checks including temperature, sats etc and to record the answers to the COVID 19 related visitor questions.
- To wash and gel their hands and put on the required level of PPE before ringing the doorbell to gain entry (apron, surgical mask, shoe covers or to have disinfected bottoms of shoes – minimum level of PPE required for every visitor). PPE wear is not negotiable.
- Visits will now take place in resident's bedrooms as a preference.
- Visits remain limited in amount of time but have been increased to 1 hour.
- All of the above is to be completed without staff assistance or supervision and therefore based on an honour system of compliance.
- As stated above we will have an audit process to check compliance.
- Any new visitors can and will receive support, tuition and assistance where required as will any visitor who requires ongoing assistance to comply.
- Particular caution should be exercised when intending to visit with children, particularly between the ages of 14 -19 due to the continuing very high asymptomatic virus transfer within this age group.
- Please note any visitor deliberately flouting the requirements will be immediately prevented from any further visiting until such time as a senior management review of their conduct can be considered.

As the new Care Centres have come on stream and with the communication challenges the pandemic has imposed, we have invested in new digitalised and electronic communication and recording systems, including the now standard use to iPad and the introduction of smart speakers and TV residents, community customers, kinship and professional's communication facilities. Therefore, we are pleased to announce a brand-new IT Systems Technician post has been developed and our very own Rufin Raphael has just been appointed. This wide-ranging role will include direct support to residents in maintaining the operation of their communication and IT systems. Welcome Rufin.

Turning to Christmas and the festive season we hope you will have seen our early preparations are now in full swing. External Christmas trees have just arrived and Steph and the welfare teams along with all the care teams supported by the maintenance guys are hard at work preparing and dressing the homes. The residents have been heavily involved with lots of arts and crafts. We hope, despite the ongoing pandemic, to make this a memorable festive season and this year we will also have the delight of welcoming family and friends to celebrate with us all.

So, we end in a much better place than we were this time last year and want to again thank you all so much for your support, understanding and forbearance. May we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a brighter New Year.

Jodie, Christian, Pauline & Matthew