

Wessex Care 12th Briefing 02/09/2020

Well this will probably be the last type of briefing of this nature as it becomes superseded by a new Wessex Care Family News presentation that Malcolm our Welfare and Engagement lead will be developing with Aimee and team at Blue Bee. We hope the COVID-19 briefings have been helpful and this certainly seems the case from the feedback we have received. COVID-19 has of course not gone away and we will continue to update on any developments either through the new News bulletin or by stand-alone briefing.

Lots of news and developments so let's get straight on with it:

Firstly after 19 years with us at Wessex Care our Service Manager Tracey Morris will be leaving us to take up a new position and in her own words;

'I would like to thank you for having me as part of your team. I am proud to have worked for Wessex Care and I appreciate the time and patience you have shown in me to develop my skills and knowledge. I have learned a lot and gained many experiences and these skills have served me well in my career. However, I am looking to step down into a role in which I can reduce the pace of work and enjoy some valued time with my family. I have enjoyed working in all the homes and with all the staff that know me, who of course will be missed by myself.'

Tracey is due to leave in early November and we will of course acknowledge her dedication and commitment properly closer to this time. Suffice to say that we wish her well, already miss her, but completely understand and support her wish to create a better work life balance in the latter part of her career. Tracey's Registered Care Manager status will be transferred to Jodie Scott the Operations Director following CQC accreditation.

We are please to confirm that the new Little Manor Care Centre is finally nearing completion following delays caused by the winter weather and then COVID but we expect to open the new Care Centre in the first week of November. There has been much discussion over the months based mainly on the needs of Wiltshire Council and the NHS both short-term to support the hospital through COVID and longer term need for Intensive Rehabilitation (IR) services something we here at Wessex Care have become very experienced at, having supported these contracts for nearly 10 years.

We will report more on this and the opening arrangements in the next few weeks when we are clear as to the outcome and requirements of the IR contract and the organisational changes that will be required. Part of this will be to support those residents who wish to return to their original Care Centre who had to move to support the rapid set up of the Hospital Discharge Support Unit HDSU [COVID-19+] at Kimberly East that was subsequently decommissioned at the end of July having successfully completed its specification.

Having taken some time, see previous briefings, we will this week finally start testing all staff every 7 days, residents every 28 days. However, we have already been informed that there is going to be an ongoing supply problem which may mean we are unable to continue with this level of government swab testing. This is one of the reasons we have decided at the same time to implement a trial antibody testing for all staff every 14 days funded by Wessex Care. We will be sharing this information with local Public Health but in principal it will give us a significant advantage in spotting

the virus very early thus self-isolating and reducing the risk significantly of asymptomatic transfer. This with all our Infection Prevention and Control [IPC] measures including PPE and our UV-C decontamination robot adds yet another level of scrutiny, prevention and protective response measures to our already very robust COVID plan. We can confirm that we have had no positive tests returned meaning all Wessex Care Homes and Care Centres remain COVID free.

Visiting has at long last commenced if in a strictly limited and restricted fashion. Thank you all for bearing with us and your understanding of the strict protection measure we have in place to protect your loved one and all of our highly vulnerable residents. Thank you too to all our staff who have gone the extra mile, and then some, to ensure as much contact as possible has been maintained, palliative and exceptional visits have continued throughout and are now managing the strict requirement of our nationally guided garden visiting and observation requirements.

The exception to the garden visits is Milford Manor where the individual and group risk assessment clearly indicates that because of the special needs of this group they are individually and collectively at significant risk as they lack capacity to engage in self isolation, socially distance, wear PPE and conform to normal IPC measures. We would need to enforce these measures which would require significant constant staff intervention which could, in some circumstances, would result in avoidable and harmful conflict. Therefore, we have decided not to introduce garden visits until there is a secure way of managing this. To this end we have purchased a secure visiting pod which is essentially an indoor space outdoors as it includes heating and lighting, to support safe and controlled visits. This should arrive in about five weeks and in the mean time we will continue to support window and iPad visits. Some may say we are being over protective but time will tell and we would rather be criticised in hindsight for being overprotective than under and managing the consequences to this the most vulnerable group in our care.

Please remember it is not in our employees nature or in our Wessex Care family nature to actively restrict visiting, it's not what we would normally do and to do so has come at a significant price to our teams wellbeing as they and we are challenged daily with keeping safe some of the most vulnerable groups of people in our society, while ensuring their rights and wishes are respected as much as possible without compromising the rights and welfare of others and then trying to support all their families and friends to maintain contact at a distance even when they can conduct a garden visit. None of this comes naturally to us and is at complete odds with the way we are committed to working and caring for people. We really appreciate how distressing it is for families and friends not to see loved ones or to see them in a very restricted and unnatural way but please understand it is also distressing for our teams to have to enforce this. So please please do be gentle with our teams, this horrible situation is not of their making they are just trying to do their best to stop this virus potentially killing your loved one. Please follow their instructions and the protection measures with good grace.

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]