

Wessex Care 7th Briefing [26/06/20]

July is on its way and we are working on getting some leave in for some amazing but somewhat tired staff.

Our focus for the next few weeks is to consider what the 'new normal' actually means for the welfare and protection of all of our residents and community customers. As the general public rules are relaxed, we have to maintain our high level of protection measures to ensure the safety of everyone we care for and the dedicated teams that provide this care. As others relax, we cannot and must remain very vigilant.

We have now completed our whole home testing and I am delighted to confirm that there have been no COVID-19 positive results in either our resident or staff groups. Please remember that Kimberly East is the South's Hospital Discharge Support Unit (HDSU) where you will expect a level of COVID-19 positive results, but I have excluded these from our figures. We have now moved to a phase of testing any resident that presents as unwell in anyway with a particular focus on changes to their oxygen saturation tests which increasingly appear to be a strong early indicator. No COVID-19 positives have thus far been returned. All new admissions require, before arrival a COVID-19 negative test prior to admission and a clinical view that supports the negative result. They are then placed in 14-day isolation being barrier nursed and retested before being able to leave their room.

Milford Manor is an exception to the barrier nursing and isolation as this would be impossible to achieve with this client group so alternative checks and timings are reviewed very carefully before admission to ensure reasonable clinical view that individual is COVID-19 negative supported by a test where this is possible to achieve. There has only been one admission since March.

All and any staff illness result in immediate self-isolation and testing after seven days and no staff can return to work until they have a negative test and are symptom free. Public Health England advice on Personal Protective Equipment is strictly adhered at all times. We have a substantial buffer stock of all PPE required and continue to receive weekly additional supplies. Staff are aware that they cannot follow the easing of restriction for the general public and must in their own personal lives maintain the high levels of infection control which now includes the wearing of a mask when in any environment that produces closer contact, irrespective of the one or two meter rule, with the general public e.g. transport, shopping etc. We have supplied a special reusable mask for all employees to assist in this matter.

Therefore, residents are now able to socialise outside of their rooms in communal areas and in the garden. We have strict rules in place to support this which maintain social distancing requirements between the residents and include the wearing of masks when moving or being moved around the home. Areas for socialising have set maximum numbers allowed at anyone time and the logistics of this are carefully orchestrated by the senior staff to ensure the enjoyment of social interaction and activity while being safe and controlling any risk of cross infection. This includes the development of further workshops and live external music events

The teams have been single minded and determined to support all resident's psychological and mental health welfare by producing a stimulating day, supporting activities and virtual programmes including virtual families and friends visits and in one case a virtual cat visit. Staff have had their own

support with the availability of 'Mindfulness' and Pilates sessions to help mind and body through these difficult times. Staff also have available on a 24hr basis access to a dedicated professional support line with direct access to counsellors and an advice centre. They have and continue to be amazing; we are so, so proud of them all.

Again, much in the media regarding relatives visiting and of course we continue to understand the anguish this may cause. However, our response remains based firmly on PHE guidance, that until this guidance is nationally changed, we will remain focused at providing palliative care visits only, using Malcolm and the welfare team to support and assist virtual visits. As part of our previous promise to keep this under review we have asked Malcolm, in advance of any possible relaxation, to start a process of consultation which has a significant focus on the potential for family visiting to resume but to consider in what form and in what way this could happen while also keeping all residents and staff protected from potential infection. There will need to be a number of clear restrictions and requirements for all concerned in order for this to be fair and safe. Therefore, it was vital to us that we consider these changes with all residents and their families including our own teams before making any changes. We do not want to raise expectations so must reiterate that nothing will change until we have the new Government and PHE guidance (despite what other care services are doing), and when it does this will be by carefully considered steps. We remain strongly of the view that these actions have saved lives in our service and continue to do so.

As reported in our last briefing the new state of the art decontamination system Ultra-V UV-C is now fully operational and a range of bedrooms and high traffic communal areas have been treated in Kimberly West and East. There was a small gremlin in the unit in the first week of operation but the support engineers quickly identified the problem which has been resolved and it is now working efficiently. Confirmed, as we write, that the special travel case has been manufactured and should be with us next week which will allow us to begin to transport the system to the other Centres. We also had it confirmed that this is the first time this system has been deployed outside of a hospital or ambulance service and we have received financial support towards the cost from Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group COVID-19 grant funding focused at Infection Control.

We wanted to end with a special mention to our Community Team ably led by Agnes who throughout this pandemic, and following the very sad and tragic death of their colleague and friend Aneta, have continued to provide vital support to our customers / clients in the community. They have never faltered, even on the worst of days, to ensure that each and every one received the care they required and as always continue to go that one step beyond whenever needed. We stand beside giants and it's a privilege to do so.

To all our fantastic family of Wessex Care we again thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your selfless devotion and dedication to our residents and community customers. It remains and always will be such a privilege to work alongside each and every one of you. Remember to maintain your personal protection, as the restrictions ease for others they cannot for Health & Social Care Workers.

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]