



Head Office
Suite 1
3 Silver Business Park
Airfield Way
Christchurch
Dorset BH23 3TA
T: 01202 485597
F: 01202 488523
E: info@applehouse.co.uk
W : www.applehouse.co.uk

4th May 2020

Dear Family Members and Friends,

Re: COVID-19

As it's been a little while since I last wrote to you I wanted to update you on our continuing preventative measures which have thus far kept COVID-19 from our homes and to let you know how everyone is getting on. I know our teams have been keeping you in the loop while also making available different means of communication with your family member and I thank them and you for your patience and flexibility during the national lockdown.

I'm sure we all share a renewed sense of hope as the Government tells us that our nation has moved past the peak without the NHS seeing the terrible pressures so many countries' healthcare systems have seen. However, we remain cautious and vigilant here and don't intend to relax any of our protective and proactive measures just yet. As always we will be guided by Public Health England whose advice for care homes remains at its high level of alert. This means the following steps will still be adhered to in each of our homes and across our company at this time:

- Fluid resistant masks are worn at all times by all staff. These are managed in strict accordance with PHE guidance around safe handling, disposal and sessional use.
- Additional PPE of single use gloves and aprons are worn during all personal care support, these are disposed of safely after each use.
- Regular checking and recording of temperatures for all residents regardless of whether they are symptomatic.
- Staff temperature checking prior to commencement of shift and entrance to the home.
- Temporary closure to non-essential visitors to the home including non-urgent cosmetic repairs. Fire safety checks and all health and safety related visits continue on a stringent social distancing basis.
- All meetings are taking place remotely via the internet on secure meeting sites such as Microsoft Teams.

Directors:
Jane Montrose (Managing), Romaine Lawson (Operational), Guy Montrose (Co.Sec)
Company Registration no: 5249887
Registered Office: 31/33 Commercial Road, Poole, BH14 0HU



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- A robust and thorough recruitment drive was undertaken early on in the pandemic, with additional team members employed and training programmes commenced in order to bolster our teams and protect against the national social care shortages feared by the Government. This has meant that we are now almost fully staffed and, where staff are self-isolating or shielded, our own team are able to cover most of their colleagues' hours. We have increased overtime pay rates as a thank you to our incredible teams.
- We, as a provider, remain in close contact with Care England and National Care Association as active members. We participate in webinars and sector Q & As at a national level including Public Health England. We maintain an open dialogue with our Inspectorate, CQC, and with our local authorities to ensure we continue to work and make decisions in an open, collaborative and transparent way using best practice as our benchmark.
- We continue to source sufficient PPE (Personal protective equipment) so that we can try to prevent coronavirus from entering our homes and making the people we support sick. We currently have a further 2,500 pieces of PPE on order and receive daily stock updates from the homes so that we can plan in advance and keep on top of PPE demand. We don't deny it is more difficult to locate good quality masks and aprons at the moment but with time and determination it's not impossible.

We are eternally grateful for the kindness of others; our thanks go out to the community-spirited members of the public who hand-made clips to fix mask elastic to prevent our team's ears from becoming sore. Such a simple idea but what a help! Also to the local New Milton company who turned their manufacturing workshop into a production line for face visors and who sold these at cost to us when it was so hard to source them online. We hope we don't need to use them but it's good to know we have them, that our teams are safer if coronavirus strikes us. Also the wonderful ladies who hand stitched scrub bags and donated them to our staff in case they need them.

Our teams have been overwhelmed by others' thoughtfulness, including the fabulous primary school children of a local school who sent dozens of bright and beautiful rainbow paintings to cheer everyone up. These are displayed in the windows of Apple House care home and along the wall in the back garden, what a display!

We are keeping busy in spite of the lockdown. As well as accessing the community for socially distanced exercise where appropriate, the homes are hives of creativity and fun! Summerwood have been busy creating their rainbows and these bring smiles to everyone passing their rainbow gallery fence. Corner Cottage are getting crafty and have also built a brand new outside dining area for alfresco meals. Redcroft's David and S have been busy constructing a nature garden from a scrubby patch behind the

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chicken run, please do visit our website (site address can be found above) to see it in progress.

In my last letter I outlined some of the challenges our teams and your loved one faced as everyone adapted to the new 'normal' and the restrictions and changes this brought. It's been quite remarkable to look back now and consider how they have so far coped – not only have they coped but they have done so with unending humour, patience and tolerance for each other. Your support has undoubtedly contributed to this and I thank you on behalf of everyone here.

As always we welcome your ideas, suggestion and feedback so please do reach out to me or our teams if you would like to or if you have any queries or concerns or indeed positive feedback for our teams.

Please stay well and take care.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Montrose

Jane Montrose
Managing Director

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