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20th July 2020

Dear Family Members and Friends,

Re: COVID-19

I hope you and your families are keeping well. Our team and your loved ones have found it really special to see some of you during home visits or when you've visited our gardens since the lockdown has started to be eased and we are permitted to do a little more.

When I last wrote to you in May I updated you on our continuing preventative measures which have thus far kept COVID-19 from our homes and to let you know how everyone was getting on. I know our teams tried their very best to keep 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 such a difficult time of separation and worry. Thank you too for working with us in different ways, creative ways, to ensure that separation was a little easier for the people we support. Maintaining this connection and communication has really been invaluable.

I'm sure we all continue to share a renewed sense of hope as things start getting back to a semblance of normality with shops and some leisure activities reopening, albeit cautiously. However, we remain cautious and vigilant here and still 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.
- Weekly Covid-19 testing for all staff and residents, subject to their consent and where appropriate, from August.

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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- All meetings are taking place remotely via the internet on secure meeting sites such as Microsoft Teams.
- 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 will be welcoming back shielded team members from August 1st and will be taking extra care of them. Should a further national or local lockdown be put in place, we will work with vulnerable staff and their GPs/PHE to keep them safe.
- 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 are currently adding to our stocks of PPE in readiness for any future Covid-19 spikes in the autumn and/or PPE shortages. I receive weekly stock updates from the homes so that we can plan in advance and keep on top of PPE demand. Current shortages nationally seem to be for gloves and aprons but we have sufficient stocks.
- We have purchased organic cotton washable face masks with funky patterns for every team member to use outside their workplace on their days off. This is so they are prepared for the new regulatory need to wear a face covering in shops and on public transport. Care for the welfare of our team doesn't stop when they finish their working day. They will not be permitted to wear these masks in the workplace as we provide medical grade masks for staff on duty.
- We have put in place the following measures to reduce the need for staff to use public transport: Provided each home with a bike, helmet, high viz jacket and bike rack for cycling to and from work and their own home. Paid for taxis to take staff to and from work. Provided a face covering for use on days off.
- In readiness for any Covid-19 infection inside the homes, we have also commissioned the following: External changing facilities at our care homes so staff would not need to wear home clothes into work or work clothes home. Creating external sluice areas at two of the homes. Provided hard floor deep clean machines. These measures are either completed or will be completed by the end of September ready for the autumn.

As always we remain 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

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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.

We are keeping busier than ever as we exit lockdown. As well as accessing the community for socially distanced fun and exercise, each home continues to amaze us with their creativity.

In my last letters 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. Now there are different challenges as the country, and our communities, partially open up while other activities and services remain restricted or closed. Again I am in awe of the acceptance of change demonstrated by the people we support and our teams.

We have received testing kits from Public Health England and have carried out those tests for residents and staff where appropriate to do so. From August we will be able to access weekly tests.

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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