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11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Family Members and Friends,

Re: COVID-19

As you will be aware we have now entered another period of national lockdown as directed by the Prime Minister. The full details of his statement on the 4th of January 2021 can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-national-lockdown> and include the following statements:

*'The Prime Minister has announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The decision follows a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions and case rates across the country, and our hospitals are now under more pressure than they have been at any other point throughout the pandemic. This drastic jump in cases has been attributed to the new variant of COVID-19, which our scientists have now confirmed is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible.*

*On 4 January, there were 26,626 Covid patients in hospital in England, an increase of over 30% in one week, and the April 2020 hospital admissions peak has now been surpassed by 40%. The case rate in England up to 29 December was 478.5 per 100k, three times higher than on 1 December when the case rate was 151.3. On 3 Jan, 454 deaths were reported, with 4,228 over the last 7 days – a 24% increase on the previous 7 days.*

*This afternoon, the four UK Chief Medical Officers have advised that the COVID threat level should move from level four to level five, indicating that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days. The Prime Minister praised everyone's collective efforts to get this virus under control, emphasising the great national effort to fight Covid. Despite this, the pressure on our NHS, rapidly rising infection rates and hospital admissions due to the new variant mean that another national lockdown is sadly necessary.'*

**Directors:**

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As a company, we at Apple House Ltd are keeping updated with the guidance as it is reviewed under the current lockdown and will be amending our individual plans as needed. We remain committed to keeping people fully updated as and when we ourselves receive information.

Our staff teams continue to work tirelessly in keeping the people we support safe and well informed and we are very proud of them. Everyone in the company is a true champion!

### Testing

We have introduced the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing twice a week along with weekly Polymerise Chain Reaction (PCR) testing for staff. We have trained testers in each of our services. We are testing in line with the latest joint HM Government and NHS guidance. The frequency can be seen below.


## Overview of retesting schedule

Ensure you are ready to test staff and residents on a regular basis. Below is the regular testing cadence in all tiers:

**The regular testing cadence**

Key: **P** PCR test    **L** LFD test

Week	1	2	3	4	5+
Staff	P L    L	P L    L	P L    L	P L    L	P L    L
Resident	P				P

 Repeat testing cycle for staff and residents

### Vaccinations

We are welcoming the vaccination rollout which has started in our areas. In the UK, there are 2 approved COVID-19 vaccines. They both require 2 doses to provide longer-lasting protection. Both have been shown to be effective in clinical trials and have a good safety record.

Eligibility groups in order they are given if you are:

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- living in a care home for older adults
- a frontline health care worker
- a frontline social care worker
- a carer working in a care home for older residents

Then the vaccine will also be offered in age order to:

- those aged over 80 years
- those aged over 75 years
- those aged over 70 years
- adults on the NHS shielded patient list
- those aged over 65 years
- adults under 65 years with long term conditions (see conditions below)
- Those aged 50 to 64 will be offered it later.

At this point, our company have one home which has received all staff and resident vaccinations.

### Visiting

Our visiting procedure is being reviewed to take into account the nation lockdown imposed by the Prime Minister. We have available many different ways for people to keep in contact with their loved ones while abiding by the national restrictions in place. These include our visitor's pods, garden visits, window visits, Skype, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Please contact the individual homes to talk through any questions you may have with the relevant home management team.

Thank you for all of your support and we continue to be here for you during this time and the coming months.

Please stay well and take care.

Yours sincerely,

*Romaine Lawson*

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Director of Operations

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