

Covid-19 update 16th July 2021

Dear All,

I hope, as always, that this finds you well.

As you will all be aware we are getting closer and closer to the promised 'big-bang' opening next Monday. I think we will all greet this with a mixture of emotions, not least with relief that things will be getting back to normal, but also with a sense of trepidation as we see the rate of cases of Covid in our communities, and hospital admissions, increase.

Currently, as things stand, we are in a position where the guidance for visits into care homes, published under the Covid regulations, has not yet changed to reflect the anticipated changes for the wider society. As a result, we have to continue with the current booking system for visits and with the requests for testing, and the wearing of PPE. I must caveat this stance by explaining that having delayed writing this update for as long as possible, I am writing this at 12 noon on Friday, and it is very likely that new guidance will be published over the weekend. Should this happen, we will of course advise you of any changes that we need to make. Please bear with us whilst we do this. One of the consistent themes throughout this pandemic is that we get official guidance at very short notice, and it can take a few days to work out how best to put it into practice.

There have also been some comments / leaks in the media about the requirement for ALL visitors to care homes to prove that they have had both doses of a Covid vaccine. Currently, this has not been confirmed or refuted by the Department of Health and Social Care. Again, once we have some guidance confirmed on this we will let you all know.

In terms of the compulsory vaccines for care home staff, a ruling which will be effective from October 2021, we have had consistently high levels of vaccine uptake from the outset, and this continues to be the case. We are working hard to get to a 100% vaccination rate in our staff group and feel that we will be able to meet this requirement comfortably.

For us, the bottom line remains that we care deeply for our residents, and they remain very vulnerable to this virus. Therefore, we must sustain our efforts to continue to protect them. I am sure that we will see measures decrease (and maybe increase) over the next few months, but for now, we carry on as we are, with testing and judicious use of PPE, such as masks, continuing to be a really important measure.

With best wishes to you all

Richard

CEO