

7<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Sir /Madam

### National Care Group COVID-19 Response

I am writing to you to outline our position in respect of visiting arrangements following new Government advice in respect of *care homes* in England which was updated on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Hopefully you have been enjoying your visits to date and you have been pleased with the measures put in place to protect the safety of those involved. There have been some wonderful photos shared with me of individuals we support being reunited with a family member or friend after such a long period and these have been lovely to see.

### Delivering the right support at this difficult time

I am pleased to update you that care home visits can be extended further and as from 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 every care home resident can nominate up to 2 named visitors who will be able to enter the care home for regular visits who will be able to visit together or separately as preferred.

The nominated visitors still need to be tested using rapid lateral flow tests before every visit. This testing can only be completed by a trained member of staff and visitors are unable to take the test kits home to self-test. In order to ensure that there are trained staff available to perform this test it is important that your visit is pre-arranged and that you allow an additional 30 minutes to enable this test to be performed prior to the visit taking place.

If on completion of this test a positive result is returned your visit will not be able to go ahead and you will be advised to leave the premises to go home and self-isolate, avoiding public transport wherever possible. Further to this you must follow government [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). You will need to then complete a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction test (PCR) which will be provided to you by the service.

During the visit visitors must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow all other infection control measures as directed by the local team. Visitors and residents must keep physical contact to a minimum, visitors and residents may wish to hold hands, but should bear in mind that any physical contact increases the risk of transmission. For this reason there should not be close physical contact such as hugging

It is important that the named visitors remain the same people as far as possible. This is important in reducing the risk of transmission, by limiting the number of different people coming into the care home from the community.

It is not a condition of visiting that the visitors should have been vaccinated. However, it is strongly recommended that all visitors take up the opportunity to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so through the national programme.

Visitors should also be careful to ensure they observe strict social distancing from other residents, visitors and staff at all times.

In addition to visits inside we will continue to offer visits to other friends or family members through arrangements such as outdoor visiting where these can be arranged.

Where COVID – 19 cases are suspected or confirmed, visiting arrangements will be reviewed and amended to restrict to only essential visits.

**Vision:** To be the best and most trusted care and support provider in the UK

**Values:** Passion | Empowerment | Respect | Collaboration

We will do everything that we can to facilitate a visit as long as the above principles can be met and where we would recommend a different or revised approach this can be discussed with you.

**We are here to provide support**

We appreciate these new guidelines may be frustrating and will need for your visit to be planned in advance however maintaining the safety of all involved is of paramount importance to us.

If following your discussion with your normal service contact, you are not happy with the proposed way forward please do contact the National Care Group Regional Operations Manager in your area for advice. Their details will be provided to you upon request by your normal service contact.

Thank you once again for your continued support at this difficult time.

James Allen  
Chief Executive