

21st July 2021

Dear Sir /Madam

National Care Group COVID-19 Response

I am writing to update you on a change to guidance on 19 July 2021 which saw most legal restrictions in England, related to coronavirus, lifted.

The vaccine programme has been highly successful in breaking the link between infection and serious illness. We have come a long way since March 2020, but there are still some outbreaks of coronavirus in care homes reported albeit a very small number across National Care Group locations.

Delivering the right support at this difficult time

We want to make visiting your loved ones as easy and straightforward as possible, while keeping them safe. Nothing can replace the care and love family and friends provide and we know the period of the pandemic has been a particularly difficult and emotional time for individuals living in our care homes, their loved ones and our colleagues who have worked tirelessly through a difficult period.

Our colleagues working across National Care Group will continue to wear PPE and practise strict infection control, just as before 19 July to protect the individuals supported. We would appreciate your cooperation with those practices that remain in place, to keep individuals we support safe.

It is particularly important that you:

- **Get the vaccine when it is offered to you.** Vaccination is one of our best defences to combat infection. It significantly reduces the transmission of infection, particularly after two doses. It is strongly recommended that individuals supported and visitors receive two doses of vaccine before conducting visits.
- **Take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) on the day of your visit.** Testing supports our homes to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the health and wellbeing of the individuals we support.
- **Continue to book appointments to visit the home.** Our colleagues will still need to clean between visits, which can take some time. Booking an appointment means there is time to keep the home clean and keep your loved ones safe.
- **Wear a mask throughout your visit.** This will help prevent transmission of the virus to others. You do not need to wear aprons, gloves or eye protection, unless you are giving direct care.
- **Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water,** for at least 20 seconds, or use the hand sanitiser provided, when you arrive at the home.
- **Cooperate and communicate with us.** Homes are best placed to undertake risk assessments for the individuals supported, and every decision is made to keep your loved ones and our colleagues safe. We encourage you to work with the local team to understand how to effectively manage risks for indoor visits, and when taking your loved one outside of the care home.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your local team. Thank you once again for your continued support at this difficult time.

James Allen

James Allen
Chief Executive