



17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear

During this unprecedented time we wanted to give you a brief summary of the actions Orwell are taking to try and minimise the spread of Covid-19 into our services. As you are aware, we have had to make some really difficult decisions over these last few weeks which we know will have had a huge impact on yourselves and your family/friend that we are caring for. We know how hard this is on everybody and want to give you some assurances that we are doing everything we can to keep people safe.

You may remember that on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 we placed a temporary stop on all non-essential visitors coming in to all of our services, which included the families and friends of tenants and we would like to thank everybody who has supported us with this difficult decision. As you know, our Extra care schemes are not residential care homes which therefore makes it difficult for us to prevent people leaving our services as they can in a care home, in fact it would be against the law for us to do so. Disappointingly, some tenants are still going out and although this is a minority, this increased risk of infection has left us no choice but to close all the communal lounges and seating areas. We are aware that this may have a detrimental impact on tenants and we certainly didn't make this decision lightly, but we must protect not only the tenants but also the care team working in these services.

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April we will also be locking our entrance doors, this again has been a difficult decision. Anyone that wishes to leave will need to ask a staff member to unlock the door. We can't just stop people from leaving but we can try to reduce the risks to others as much as we can. Tenants have been advised today that if they do leave the building for what we believe to be a non-essential activity then we will also report this to the police. We would ask that you support us with this decision and if you are aware that your family member or friend is one of the few that you would encourage them to follow the government guidance and stay at home. We are working extremely hard to ensure people are not isolated in flats and will provide as much support as and where we can. We will review the situation in 7 days' time, where if people have remained inside the building we may be able to relax the restriction on the communal areas.

We have provided schemes with computer equipment to enable tenants to make video calls/facetime with people so if this is something you would like us to do for you please get in touch and we will try and organise. Any pictures etc are being shared on our Orwell Facebook page and our website. [www.orwell-housing.co.uk](http://www.orwell-housing.co.uk) so please take a look. There are some fabulous photos and some lovely messages being uploaded daily.

We are extremely proud of our care teams who continue to be exceptional in the way that they look after our tenants. They have shown enormous courage and dedication to ensure that we can continue to provide the care that people need in this crisis, going above and beyond the normal expectations of a care assistant. Throughout the current situation, all care staff have been wearing the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and are now wearing full PPE, which is aprons, gloves, masks and goggles, none of which is easy to wear for the length of time it is needed. We are aware that the media has reported a lack of PPE in some places but please be assured we have enough stock and would not put people at risk even if we didn't. To support our care teams, we also have other people within Orwell who are taking on different roles to what they had before and this has been a tremendous help.

We would like to reassure you that we are continually reviewing government guidance in line with our current practices in relation to Covid-19 and may at times have to put in further measures to protect people, our priority is and always will be the safety of our customers and staff.

Thankyou once again for your support in this difficult time and we hope that this overview has given you some assurances that we are doing everything we possibly can to keep people safe.

Please continue to monitor our website for updates or call our Customer Services on **0345 60 100 30** with any queries.

Kind regards



Hayley Cheshire, Head of service, Older Persons



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