

Dear

Re: Coronavirus update 6

This is now our sixth update regarding the restrictions currently in place within Extra Care Services, which I hope you are finding helpful.

As you will be aware, we are currently in a situation where there is a sustained community transmission across the UK and Public Health England have advised that all care workers should assume that they are likely to encounter people with COVID-19 infection during their day to day routine work. We are extremely mindful that Extra Care schemes are not Care Homes, but we do also have a duty of care to our residents and the teams that work in these environments which includes making their living environments as safe as possible and ensuring the working environment is also safe. We understand how difficult things have been and will continue to be over the next few months, for everybody. However, we must not become complacent with the practices or arrangements we have in place especially when we have all worked so hard to get to where we are today.

After reviewing the government guidance around visitors in Care Homes, www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus and Extra Care settings:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-living-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19, we believe we must continue with the bookable garden visits as they currently stand. We understand that this is causing frustration to many relatives and many may feel that they should be able to visit when they choose. Whilst we would also like this to happen, we do need to continue to limit visits in order to protect the health and wellbeing of the people we support, the staff teams and also yourselves when visiting.

Whilst we will continue with the garden visits, circumstances permitting, we do need to ask that this is limited to no more than two people per family household and would ask that people do try to keep to this one family and not have different families mixing due to the risk to yourselves and others within the vicinity. Unfortunately, not all our gardens are large or very shady so we can only accommodate very small numbers at any one time.

We had previously asked if anyone would be able to spare some time to help with the garden visits, help with sanitising areas and supporting any residents who may want to walk around the garden during the visiting times, this would enable the staff teams to continue with their own roles

and give further opportunity to increase some of the visiting times to the evenings; this option is still open, if anyone would be willing to help?

You will I hope be pleased to hear that we have been able to commence some activities in schemes which we hope will reduce any distress and isolation that people have been experiencing over this period; these are still in small groups as we have to ensure that we can maintain the 2-metre social distancing within these areas.

Just as gentle reminder, I thought it would be good to reshare the good practice guidance for infection control when visiting people in the gardens:

- ***No one with COVID-19 symptoms should visit;***
- ***No one should be visiting if they are self-isolating due to having close contact with someone who has symptoms or visited a restricted country or town;***
- ***Communal garden areas have seated arrangements in place to ensure the 2-metre distancing;***
- ***We would ask that a suitable face covering is worn for the protection of people living in the service. If you wish to wear a visor, please discuss this with the Service Manager who will review the risk to others at the time of the visit;***
- ***Please use sanitiser when arriving to the gardens and ensure that the chair you have used is sanitised when leaving.***

We do need to remind everybody that the decisions around restrictions, what is enforced, what is lifted and any other measures in place are supported by all Service Managers, but overall are set and agreed by Orwell Senior Managers; therefore I would ask that some thought and consideration is given to the Service Managers and their staff teams when you are speaking with them as they are following the advice and guidance given to them from Orwell.

We are sorry that this update does not lift any of the restrictions we have in place for everybody and is not what you will have wanted to read, but as the summer comes to an end, we are looking at other ways we can provide visits without the need to enter shared spaces within the services that will hopefully make lives easier for everybody.

You are also able to view our website for any further updates www.orwell-housing.co.uk/ or call our Customer Services on **0345 60 100 30** with any other queries.

Once again, thank you for your co-operation and support during this extremely difficult time it is extremely appreciated.

Kind regards



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