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**Our Ref:** HC/virus7

**Date:** 18th December 2020

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Dear **Name**

### **Re: Coronavirus update 7 – Christmas 2020**

As you will be aware the Government have given advice regarding Christmas and the five-day period between 23rd to 27th December 2020. With this in mind, we have reviewed our own visiting arrangements so that you can enjoy Christmas with your family member but also keep our services safe.

We are aware that families will want to take their relative or friend home for Christmas for some of the period which we would wholly support, but we will have to ask that some time of isolation is needed on the return to keep everybody safe. We know how detrimental 14 days isolation can be to individuals and we do not want this to be a reason not to enjoy Christmas. Therefore we would ask that on return, tenants will continue to isolate, but on the fourth day of their return we will complete a Covid-19 test and upon receiving a negative test result, the isolation period can then stop.

Although the Government has advised that three households can mix as a Christmas bubble, we do need to remind you that this does not necessarily mean that we have to do this. We would hope you take into consideration the vulnerabilities of all our tenants and how any mixing of households could put anyone of them at risk. If you do decide to form a bubble then you should stop unnecessary social contact outside your immediate household as soon as possible and for at least five days before you form the bubble. Once you have formed a bubble please try and be mindful of not getting too close to your relative, be careful of keeping areas ventilated, windows open etc and try not to have too many visitors in small environments within your home. The less people in your bubble the safer it will be for everyone. Covid-19 cases are on the increase in Suffolk and we have all seen the detrimental impact this is now having across some of our services. Therefore we urge you all to be really careful, think about the implications for both you, your relative/friend, other residents and staff who live and work at the scheme as we all have a personal responsibility this Christmas to try and protect the vulnerable.

However if you decide not to form a Christmas bubble then we can support with technology, Facetime, Whatsapp and telephone calls as much as we can.

Unfortunately, we will still not be able to allow visitors into the flats unless this is for an essential visit, but we have provided visiting pods for you and your relative / friend to use, should you



want to visit. The pods meet Government guidance and have screens that are floor to ceiling in height: these should help protect people when visiting. Please ensure that if you visit, you have booked a time with the scheme to avoid disappointment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

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

- ***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: please do not move these;***
- ***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.***

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.

As with all Government guidance, things may change quickly, we know that Government is reviewing the Christmas arrangements on a daily basis. If anything changes from what we have already advised we will send out further guidance.

With regard to the vaccination programme, we are working with Suffolk County Council to ensure that all staff and tenants are able to obtain the vaccine quickly. Unfortunately, this is out of our control but we will update everybody as soon as we have further guidance and possible vaccination dates.

Once again, thank you for your co-operation and support during this extremely difficult time, it is extremely appreciated. We would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope that 2021 is a more positive year for us all.

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

Kind regards



Hayley Cheshire  
Head of Service, Older Persons