

Dear Resident, relative and visitor

Re: Covid-19 Risk reducing measures at Bridgemoor

As we are all well aware, covid-19 is rapidly increasing and spreading nationally and internationally.

Risks to older people and those with underlying medical conditions are already acknowledged, and for those we care for the risks are heightened.

The government have started to discuss 'cocooning' people in care homes, to reduce the risks of the virus spreading to this high-risk group. Further to discussion with the team here and with our local NHS partners and GP, we have decided to commence these procedures with immediate effect.

Whilst we do not have experience of this virus, we have long learned experience of infection control measures that have worked in keeping the people we care for, visitors, staff and other external professionals as safe as possible, and so we hope you trust and work with us to continue to do so. Our plan is to avoid panic, reduce risks as much as possible, prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Much of this goes against our ethos and ideals, however after much discussion, research, information sharing with other providers and external stakeholders, risk assessing and questions from many of you, we have had to make some rather uncomfortable decisions in the hope of protecting and promoting best outcomes for those we care for, staff and visitors. Ultimately, why take unnecessary risks?

We know this will be very hard for some people, and for that we sincerely apologise in advance.

The measures we plan to take with immediate effect are:

- **Limit all visitors** to family and resident's representatives only. We would ask that visits are limited to the resident's room, to prevent the spread of any potential infection.
- Please limit visitor numbers and **DO NOT VISIT** if you are in anyway unwell with coughs, colds, or fever. We request that you please share this information with family members, who may be thinking of visiting.
- All visitors please **wash hands or use hand gel on arrival and on leaving the home.**
- We have reduced **appointments to essential only**, as with assessments, consultations, meetings, hospital visits etc. The GP will do virtual visits (by telephone consultations) unless essential to visit.
- We will instigate **minimal contact** – where we are usually very tactile and 'touchy feely', we will reduce this where possible (and without obviously doing so), with 'distance touch' (rather than firm hugs and kisses), reassuring words and kindness.
- Visitors will be unable to go to the usual communal areas to make tea / coffee too. We are advising if you wish to have drinks whilst in the home, to bring them with you e.g. in a flask etc. This is sorely against our usual practice or hospitality wishes. Our reasoning is to reduce contact as much as possible and avoid potential 'droplet' cross infection with visitors.
- We have **stopped all external trips, and entertainers** to the homes.

Whilst some organisations are 'shutting' completely to all visitors, we also believe we need to maintain normality and quality of life as much as possible. We have a humanitarian duty too, and it is in our

nature to care about and for others too. In the event of a loved one being unwell, we will reassess and not prevent entry by the family to see and be with that person. People are not imprisoned and are free to leave and choose what they do and do not do. We are simply trying to reduce risks wherever possible in relation to infection spreading.

We will not stop people who wish to attending church, the hairdresser, going to the lounge etc, but we will advise and reduce these if people are in anyway unwell. We cannot stop you from taking people out too, we can only advise that the risks associated with contracting this virus, and the consequences are very severe and seriously (gravely) life threatening for our entire elderly population – and our residents are some of the most vulnerable in society. We are only trying to reduce the risk, but we cannot avoid them entirely.

In the event of an actual outbreak we will keep you informed and up to date immediately, and in this case 'lock down' completely and follow Public health advice at that time. Equally we request that if you or any family member are diagnosed, you keep us informed.

You are welcome to telephone and speak to residents via 01225 444869.

We are also requesting that in the event of a serious covid-19 outbreak in the home, school closures or staff sickness with this illness, if you could inform us now if you or any other family members might be prepared to assist us care for your loved one e.g. assisting with their meals / drinks / washing and dressing etc. We do not expect you to do this, but it may be easier to ask this now so we know who may be willing and /or able if needed.

We are following the guidelines set down by Government through CCG., CQC, PHE and the LA's, and will keep you updated accordingly. Please be aware of any notices placed in the Home.

Should you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch. We greatly appreciate your input and support, and fully acknowledge this will not please everyone.

Could we remind you all of the importance of hand washing, and drying hands well, as cracked hands from hand gels and not drying their hands properly, seriously increases infection risks – so moisturising hands is very important.

With best wishes and much hope for reducing the risks to all of us collectively.

Pam Bourton

Registered Manager