

**Adult Care Services**  
**Hertfordshire County Council**  
**County Hall**  
**Pegs Lane**  
**Hertford**  
**Herts, SG13 8DP**  
**Date: 4 December 2020**

Dear Visitor

### **Arrangements for Family and for Non-Essential Care Home Visits during Continued Viral Spread**

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the challenges, emotional impact and distress that the pandemic has created for care home residents and their families. We would also like to reassure you that we are committed to supporting our residents in all settings and care homes and appreciate how difficult this must be for family at the moment.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still circulating in the community causing new infections and hospital admissions, and the current easing of restrictions nationally means that this gives the virus opportunities to transmit more widely. As a result of this, we need to continue taking measures to make visiting your loved ones as safe as possible.

We want to make visits to care home residents possible, but this can only happen if we do everything we can to prevent the spread of infection.

Your care home will put in place a series of measures, following a detailed checklist and your co-operation with these measures is crucial to help us prevent the spread of infection.

This may include a policy on garden only visits or shielded visits

As the virus is still circulating, to make visits as safe as possible, **every** person visiting a care home could have COVID-19 unknowingly. We are sorry if this statement offends you, but we must treat every person coming into a care home as potentially infected. This is the same approach NHS facilities are now taking.

#### **Making your visit as safe as possible**

We want to keep care homes open to visits where possible and safe. We recognise visits are important for residents but if we cannot make them safe, we may have to require the homes to close to visitors.

#### **Following these key rules will help to keep your loved ones, and you, safe.**

1. **Contact the home in advance** - you may need to book and may be turned away if you do not

2. Follow any instructions or advice given by the home to make the visit safe
3. It is really important that you are free of any COVID-19 symptoms and not unwell on the day of your visit. Please be ready to answer some health questions, this might include a temperature check. If you have a new persistent dry cough, a fever or loss of smell or taste or any 'flu like symptoms, then **YOU MUST NOT VISIT**
4. It is really important that you wash your hands, keep 2 metres distance from everyone (staff and residents) and use PPE, such as masks as directed by those caring for your loved ones
5. Please remain in the designated visiting area and follow guidance from our staff
6. Please ensure that any gifts you bring can be washed / sanitised
7. Please avoid public transport when visiting the home
8. The home may record your name and contact details for Test and Trace purposes, should they be required

### **Home Closure**

Since the virus is still circulating widely, and as a nation we are progressively easing those restrictions which can be eased, we will see increases in virus transmission and outbreaks in some areas. This means there may be circumstances where homes must close to family visitors. It is important to contact the home to ensure it is still open to visits before you go. This will mean we can avoid closures and prohibitions of visits. We are sorry that we must put these measures in place, but they are essential to avoid homes closing and keep you, your loved ones, other residents and staff safe.

We are hopeful with the roll out of the Covid vaccine that we will soon be able to stop these measures.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation in these measures.

Your sincerely



**Jim McManus**  
Director of Public Health

Yours sincerely



**Chris Badger**  
Interim Director of Adult Care Services