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Dear Families and Friends

I hope you are continuing to keep safe and well and that you have been able to benefit from some of the ‘easing’ of lockdown. Although we have not been able to see you here for some weeks now you are all in our thoughts and we continue to work tirelessly to protect your loved ones. To date this has been managed with caution, meticulous levels of planning, appropriate PPE and an amazing level of staff spirit/team work, with the end result of Oakleaf residents across all sites remaining in a healthy and comfortable condition.

I would like to give you an update on the current approach we are taking regarding visitors and the stance we will have going forward. Although I recognise the desire and drive for you to see your loved ones, we will be continuing with the current No Visiting arrangements throughout June into the first weeks of July. The precautions we have put in place to date have been hugely successful and have had the desired effect at largely keeping COVID 19 outside of the organisation. As restrictions are eased at a national level, our staff group, yourselves’ and the wider community will be starting to access a widening group of people and environments. We HAVE to monitor the effects of this in the coming days/weeks and ensure that we can maintain the level of control and safety we have been able to currently achieve.

There have been some requests from a small number of families to meet their loved ones in parks/outside spaces whilst maintaining social distancing, however again we have to curtail these due to the potential risks involved in the virus being brought back on to the site. This may appear to be overly cautious and I can assure you these decisions have not been taken lightly by the Oakleaf team and are the result of much discussion between ourselves, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Public Health England (PHE). I personally have spoken at length with both organisations who fully condone our course of action and it is indeed the advice they are giving to ALL care homes/health organisations across the country. So much hard work and sacrifice has gone in to keeping our residents safe that to endanger this by coming out of these measures too early could still prove catastrophic.

I am asking for your understanding and patience and will lay out once again the 3 main stipulations we are continuing to operate regarding visitors:

1. No visitors to any site are allowed on the premises.
2. No residents will be taken to parks/open spaces to meet their families.
3. We ask that families do not bring goods to the community houses for residents unless they are absolutely essential and it has been discussed with management.

The Government intends to review their stance on Care Homes on June 30th and we will be listening to their advice intently. Please let me assure you again that it is with a heavy heart that these arrangements need to be kept in place but I hope you understand that the end goal is for us to be able to greet you all again in better times and be able to say to you “we kept your loved one safe” and all the peers and staff around them.

Many of our residents are extremely vulnerable and fall into the Governments official “shielding group” and this currently has been extended and running to the 30th June and will then be reviewed.

The staff are continuing to work as creatively and innovatively as possible to produce some interesting therapy within the confines of our lockdown and some of the results have been wonderful to witness. They have attempted to generate a lot of fun, co-operative working and interest, whilst at the same time continue to progress residents along their rehabilitation pathway.

The Senior Management COVID 19 Team continue to meet twice weekly to discuss and review our plans to ensure that best practice is followed and that we have appropriate PPE in place. I personally speak continuously to PHE, The wider Caretech Group and the local health authority - CCG to ensure our approach is valid and that we are keeping up to date with current guidelines.

I hope this gives you further insight into the way in which we are managing these most extraordinary of times. Along the way difficult decisions need to be made and our policy around visitors at the moment sadly falls into this category. However our common goal is always to keep our most vulnerable residents and staff as safe as possible from this potential killer and to this end we will continue to take the steps that need to be taken. Our approach will be cautious but where and when we can start to ease the restrictions we will do so in a gradual and graded manner.

In these testing times the hope and thought of better days to come has been our salvation and we WILL get there. Your support and understanding plays a great part in what we are doing and I would like to thank you for the messages of gratitude we have received commending the staff efforts, they mean so much and serve as a great motivator.

Please keep safe, keep heeding the advice and know that we are thinking of you as we all work our way through this.

Yours sincerely



Kathy Swannell

Clinical and Operations Director