1st December 2020

Dear Families & Friends

As the Christmas season comes upon us can I firstly wish you all the best for December, and hope that you continue to stay safe and well. This year has been so testing for you all and your unwavering support has enabled us to tackle 2020 in the spirit that we have. Please be assured that this support, patience and understanding has been invaluable to us all.

You will be aware that the second period of national lockdown comes to an end on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 and that has prompted discussion as to the possibility of allowing visitors back on site. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that we have overwhelmingly felt it was important to re-start face to face contact and that from Thursday 3rd December 2020 we will be allowing family and friends back on main site at Hartwell, and at all of our community homes.

Northampton is currently in tier 2 of the national tier system, and we will be accepting visitors from tiers 1 and 2. Unfortunately, we cannot accept families/friends who reside in tier 3 areas. These are difficult decisions to take, but again are necessary to ensure the safety of all.

Clearly it is important that we continue to do this in exactly the same way as pre-lockdown. Attention to safety, social distancing rules and Oakleaf guidelines will be imperative. Visits will be limited to 2 family/friends at any one time. All visits will have to be booked through the normal system by calling 01604 864466 where Kathlyn Donohoe or Hayley Parkins will allocate you an hour’s slot, which hopefully will meet your preferred times.

When you arrive please go to the unit where your loved one is currently staying and a member of staff will meet you and take you to your allocated visiting room. The room will have masks and hand-sanitiser for you should you not have your own and will be cleaned down prior to and between each visit.

It gives us all great heart and pleasure knowing you will be able to come and see us again but I implore you to please maintain the standards we were adhering to prior to lockdown. We did have a couple of reports of people not keeping masks on and I have to insist that these are the protocols we follow, to ensure the safety of all.

I am very aware that Christmas visits and organisation will be causing some anxiety and I wish that I could give you an answer in this letter that would satisfy and take these away. However, we are going to remain cautious and just keep the next 2 weeks under review and then communicate with you as to how we are going to manage this very important and special family time of year.

Thank you all so much for understanding and we really are all looking forward to seeing you again from Thursday. Family contact is so important and the act of physically laying eyes on each other is a commodity that I do not feel we will ever take for granted again.

Please keep safe, keep well, look after one another and come to see us as soon as you can.

If we can be of assistance with anything related to COVID and Christmas organisation, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Dan Gordon, Sue Clayson or Hayley Parkins where we will do our best to assist.

Yours sincerely



Kathy Swannell

Clinical and Operations Director