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07 May 2020

Hi everyone

I hope that you and your loved ones are well and are coping as best you can.

I wanted to catch up with you before the Bank Holiday weekend and to say thank you for everything that you are doing to keep our essential services running and keeping the people we support safe. The fact that you are doing this with such selflessness is humbling.

I don't know about you, but each day and week can be full of joy and heartbreak in equal measure. The small but significant acts of kindness are the ones that make life bearable, in a world in which we are surrounded by such unrelenting sad news. Given the number of vulnerable people that we support, you are doing a remarkable job to keep the numbers of people falling ill with the virus so low. You are genuinely saving lives.

At the time of writing we have 4 people we support who are currently symptomatic and we have 11 people who have been symptomatic and have recovered, 6 of whom were tested as positive. I am however saddened to report that in total we have had 3 people we support who have died with Covid related illness: Liz Chapman from Westerton, Jeff Hichliff from Endecliff and Jack Carver from Holmsley. Sadly, Jane Wilson from Waterloo and Pamela Hitchin from Delph have also died from other health conditions. All five will be greatly missed. We have two other people who are still in hospital, one of whom is due for discharge any time soon and the other of whom is showing signs of improvement after weeks of being critically ill.

We have been working to ensure that all our extremely vulnerable staff and those staff who live with people who are extremely vulnerable are able to shield and therefore not be in the workplace. I can confirm that we do not have anyone in either of these categories physically in work, though we are trying to allocate work to those people as far as is practically possible.

We now have 102 staff who, due to their circumstances and vulnerability, are currently working from home for 12 weeks. Additionally, we have 8 people who have tested positive and are unwell at home and a further 15 who are self isolating because they or a member of their household is currently symptomatic. On top of this, at the moment we have between 50 and 60 people off each day with non Covid-19 illnesses.

We have had two members of staff who have required hospital treatment, one thankfully discharged and on her route to recovery and one who remains seriously ill in hospital, though showing some signs of improvement over the last 24 hours. I know that everyone is rooting for his recovery.

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Our overriding objective is that we minimize the risks to everyone and that, wherever practically possible, we do all we can to protect all our vulnerable customers and colleagues.

I am grateful to those people who have been able to adjust their regular working pattern through this crisis to do shift work. This has enabled us to support some staff in the vulnerable category also not to have to be physically in work. We continue to seek volunteers from people who are not in the vulnerable categories to come forward to do shiftwork from those who are able to do so – as the more people who volunteer, the greater the number of vulnerable colleagues we can support to work from home.

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister is to make an announcement on Sunday about the governments plans to ease restrictions. I do not envisage that this will have any immediate impact on the services that we deliver and the way we currently deliver them – given that we support some of the most vulnerable people in society.

There has been some concern that the talk of easing of restrictions may lead to a relaxation of some behaviours that are now routine. Please, please ensure that you:

- continue to maintain good hand hygiene practices
- follow Aspire's PPE wearing guidance [Link to PPE wearing guidance](#)
- continue to follow PPE donning and doffing guidance [Link to donning and doffing guidance](#)

These three measures are undoubtedly key factors of why we have been able to keep the numbers of people catching the virus so low.

Keep well and stay safe



**Andy Rawnsley**  
**Chief Executive**

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