

N: Andy Rawnsley
E: andrew.rawnsley@aspirecbs.org.uk
A: Westfield Chambers
Westfield Business Park
Lower Wortley Road
Leeds LS12 4PX

22nd July 2020

Dear all

I hope that you are well.

Just wanted to say thank you for everything that you are doing to keep people safe and to provide a few updates:

Covid update

I am really pleased to be able to report that we still have no-one who we support who has tested positive since 24th April, which is in itself a huge achievement. Additionally, we have only had one member of staff who has tested positive in that period, and thankfully she had not had any symptoms. Our PPE stock levels continue to be healthy and as you have heard from me before, it is the use of PPE, vigilant infection control practices and social distancing (which for us is still 2 metres) that continue to be our biggest defences against transmission to the people we support and to each other.

Importantly, national PPE guidance has just come out which has led us to update our guidance on the use of masks. Essentially, this means that all staff and visitors in all care settings should wear a mask at all times, even if they are not undertaking care tasks.

Given that the government is pausing shielding, we are starting to plan with the 106 members of staff who have been working from home about how they can safely return to work.

With the further opening back up of society we have implemented a risk assessment tool to allow us to support people to visit families, go back out into communities and enjoy a greater range of activities in as safe a way as possible. Please talk with your manager if you have any questions about this.

As restrictions across the country are being eased, we continue to make small steps towards returning our services to a safe way of operating in a COVID-19 world, as outlined below.

Respite

We have started to see an increase in demand for our respite services in recent weeks, which we anticipate will increase again, once shielding pauses. We have therefore agreed with care

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management that we will revert the respite unit at Scott Hall back to providing a respite function in August. This unit has temporarily been used as a second 'crisis' unit, which has supported a number of families over recent months whose situations required emergency support. A huge thank you to the respite team who have adapted to this new model, in what has at times been very challenging circumstances.

Supported Living

Many families have been able to take up the offer of outside visits, and these continue to be the safest way to visit their loved ones in our supported living services. Our visiting arrangements continue to be that family members can visit, but only outside of properties and in well planned, controlled and safe ways. However, we will keep this position under review as guidance changes. Our approach to any future change to visiting arrangements will be cautious to ensure that the risk to the people we support, especially those in shared accommodation, remains low.

Day services

We are in the process of finalising a detailed recovery plan for a small number of our day services to be able to re-open from the middle of August, albeit on reduced numbers. This will be the first phase in what will hopefully be a gradual return to providing a buildings based day service over the coming weeks and months. Initially this offer will be to those people who live at home with family carers and those who live in the St Anne's Community Carers scheme. We will have reduced numbers of people per day, in order that social distancing can be safely managed.

Our intention from the middle of August is to re-open the three main hubs at Bramley, Potternewton and Rothwell and the following community bases: Strawberry Lane, Cross Gates, Naburn, Blackgates and the Lavinia Baker room at Morley Library. The local managers will be in touch with you about the precise days that each building will open. We are also working on plans to follow this phase with more day services opening during September.

We will continue to provide some community support and are developing an online offer so that we have a flexible day service offer that can respond to future demand and to any local lockdowns that may be imposed, should there be local spikes.

Black Lives Matter

As I mentioned in my previous letter, we are looking to facilitate the set up of a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff forum, led by people from those communities that can help influence us in the development of our policies and practices. The first meeting will be arranged as a Skype meeting on Wednesday 12th August between 2 and 3.30 pm. If you would be interested in joining such a forum please phone or email Jenny on 0113 378 1922, jennifer.smith@aspirecbs.org.uk who will send you a calendar invite.

Board Update

The board met via Skype on Monday and approved the accounts for last year, which saw us make a small surplus in 2019/20 of £211k. The board approved an updated service Safeguarding Policy, which was rolled out earlier this week – please speak with your manager if you have not seen this yet. The board also wanted to express their thanks for everything that you are all doing to help keep the people we support and each other safe.

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I am conscious that there will be some anxiety as we start to open up our services again and as people start to return to work who have been shielding. Now more than ever we need to support each other and be kind to each other.

Keep well and stay safe



Andy Rawnsley
Chief Executive

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