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Dear Carer

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. At the time of writing, the rates of coronavirus are increasing again with additional restrictions having been imposed at a national level recently as well as new local restrictions having come into place here in Leeds over the last weekend.

Covid update

With the increase in local cases that followed the previous easing of restrictions earlier this summer, we have had one person we support who has recently tested positive for Covid-19. However, I am pleased to be able to let you know that he has been able to remain at home, has not required hospital treatment and is improving. Additionally, four members of staff have recently tested positive and they are isolating at home. The Infection Prevention and Control measures we have in place are vital in combating the virus and we continue to invest heavily in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face masks, gloves and aprons. Our staff are required to wear PPE whilst supporting people and we have a good level of stocks to see us through the winter months.

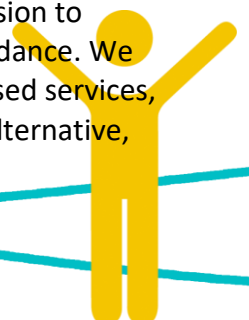
Day Services

Our gradual re-opening of day services is going well. In addition to the eight day services we re-opened in August, including the three main hubs at Bramley, Potternewton and Rothwell, we re-opened nine more services in recent weeks, as planned, and a further four services at Barleyfields, Hillside, Kirkstall Leisure Centre and Scotthall Leisure Centre re-opened this week.

The people we have supported to return to their day services appear to be very happy about getting back to a new 'normal' and catching up with friends and staff. Due to the requirements for social distancing, the people who have returned so far live with family carers or with carers from the St. Anne's Community Carers scheme and re-opening the day services has provided their carers with some much deserved respite.

Support in the newly re-opened day services is organised in 'bubbles' and is in accordance with the national 'Rule of 6' guidance. Given that further restrictions have been implemented in Leeds over the last weekend, we have reviewed our arrangements and can confirm that our decision to continue to provide these buildings based day services, is in line with government guidance. We recognise that some of you may be very anxious about continuing to use buildings based services, and if this is the case, and you would prefer to have some community support as an alternative,

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please contact your local management team. Where we have capacity to do so, we will try to provide community based support for people as an alternative to buildings based services.

Respite

We continue to offer our respite service and emergency service and demand is steady but, understandably, lower than in pre-Covid times. National guidance for areas with additional restrictions such as Leeds now advises against family visits to Care Homes in all but the most exceptional circumstances, and therefore, I regret that we have had to update our Family Visitors Policy ([Link to policy](#)) to reflect this guidance. Where we are able to support such visits, due to exceptional circumstances, this will continue to need to be fully risk assessed and agreed with the manager of the service.

Supported Living

Similarly, the local restrictions in Leeds mean that visits must not take place between people from different households, unless they are in a support bubble. Therefore, I regret that once again we are having to stop family visits in all but exceptional circumstances; this is reflected in the enclosed Family Visitors Policy ([Link to policy](#)). Where we are able to support such visits, due to exceptional circumstances, this will continue to need to be fully risk assessed and agreed with the manager of the service, through discussion with you, taking into account the individual circumstances of the individual and the people with whom they live.

I appreciate that this move to further limit visits will be a huge blow to many of you and your loved ones. We will continue to do what we can to support your loved ones to keep in touch, given that face to face contact will not be possible in most cases at this time, until local restrictions are eased. This is a fast moving situation with Government guidance changing regularly. We are constantly monitoring this guidance and amending our policies and processes to reflect the updates, doing what we can to enable contact where it is legally possible and safe to do so.

I regret having to be the bearer of such disappointing news though I am hopeful that local restrictions in Leeds can be lifted as soon as possible, so that we can revert to supporting safe face to face visits as soon as practically possible. In the meantime, we will continue as before in trying to support all other forms of contact where this is possible. I am grateful for your continued patience and support.

If there is anything that you need support with, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or someone from the team where your loved one receives a service and we will try to respond as best we can. Alternatively, should you want to talk to someone independently about any concerns or support you may need in your caring role, there is help available at Carers Leeds. They can be contacted on 0113 3804300 for information, advice and emotional support.

Keep well and stay safe



Andy Rawnsley
Chief Executive

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