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Dear Carer

I hope that you and your loved ones are as well as can be at this difficult time. We had been preparing for Leeds going into Tier Three Covid Alert Level - Very High. However, things are moving quickly and these plans have already been overtaken by the new national restrictions which are coming in from Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> November until Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December. As the number of cases of Covid-19 continues to rise, the government is imposing additional restrictions on us all in an attempt to reduce the spread of infection. The new restrictions require us to stay at home and not gather with people we do not live with, except for specific purposes, and certain businesses and venues will close.

### **Covid update**

At Aspire we have not been immune to the surge in infections: a number of people we support and staff have tested positive or are symptomatic. All of them are either self-isolating at home or have returned to work, but the good news is that none of the people affected in this 'second wave' have required hospitalisation.

We have taken the opportunity to remind all frontline staff of the need to be diligent in implementing our Infection Prevention and Control measures as these are a vital tool in combating the virus. We continue to invest heavily in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face masks, gloves and aprons and have a good level of stock in preparation for the months ahead.

### **Day Services**

The government has stated it wants social care services to continue and we are very pleased to confirm that, under the current new national restrictions, we are able to continue to run the majority of our day services. We have exclusive use of several buildings plus, although all community buildings and leisure centres must close to the public from Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> November, we will continue to have access to these venues also. We will continue to support people who attend our day services in 'bubbles' in accordance with the national 'Rule of 6' guidance. To date this has proved effective and we have only had to temporarily close three of the support bubbles.

Once again, we understand that some of you may be very anxious about continuing to use buildings based services. If this is the case, and you would prefer to have some community support as an alternative, 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.

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## Respite

We are continuing to offer our respite service and emergency service. Understandably, demand for these services is falling which means we are operating the service at a reduced capacity, opening different buildings on a rotation basis. Therefore, when your loved one is booked in for respite, this may be at a different building from the one where they usually stay.

Sadly, the national guidance for Leeds is that family visits to Care Homes should take place only in the most exceptional circumstances. Therefore, once again, we have had to update our Family Visitor Protocol to reflect this change in guidance ([link to visitor protocol](#)). Where exceptional circumstances do occur, and we are able to support such visits, we will only do so after undertaking a full risk assessment, agreed with the manager of the service, through discussion with you, taking into account the individual circumstances of everyone involved.

## Supported Living

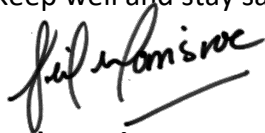
Similarly, the new national restrictions mean that visits must not take place between people from different households, unless they are in a support bubble. Therefore, again, we must stop family visits in all but exceptional circumstances. This change is reflected in the Family Visitors Protocol ([link to visitor protocol](#)). Where exceptional circumstances do occur, and we are able to support such visits, we will only do so after undertaking a full risk assessment, 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 the new national restrictions will be difficult for you and your loved ones, particularly as we are drawing nearer to cherished festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas. We will continue, as before, to do all within our power to support your loved ones to keep in touch through all other forms of contact, where this is possible, given that face to face contact will not be permitted, in most cases, for the foreseeable future.

This is a fast moving situation with Government guidance changing regularly. We are constantly monitoring the 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.

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



**Neil Morrisroe**  
**Operations Director**

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