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Hi everyone

I hope that you and your loved ones are as well as can be at this difficult time. I would like to personally thank you for all that you are doing to help keep our services running. 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 came into effect 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 where possible, not gather with people we do not live with except for specific purposes and certain businesses, shops and venues have closed.

### **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 now been able to return to work, but the good news is that none of the people affected in this 'second wave' have required hospital admission.

Many of the people we support have specific vulnerabilities and now more than ever it is vital that all frontline staff fully implement our Infection Prevention and Control measures as these are our best tool in combating the virus and protecting the people we support, colleagues and yourself. 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. We have exclusive use of several buildings and, although community buildings and leisure centres are now closed to the general public, we have access to these buildings. This means we can continue to run the majority of our day services under the new national restrictions which is fantastic news for the people we support and their family carers. We will continue to operate our 'support bubbles' within day services in accordance with the national 'Rule of 6' guidance. To date this has proved very effective and we have only had to temporarily close three of the support bubbles to customers.

### **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

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different buildings on a rotation basis. Therefore, when someone we support is booked in for respite, this may be provided at a different building from the one where they usually stay.

The national guidance is that family visits to Care Homes can take place in certain circumstances. Therefore, once again in this ever changing climate, we have had to update our [Family Visitor Protocol](#) to reflect this change in guidance. Where 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 certain circumstances. This change is reflected in the latest version of our [Family Visitors Protocol](#). Where certain 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.

Under the new national restrictions none of us are free to participate in the full range of leisure and social activities that we enjoyed in pre-Covid days. However, it is essential that we continue to do all in our power to enable the people we support to stay safe, be active and keep in touch with their family and friends. If you have not done so already, now might be a good time to take a look at all the online activities that are available on our [website](#).

I appreciate that the new national restrictions will be difficult for everyone, particularly as we are drawing nearer to cherished festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas. 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.

Again, thank you for all that you are doing to keep the people you support safe, well and connected.



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

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