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Dear Carer

I hope you and those people close to you are safe and well.

It's really good to be back at work after a period off being quite poorly with Covid 19. I would like to say a big 'thanks' to Neil Morrisroe, Operations Director, and the team for covering everything in my absence and to everyone for your kind messages.

After what has been an awful year for everybody, I'm very pleased to be able to have some good news to share:

#### **Vaccine**

Firstly, the approval of the Pfizer vaccine does appear to offer some hope that life without the current level of restrictions may well be on the horizon. We know that people in Care Homes are in the priority group for vaccinations when they are rolled out, followed by health and social care staff, though at this point we do not have a definitive position as to when it will become available to the people we support or Aspire staff.

#### **Visiting Loved Ones**

Secondly, as you may have seen on the news, rapid testing is going to be made available to the people we support, a family visitor for people who live in Care Homes and staff. For organisations such as Aspire this means our respite services and the crisis unit at Scott Hall Grove will be included. Unfortunately, as yet, the government has not made the rapid testing available to supported living services, though I remain hopeful that this will be rolled out to all care settings in the coming weeks. We will therefore continue to fully risk assess on an individual basis where families wish to visit loved ones in our supported living services. We will also continue to try to support all other forms of contact, where possible, so families can stay in touch with loved ones in the safest way possible.



## **Re-Contracting**

Thirdly, we have had good news that the Council's Executive Board has agreed to the recommendation to continue to contract with Aspire after the end of the current contract period, which expires at the end of July 2021. This is great news for both the continuation of our services and also for staff.

## **Finally**

I'd just like to say a huge thank you for your continued patience and support. From my own personal experience of Covid 19, this virus is something that we should continue to treat with the greatest of caution. I am proud that we have done remarkably well in protecting the people we support: we still have had no-one we support or who works for us having been admitted to hospital with Covid 19 since the 30th April. I know that many of us will, understandably, want to spend time with family and friends during the upcoming relaxation of restrictions over the Christmas period, but it is essential that we all do this safely.

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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