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Dear Carer

I hope that you and your loved ones are well. I am writing to provide a quick update to let you know how we are responding to the most recent lifting of restrictions and a general update on our plans for the coming months. I have also enclosed the updated visitor protocol which should help when planning visits to your loved one.

Supported Living

I am pleased to be able to confirm that no-one we support has tested positive for covid-19 since February and that 96% of the people we support have had their first job, with 71% also having had their second job.

With the national easing of restrictions combined with the high level of take up of vaccinations, we are now in a position to further support visiting, both inside and outside of properties. Whilst outside visits continue to be the safest way to visit someone, we recognise that this is very difficult for some people we support and for family carers. We are asking that anyone who does visit continues to do so safely, with a risk assessment completed with a member of the management team in place. As part of the process we are also asking that visitors take a lateral flow test before their visit. These are free and now widely available through the online government ordering system at [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests) or can be picked up from pharmacies or we can provide you with one at the time of your visit. I appreciate that taking these tests can be a bit of an inconvenience, but they do provide further mitigation against the possible spread of the virus and will hopefully help us all be more confident about giving hugs to those we most love.

Respite and emergency services

We continue to see an increase in take up of respite services and have had no-one in respite test positive this year.

We are taking the same approach to visiting people in our respite and emergency services as we do in our supported living services. The only difference being that should any family members need to do visits to any of those services, the lateral flow tests are compulsory, in line with government guidance for visits to care homes.

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Day services

We are now starting to prepare for the full re-opening of all our day services, though this will be very much dependent upon what is permissible by the next stage of the government's roadmap on 21st June as well as what is practically possible. Much will depend on the government's view about vaccine rollout and whether or not the new variant can be controlled. That said, we are hopefully moving to a time when our day services can again be fully operational again and welcome back those people who have not accessed day services for over a year.

Over the next couple of weeks managers in services will be making contact with you to check the level of service you would want to take back up, in the event that we are able to fully open. We anticipate that should all restrictions be lifted on 21st June we would then start to reintroduce more people into our day services in a phased way over a number of weeks. All this is however very much dependent upon all restrictions being eased, particularly those about social distancing – which have had a severe limiting impact on the number of people we can support in any given space.

As you may be aware there has never been any specific government guidance throughout the pandemic about day services and therefore we continue to look at all the guidance about community venues and social care and other similar settings to try to plot the safest way forward.

I hope that these are all positive steps in the right direction – and I remain cautiously optimistic for services re-opening fully and safely, particularly as we now have 84% staff who have had their first vaccination and 72% have had their second jab.

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 380 4300 for information, advice and emotional support.

I would like to thank you all for your continued patience and support.

Keep well and stay safe



Andy Rawnsley
Chief Executive

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