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Dear Carer

I hope all is as well as it can be under the present circumstances. I know that this third lockdown has been particularly difficult for some people, especially as the weather has made getting outdoors more challenging.

The vaccination process is offering some light at the end of what has been a very long tunnel and I would recommend that everyone takes up the offer of a vaccine as the programme is rolled out across the country. Currently half of our staff have now had their first Covid vaccination and I am pleased to report that no-one has reported significant side effects.

We are also working with local GP surgeries so that vaccinations are offered to the people we support and best interest decisions can be made by health staff in respect of people who lack capacity to consent. To date over 60 people who live in our supported living services have had their first dose and, as the NHS works through the priority groups, we anticipate this number will increase.

Please find below an update about each of our services:

Day Services

I am pleased that the pause in our day services during January was short-lived and that the services are now up and running again, albeit with significantly limited numbers of people attending each day. Of course, things are not as before, but the people we support who are attending appear to be happy about their return and we know those of you with loved ones who have returned appreciate the short break this is providing.

Respite

Our respite service has continued throughout the pandemic. To help manage the risk of asymptomatic people passing the virus to others, we continue to ask everyone who uses the service to wear a mask whilst they are in respite, if this is possible. For people who cannot tolerate wearing a mask we will continue to support them, as far as is practicably possible, to observe social distancing.



Supported Living

Our supported living services continue as before, thanks in part to those day services staff who have moved across to work alongside colleagues in supported living. Whether on 24/7 shifts, or through the day, they are supporting people to keep safe, stay connected and be active. This is extremely helpful whilst the number of people attending day services has had to be even further restricted. The benefit of having additional staff in a team who know the people they are supporting well is invaluable.

We have had two recent Covid outbreaks in our supported living services (in Wetherby and Yeadon) – both of which are under control, with life in those services affected by short term illnesses to both some people we support and some staff members. I am grateful to everyone who has pulled out all the stops to maintain these services – and to the patience of families who have had to stay away whilst outbreaks take place.

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.

Lastly, our January edition of the newsletter is enclosed. I hope you enjoy reading about the great things people have been doing over the last few months including life events that are not related to Covid.

Keep well and stay safe.



Andy Rawnsley
Chief Executive

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