21 April 2021

Dear Family Member/ Carer/ Representative

Further to my letter to you dated 7 April 2021 I am now writing to advise of the updated visiting guidance Livability is following. Please accept my apology regarding the delay in sending this letter. The delay has been caused by us taking some additional time to understand the changing position regarding visits away from Care Homes issued by the UK Government.

Indoor Visits to Care Homes

The UK Government guidance regarding indoor visits to Care Homes has now changed and means that each person living in a Livability Care Home can have two nominated constant visitors who are able to undertake visits indoors. The nominated constant visitors may visit together or separately.

As before, in order to undertake an indoor visit to a Livability Care Home, the person visiting must:

* Make an appointment in advance of the visit
* Agree to undertake a rapid Lateral Flow Test upon arrival at the service. The result of the test must be negative. If the visitor has had COVID-19 in the past 90 days and has fully recovered a Lateral Flow Test will not be required but the visitor must provide the Care Home with proof of the date they tested positive for COVID-19
* Wear PPE as directed by the service including a Type IIR surgical facemask, apron and disposable gloves. This PPE will be provide by the Care Home.
* Agree to the visit taking place in a specified location within the Care Home

Visitors are able to hold hands, whilst wearing the disposable gloves provided, with the person they are visiting but should keep physical contact to a minimum.

Outdoor or Window Visits (within the grounds of the Care Home)

People living in Care Homes are able to receive two visitors at a time either outside within the grounds of the Care Home or by going to the window of the Care Home and the visitors being outside.

These types of visit must also be arranged with the Care Home in advance however there is no need for the visitors to be “nominated” visitors meaning that the visitors do not need to be constant visitors and can change from visit to visit.

Visits Away from Care Homes

The UK Government guidance is that visits away from Care Homes can take place however the person living in the Care Home must undertake a period of 14 days isolation when returning to the Care Home. Isolation usually means that the person living in the Care Home must remain in their own bedroom for 14 days to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission to others living in the Care Home. The rationale provided by the UK Government for this is that Care Homes are not able to control the environment when visits take place away from the Care Home and so cannot be sufficiently certain that transmission of COVID-19 has not occurred.

In practical terms, for most people we support in Care Homes, this is likely to mean that visits away from Care Homes are not a feasible option at this time. However, where it is agreed and where the person we support agrees to complete 14 days of isolation upon return to the Care Home we will support this as far as we can. When a person we support is undertaking a period of isolation this will mean they are unable to receive visitors either indoors or outdoors.

The guidance regarding the requirement for self-isolation following a visit away from the Care Home applies to any and all visits away from the Care Home where the immediate “bubble” cannot be exclusively maintained. We recognise this is a difficult piece of guidance for people to accept and we are checking for updates to the guidance each day.

Supported Living / Extra Care Sevices

The people Livability supports in Supported Living or Extra Care settings are subject to the same restrictions on visitors as the rest of the population. We will support people to understand the restrictions that the UK Government has in place so that the person can ensure they remain within the boundaries of the law. Where the UK Government changes that guidance we will ensure we communicate with the people we support so they understand the ramifications of these changes.

I hope this letter has been useful in updating you regarding the visiting guidance Livability is following. If you wish to discuss this please contact the Livability manager at your local Livability service and they will be happy to listen.

We expect it is likely that the visiting guidance issued by the UK Government will now change periodically and please be assured we will remain alert for such changes.

Thank you for your on-going co-operation and support and I hope you will be able to visit your loved ones soon.

Yours sincerely

Jane Percy

Executive Director of Operations