21 December 2020

Dear Relative/ Carer/ Representative

Further to the UK Government and Welsh Government announcements on 19 December 2020 I am writing to update the guidance I sent to you only last week regarding the arrangements we will have in place for the Christmas period and beyond.

I am sure that you, like me, are concerned about the potential impact of the newly identified variant of the coronavirus. My role for Livability is to continue to protect the people we support and our staff from the virus and having considered the information presented by the UK and Welsh Governments I can now advise that our arrangements are as set our below.

**New Guidance – Care Home Services**

Our arrangements for our care home services remain the same as was communicated last week. These arrangements will stay in place for the duration of the Wales-wide National Lockdown and they will be reviewed during that period of time. As such I can confirm the arrangements for Care Home services are:

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| **Livability Activity** | **Guidance** |
| **CARE HOME GUIDANCE WALES** | |
| Care Home Visits (family/ friends) | Indoor: visits for End of Life family visits only.  Outdoor and window visits can take place. One visitor at a time only. |
| Care Home Visits (contractor/ other) | Essential only and agreed via COVID Team/ Oncall |
| Care Home CIW/ Funder inspection | Legally allowed to take place – advise inspector of service COVID status |
| Indoor Visits Away from Care Home (including visiting friends and family) | Not to take place |
| Outdoor Visits with friends and family (such as a walk along the sea front or in a park) | Can take place with staff member present and with robust risk assessment agreed by Regional Director/ COVID Team/ On call. Two metre social distancing guidance to be followed. Must be agreed at least 24 hours in advance with the Care Home. |
| Shopping trip (away from care home) | Not to take place |
| Medical appointments (away from care home) | Essential only – robust risk assessment agreed by Regional Director/ COVID Team/ On call |

I appreciate this will be, for some people, extremely disappointing news and especially as we had been hoping that a relaxation of some of these rules may have been possible. I wholeheartedly and sincerely apologise for the upset and heartache this will cause.

Our staff will be working hard over the Christmas period to support video calls, telephone calls as we try our hardest to enable virtual visiting to take place.

**Christmas Visiting Arrangements – Supported Living Services**

The national guidance for our Supported Living services in Wales is set out below. The Welsh Government is permitting changes to the usual arrangements on Christmas Day only and so the guidance Livability is following is in two part.

For Christmas Day our guidance is:

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| **Livability Activity** | **Guidance** |
| **SUPPORTED LIVING GUIDANCE 25 DECEMBER 2020 ONLY** | |
| Visits to Supported Living services (friends and family) | Christmas Day Bubble of two households (plus one single person household) |
| Visiting friends and family away from Supported Living services | Christmas Day Bubble of two households (plus one single person household) |
| Medical appointments (away from supported living service) | Recommend Essential only - notify local authority of risk, develop risk assessment to reduce risk to lowest levels |
| Day service/ other attendance from people living in Supported Living services | Strongly advise against – notify local authority of risk |
| Supported Living Visits (contractor/ other) | Essential only and agreed via COVID Team/ Oncall |

Livability strongly recommends that the additional advice from the UK Government in relation to Christmas Bubbles is followed by the people we support in Supported Living Services and their families. That additional advice is:

* All parties to avoid all other social contact for five days before the Christmas Day Bubble begins
* Avoid travelling from high prevalence COVID-19 area to areas of lower COVID-19 prevalence – do not travel to or from Tier 4 areas
* Avoid overnight stays
* Consider if a visit on Christmas Day is essential given the risks this may pose to yourselves, your loved ones and others.
* Restrict the Christmas Bubble on Christmas Day to as few people as possible and consider doing as much as possible outdoors
* Maintain excellent ventilation when households are mixing
* Keep the Christmas Day visits to as short a time as possible

Outside of Christmas Day and for duration of the Wales-wide National Lockdown our guidance for Supported Living services is:

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| **Livability Activity** | **Guidance** |
| **SUPPORTED LIVING GUIDANCE OUTSIDE OF 25 DECEMBER 2020** | |
| Visits to Supported Living services (friends and family) | Only as part of a legally extended household |
| Visiting friends and family away from Supported Living services | Only as part of a legally extended household |
| Medical appointments (away from supported living service) | Recommend Essential only - notify local authority of risk, develop risk assessment to reduce risk to lowest levels |
| Day service/ other attendance from people living in Supported Living services | Strongly advise against – notify local authority of risk |
| Supported Living Visits (contractor/ other) | Essential only and agreed via COVID Team/ Oncall |

I would advise that due to the concerns we all have about the spread of COVID-19 across our communities the advice from UK and Welsh Government is to keep any household mixing, even in legally extended households, to an absolute minimum.

**Thank you**

I hope this letter sets out the changes to the guidance we are having to make in order to ensure we are complying with the UK and Welsh Government requirements. I appreciate that this is a tremendously difficult situation and I express my sincere sorrow that this special time of year will be far less special this year than it usually is. I reaffirm my promise to you that Livability is doing all it can to protect the people we support and our staff and I add that we will do all we possibly can to make Christmas as good as it can be this year for the people we support.

Yours sincerely

Jane Percy

Executive Director of Operations