

Dear Friend of Greensleeves Care,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of all our staff in each of our care homes across the Trust in what has been an unbelievably challenging year for us all. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all our homes, our residents, and the communities in which we all live. It has been especially hard on all our families that have missed out so much on time with their loved ones.

With the release of the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown there is a sense that we may have brighter skies ahead and we have many reasons to be optimistic about the future. I know everyone is impatient to get back to normal, but we must take small steps back and remain careful, especially in care homes.

The vaccine rollout in the UK has been highly successful and is starting to have a significant impact on infection rates, hospitalisations, and mortalities across the country. We are utilising new treatments in our hospitals and have learned a great deal about how to reduce infections. In short there is a great deal to be positive about, but we need to remember that it is not all over and we need to stay sensible.

Although, there have been a number of welcome relaxations across the country and indeed within care homes we still need to remain cautious. We are still required to comply with some relatively strict rules regarding how we care for our residents and how relaxed visiting is. Things are opening up but are doing so at a sensible pace and we are sure you appreciate why that is.

### **Vaccine rollout**

The UK's vaccine rollout has been highly successful and has started to have a significant impact on managing the pandemic. Within Greensleeves Care homes the rollout has been very successful with over 97% of our residents having had their first vaccine and a similar number having had their second. This is great news and will hopefully lead to further easing of restrictions really soon.

We have also had the majority of our staff vaccinated; some have been unable to take up the offer of a vaccine for medical reasons. In fact, the uptake of our staff has been higher than the national average which we are really pleased about.

### **Improvements in visiting**

As part of the general easing of restrictions across the UK the government have also relaxed some of the rules governing care home visiting. As from Monday 12th April 2021 our residents will be able to receive visits from 2 named people nominated as close contact visitors. As you would expect there are some rules and regulations surrounding those visits, to get the specifics for your care home please speak to your local care home manager who will be pleased to advise you.

In order to keep our residents safe during visiting, the following precautions will be implemented:

- Temperature checks of all visitors
- Checks to ensure all visitors remain free from any Covid-19 symptoms
- A negative lateral flow test
- PPE – visitors will be required to wear appropriate PPE

- Screens – homes will have large screens in place to keep a safe barrier between the residents and our visitors for non-close contact visitors
- Hand washing – as all visitors would expect
- Hand sanitizer – there will be plenty of sanitizing stations for easy use.

We can allow essential carers visits as well – under strict risk assessed circumstances.

We are also looking forward to being able welcome children and babies to visit for the first time. Children under the age of two will not count towards the two named visitor quota.

Obviously, any visit involving children needs to be carefully managed and organised in advance with the home manager. Again, as per guidance, any children over the age of 11 will also need to wear PPE and with the parent’s consent register a negative lateral flow test result.

We are very excited about the easing of these restrictions; our residents and their families have made such big sacrifices over the last year, it will be so nice to see them enjoying each other’s company again. We have always followed the guidance and policies from Government and Public Health England. We have done so because it is the right thing to do and our residents have been kept safe as a result.

But we are proud that throughout our history we have always had an open-door policy where families had open access to their loved ones and the home management team. We are not back in that position yet, but it means a great deal to everyone at Greensleeves Care that we are at least moving in the right direction.

### **Monitoring standards of care**

As always, and throughout the pandemic, the quality of the care we deliver to our residents in our care homes remains central to all we do. Covid-19 has made keeping an eye on the care we provide much more difficult, so our team have had to adapt to the challenging circumstances.

At Greensleeves Care we have a highly experienced and motivated quality and operations team that work very closely with the team in each of the care homes to ensure our standards remain exceptionally high. This involves a balance between our internal experts visiting the care homes to conduct Covid-19 secure audits as well as other audits completed by the home.

This is something that we passionately believe is necessary as well as a vital requirement of the Care Quality Commission, our regulator.

Our Operational Support Teams and the Quality Teams follow the strictest possible protocols that make sure ensure the correct balance of oversight and accountability is always in place whilst minimising any infection control risk.

### **Our staff**

We have been truly overwhelmed by the number of positive messages, letters and cards that we have received from our resident’s families and friends over the last year expressing their deepest thanks for the care their loved ones have received.

We are incredibly proud of our staff and everything they have done over the last 12 months and we would like to pay tribute to them for their dedication and sacrifices.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

We continue to provide all the necessary Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to all our care homes to ensure that our residents and staff stay as safe as possible. We have also created an extremely robust supply chain to ensure that we continue to have a regular supply to meet any future PPE needs.