

13 March 2020

Dear visitors/ residents and staff,

Pinewood and the Coronavirus Outbreak (Covid-19)

The health, safety and wellbeing of our Residents and Staff are always our top priorities. We have, therefore, carefully considered our position with regard to the coronavirus outbreak in the UK including taking advice from Public Health England.

This letter details the latest guidance from us about the steps that we are taking in our Home. This information is intended for the residents of Pinewood, staff and any visitors.

For comprehensive information about the coronavirus itself, please visit the Public Health England website - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

It would be extremely difficult and impractical for us or any care home to completely eradicate the risk of any resident catching a viral or bacterial infection in the care home. We consider our response to, therefore, be proportionate considering the likely risks involved.

Before visiting Us

As a preventative measure we are asking visitors, including family members and friends, to minimise visits to Pinewood until further notice. We are specifically not taking the precautions taken by some care homes of banning all non essential visits. To do so may mean that some of our service users do not see visitors for three months or longer that the current epidemic may last for. In our view (and that of Public Health England) banning all non essential visitors would not necessarily lead to a significant lowering of the risks to our residents in catching the virus in any event (particularly given that staff and essential visitors would still be visiting the home). We are, however, keeping this policy under review.

What we do ask is that you do not visit Pinewood if you are feeling unwell, particularly if you have a cough, cold, flu, have shortness of breath, have recently been abroad or been in close contact with someone who has, or if you, a partner, or a dependent has recently returned from a Category 1 or Category 2 country as defined on the NHS website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>

Additionally, if you have a recent onset of a new continuous cough do not enter the care home and follow the government advice here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

When visiting

Please ensure you wash your hands-on arrival to the care home in any of our washbasins. The NHS has a video guide to effective handwashing, which you can see on the following web page:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands

All our wash basins have a hand washing instruction poster next to it.

Hand sanitizer units are placed around the home and we ask you to use the same frequently. We are also placing boxes of tissues around the care home. If you are going to sneeze or cough, please remember the “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” slogan, use our tissues and immediately throw them away in waste bins around the home. Afterwards immediately washing your hands.

We would really appreciate your support with these measures. In the unfortunate situation that we do have a case at Pinewood we will need to stop all visiting completely and we will keep you informed accordingly.

Visiting Entertainers

Visits from external entertainers into the home have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Our staff will do all they can to ensure that life in our services remains as comfortable and sociable as possible. Our internal activities coordinator will continue to do activities within the care home.

Residents going out of Pinewood

We will still ensure that vital medical visits are made.

In order to minimise the risk of our residents catching the virus, we are being proactive and stopping all future one to one outings. In the same vein, we are kindly requesting that visitors considering taking residents out of Pinewood for non-essential purposes refrain from doing so.

We have taken the decision to continue minibus trips as we consider stopping the same would be a disproportionate response. However, those with underlying respiratory conditions who have been assessed to be at high risk from Covid-19 will not be allowed on these journeys. Additionally, residents and staff will be asked to remain in the vehicle at all times unless directed otherwise by one of our staff (in any emergency).

Staff Shortages

We will do all we can to ensure that the home is always fully staffed. However, no matter how much planning we undertake it is sometimes difficult to avoid our staff having to work short. Bear in mind that staff will be asked to remain at home if they display any symptoms and we may not be able to obtain agency staff (particularly at short notice). We will advise our residents if our staff are having to work short but ask that in return you are patient with our staff. Inevitably they are going to be unable to attend to call bells as quickly when they are not fully staffed.

Protecting our Residents and Staff

Please be assured that we are following the advice of the Public Health authorities, and robust contingency plans are in place in the event of a coronavirus outbreak at one of our homes or hospitals.

Staff will continue to take universal infection control precautions to manage the risks in the homes and hospitals to safeguard the health and well-being of our residents and staff. Our training team will support staff to refresh their infection control and hand washing training, and alcohol handwash is available to each staff member. New posters to guide the practice of handwashing and the use of hand gel for all staff, visitors and residents are currently being dispatched to Pinewood.

Our management team are regularly reviewing guidance and contingency plans will develop in response to the evolving situation. The team will continue to meet regularly and action all appropriate advice from Public Health authorities to keep the business operating within the guidance given.

We are working to ensure that our residents remain as unaffected as possible, and will continue to review our business continuity, particularly regarding the stability of the supply chains and staffing contingency plans so we can continue to deliver the care that our residents and their loved ones expect from us.

Yours faithfully

Philip Sadeghi
Director

