MESSAGE TO RELATIVES FROM DEBORAH SMITH

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGER AT RISEDALE ESTATES LTD

17th AUGUST 2021

VISITING UPDATE

As of the 16th August 2021 the Government relaxed isolation requirements for double vaccinated individuals who have been in close contact with a person who is covid-19 positive. Following this change in legislation, guidance for care homes has again been updated to reflect this, but with additional precautions in place to protect the residents in our care. The guidance on care home visiting has therefore been amended and a resume of the content is documented below.

Vaccination

Double vaccination of all visiting individuals continues to be strongly recommended by the Government and by Risedale as being a major control in protecting our residents and is the best defence against infection and reducing transmission of the virus. As you may be aware, all staff and those entering care homes as part of their employment, will be required in law to have been double vaccinated by the 11th November 2021. Although this will not be mandatory for resident family members and friends visiting residents in the care home, there are restrictions, as laid out by the government, for those who are not fully vaccinated.

The 16th August relaxation in isolation requirements for contacts with a positive case, does not apply to any individual who is not fully vaccinated. Should any unvaccinated family member or friend wishing to visit their loved one in the care home or take out of the care home for an outing, will not be able to do so for a period of 10 days following contact with a positive person. This also applies to any unvaccinated essential care givers regardless of the testing procedures being in place.

Those visitors and/or essential care givers who are fully vaccinated, will be able to visit if they have been in contact with a positive person, but must meet the following criteria:

* The contact with the positive person is not high risk, for example, not a household member
* The visitor/essential care giver undertakes a PCR test and receives a negative result before entering the care home
* The visitor/essential care giver must undertake an LFD test on site and receive a negative result before visiting their loved one.

Visits out of care homes

As social distancing requirements and use of face coverings etc have now become ‘optional’ within the community environment, infection transmission may well become even more prominent. Risedale positively encourage outdoor activity for residents who wish to do this, but caution needs to be maintained for their protection and that of others within the care home settings.

Any outdoor visit requires careful and robust risk assessment to keep any associated risks as low as possible.

Government guidance has now removed the requirement for fully vaccinated residents to isolate for 14 days on return from overnight planned stays, including in hospital. However, the resident would need to undertake a PCR test on the day they return to the home and isolate until a negative result has been received. In addition, the resident would be required to also have an LFD test each day for the 10 days following their return. Whilst this is least restrictive for the resident, any visit out to a ‘high risk’ environment may still require the 14-day isolation should the risk assessment indicate this.

During out of care home visits, residents should remain socially distanced from others, avoid crowded environments and only meet up with other nominated visitors who have completed an LFD test with a negative result on the day of the visit. The use of public transport is positively discouraged.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Control Precautions

The wearing of PPE remains a requirement of entry into care home environments. Therefore, the home will continue to assist in the correct procedures for PPE application and removal. Social distancing in the home and good hygiene practices are to remain in place. Where contact with your loved one can be facilitated following a negative test and PPE application, this should still be kept to a minimum.

 Screen visits, garden visits and window visits

These types of visits are still an option for those who are not a named visitor and do not require an LFD test. The health checklist will still be completed prior to the visit, PPE and infection prevention and control precautions and social distancing will remain a requirement in these circumstances

Outbreak protocols

In the event of home closure due to an outbreak situation, routine visits will not go ahead except for essential care givers and visits at the end of life.

We are aware that the easing of restrictions in care home settings by the Government are minimal, but the safety of all residents remains the priority.

Should you require any clarification or further information on the contents of the update, please speak to your home manager.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.