



Orchard Vale Trust

Supporting Adults with Learning Disabilities to Live Life to the Full

11th October 2020

Dear Family and Friends,

As always I hope that this letter finds you well? I am pleased to say that as I write everyone remains well at Orchard Vale Trust. Everyone is making the most of the fair weather days outside and finding plenty to do when the rain makes indoor activities more attractive. I am writing to update you about the regular testing for COVID-19 that has now started for staff and residents, and to explain about the changes made by the Director of Public Health for Somerset to visiting arrangements for Care Homes.

Testing

Staff are now being tested weekly and, to date, the results for staff at each home have shown no COVID-19 infection, which is fantastic and a credit to the care that everyone is taking both in work and when they are away from work.

Residents will be tested every 28 days and this will be starting next week, if you have not heard from your home manager, then they will be in touch before the testing begins.

Visits

The Director of Public Health for Somerset keeps the infection rates under review and uses this to determine the level of visiting which is permitted in residential care homes. The level for visiting has been raised from level 3 to level 4:

All levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a home has an open outbreak, there should be no visiting • If a home is in a geography that has become subject to a local 'lockdown' there should be no visiting
Level 4	<p>Very restricting visiting, ideally one consistent visitor for each care home resident. All physical distancing measures and IPC in place. All visitors need to be recorded for NHS Test and Trace. There needs to be a risk assessment at individual resident level for those who are vulnerable, for example (but not limited to) those at end of life or with specific clinical vulnerabilities.</p>

Level 4 is the final level before visiting is no longer permitted at residential care homes.

The Government has also issued its Adult Social Care Winter Plan which includes clear guidance for residential care homes on the management of visits. Some of the key aspects of this guidance are:

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- ensure the appropriate PPE is always worn and used correctly – which in this situation is an appropriate form of protective face covering (this may include a surgical face mask where specific care needs align to close contact care) and good hand hygiene for all visitors (at all Orchard Vale Trust homes surgical masks must be worn)
- limit visitors to a single constant visitor wherever possible, with an absolute maximum of two constant visitors per resident to limit risk of disease transmission
- supervise visitors at all times to ensure that social distancing and infection prevention and control measures are adhered to
- wherever possible visits should take place outside, or in a well-ventilated room, for example with windows and doors open where safe to do so
- immediately cease visiting if advised by their respective director of public health that it is unsafe

As a result of the guidance that we have received we need to ask you to make the difficult decision of identifying a maximum of two visitors who will be visiting your family member until the guidance has changed and the risk level has been reduced. We appreciate that this is a very difficult decision and if there is anything that we can do to help or that you would like to talk to us about then please get in touch.

All of the homes have chosen inside spaces where you can meet safely as the weather changes and makes it more difficult to meet outside and we will continue to develop these.

I know that this is a challenging time for everyone and I would like to thank you for all the support, appreciation and kindness that you have shared with us over the last few months. We will continue to do everything we can to make this difficult time as good as it can be.

Best Wishes

Liz Page
Chief Executive

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