

## **Coronavirus - COVID-19 Housing Frequently Asked Questions**

**Updated – 4 November 2020**

The safety and wellbeing of our residents and colleagues is our main priority. We are taking every possible step to safeguard this while continuing to support our residents.

We are continuously monitoring the situation and official advice and sharing updates with colleagues when guidance changes.

We hope that this document will help answer some of the most common questions that residents and families have asked. We will continue to regularly update them as and when the guidance changes.

- **How will the new government restrictions starting on 5 November 2020 affect residents?**

Your local manager has delivered a letter to all residents to confirm what will change during the lockdown period.

- **Are there any restrictions in place around friends and relatives visiting my sheltered housing scheme?**

To help protect the health and safety of our residents and in line with government guidance You must not meet socially indoors with family or friends unless they are part of your household or support bubble. You can visit an outdoor public space (this does not include your communal garden) with one person from another household. Essential visitors only are permitted to enter the scheme as confirmed in the letter sent to you on 5 November 2020.

- **Do visitors need to wear a face-covering?**

Yes. We strongly recommend that everyone wears a face-covering when passing through communal areas or areas where social distancing is not possible.

- **Why are there no sanitiser stations around the scheme/estate?**

Where possible, we have made welfare facilities available to anyone visiting our retirement housing locations. Everyone is reminded to practice good hand hygiene which includes washing hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds. Anyone visiting you should wash their hands when they enter and before they leave your home. Where concerns are raised locally, sanitiser can be provided. Please speak to your local manager if you are concerned.

## Test and Trace

- **I've heard about the new test and trace system. What is it?**

The government has announced details of the new NHS England Test and Trace service – details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

This means that anyone who tests positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19 will be contacted by NHS England Test and Trace and will need to share information about who they have had contact with. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within two metres for more than 15 minutes.

**Those who have been in close contact with someone who tests positive will be notified and must isolate for 14 days, even if they have no symptoms.**

- **Will I be asked to self-isolate repeatedly? Does the system recognise you've already isolated before?**

If you have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19, you will need to self-isolate, whether or not you have isolated before. By following social distancing rules, you will significantly reduce the risk of needing to self-isolate.

- **What is a 'contact'?**

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19 anytime from two days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms. For example, a contact can be:

- Sexual partners or people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19
- A person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19, including: Being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation, or having skin-to-

skin physical contact, or any contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact;

- A person who has been between one and two metres from someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes, or
- A person who has travelled in a small vehicle or on a plane near someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19

- **How will they get my details/phone number to tell me I have been in contact with someone?**

NHS Test and Trace uses contact details supplied by people who order a test, and also asks people who have tested positive to identify their close recent contacts and provide their phone number or email where possible. All information is held in complete confidence, so for instance NHS Test and Trace will not pass on the name of someone with Coronavirus/COVID-19 to the people they have been in close contact with - simply advising that due to close contact with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19, they may be at risk.

- **Who needs to use the Test and Trace QR Code on entry to our scheme/estate?**

The NHS launched a new Covid-19 app on 24 September. Anyone with a smartphone is being encouraged to download the app. You can find out more on the BBC news website:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54270334> which includes a simple 'how to guide'

Anyone who has the app can choose to scan the QR code when they arrive at your scheme/estate as it helps to trace and stop the spread of the disease.

- **I've returned from abroad and the current government guidance says I need to self-isolate. What does this mean?**

Please refer to the guidance on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>.

The advice confirms you should not have visitors unless they are providing emergency or medical assistance, veterinary services or certain critical public services.

You cannot go out to work or visit public areas, including communal areas. You should not go shopping or go out to pick up medication but instead

should seek support from family or friends or order a delivery. You must only exercise in your own home or private garden (if you have one) and cannot leave to walk your dog (if you have one).

- **What can I do to minimise the risk of infection?**

Please refer to the most current NHS advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

In addition to above, the government strongly advises everyone to practice social distancing: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

- **The manager is working off site for some of the time, how can I get help and support during this time?**

The health and safety of our residents remains paramount. If your local manager is working off site you can contact them on email or ringing their office number, (which will then be diverted to their mobile phone) or mobile number if provided.

When your local manager is on site please call them before visiting their office as, if their office does not have enough room to allow for social distancing, they will arrange to meet you in a more suitable place.

Customer Services are also open to support you 8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and 8.00am – 4.00pm on Saturday. Please note, that due to these unprecedented circumstances we may take longer than usual to answer, so please bear with us. In an absolute emergency please pull your cord, and our On-Call team will assist you. Please do not pull your cord for routine matters.

- **Will my carer still be able to come to the property?**

Yes. If you have a carer they should continue their visits as normal. If your normal carer fails to arrive, please contact your local manager who can alert the care agency and the local authority safeguarding team.

We recommend they wear a face-covering when passing through communal areas to get to your home.

- **Can my hairdresser come into my own home to do my hair?**

Hairdressing and close contact services have been suspended during the latest COVID restrictions.

- **Can I use the communal areas, such as the lounge, gardens, salon and any on-site catering facilities?**

Communal lounges will be closed from 5 November. Communal gardens will remain open for residents only, providing social distancing regulations are maintained at all times. All salons/close contact rooms will be closed.

As laundries are small spaces, we are asking residents to ensure that only one person at a time is in the laundry.

If you have any Covid-19 symptoms, please do not use the communal areas.

- **Will the non-emergency repairs service continue?**

We will continue to provide routine repairs, however we will try to batch routine jobs together to reduce the number of visits to your site. Please report any repair in the usual way and we will arrange for the contractors to visit as appropriate.

- **Will the window cleaner still visit?**

The window cleaners will continue to clean externally, however internal communal windows will not be cleaned during the current restrictions.

- **I have developed Covid-19 symptoms, what should I do?**

If you or another member of your household develops any of the symptoms, (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste) please tell your local manager.

If your symptoms are mild you must not to leave your home. This is called self-isolation. If you live alone, this will be for a period of 10 days. In line with government guidance, if you live alone in one of our extra care locations we ask that you remain in your property for 14 days.

Anyone you live with (or anyone in your support bubble) who does not have symptoms must self-isolate for 14 days from when the first person started having symptoms.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), you can ask for a test to check if you have the virus. Find out more on the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

- **Is there any support available to help me with shopping, supplies, collecting medication, dog walking etc. as I do not have any local friends or family to support?**

Your manager will be able to signpost you to local solutions such as voluntary groups, community hubs etc. Our managers can offer support where no other options are available.

- **Will communal areas still be cleaned as normal?**

We will endeavour to continue with cleaning services wherever we can, however the level of service may drop due to the availability of cleaning contractors/colleagues. Gardening and window cleaning will continue as long as contractors are able to attend.

- **If there is a confirmed case of Coronavirus at my location, what will happen?**

To reduce the risk of transmission, we will arrange for all communal areas to be deep cleaned in addition to the normal cleaning schedule if the diagnosed resident has been in the location within the last 72 hours.

- **If my local manager has to self-isolate or goes off sick, who will support us?**

We have buddy arrangements in place to ensure our residents are supported, however our service to you may differ from the norm over the next few weeks. We will keep you informed as far as is reasonably possible about any changes.

- **Will we still see our regional/district/area manager on location during this time?**

All non-essential visits to our locations have been cancelled. Your regional/district/area manager will be working from home, supporting local staff remotely. Your district/area manager will visit your location to carry out an essential Health and Safety audit, except during local lockdown restrictions.

- **I am in good health and under the age of 70. I would like to be able to help or support some of the older residents. How can I do this?**

You can help in various ways:

- shopping and/or carrying shopping from the front door delivery to their front door
- support with on-line ordering
- remotely checking on neighbours and friends each day to ensure they are ok
- register for the NHS volunteers programme - <https://www.goodsamapp.org/nhs>