

Coronavirus - COVID-19 Housing Frequently Asked Questions

Updated – 5 January 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.

- **Updated - How will the new government COVID alert levels of medium, high and very high and current national lockdown, affect residents?**

Your local manager will keep you updated with information as to how the COVID alert levels and current national lockdown restrictions introduced by local government, impact you and your location.

As the situation is currently changing on a very frequent basis, please refer to the guidance published by the government on their website here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

- **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 we are continuing to limit the number of visitors to your building. Our locations continue to be open to essential visitors only. We continue to encourage residents to meet with their support bubbles away from the location whenever possible.

If you are expecting any visitors, please let them know we strongly recommend that everyone wears a face-covering when passing through communal areas and observe social distancing wherever possible.

- **Do visitors need to wear a face-covering?**
We strongly recommend that everyone follows government guidance and wears a face-covering when they are in enclosed spaces and communal areas.
- **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

- **What is the NHS Test and Trace system?**
Details of the new NHS England Test and Trace service—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 10 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 have been told I need to self-isolate. What does this mean?**
 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.

Our Customer Centre is 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?**

Unfortunately, no. During the current national lockdown restrictions, close contact services, such as hairdressing and chiropody cannot take place.

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

Most communal gardens are open, for use by residents only, where we can maintain social distancing and minimise the risk of infection – subject to local restrictions. Please contact your local manager for further details.

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

During the current national lockdown restrictions, the communal lounges and salons are closed and hairdressing and other close contact services e.g. chiropody, beauty treatments etc. are not allowed.

Communal kitchens are closed except where these are used by a caterer to provide meals for residents. At our extra care locations with a restaurant, we can only operate a delivery service for the majority of our residents, as all external cafes and restaurants are closed. A fully risk assessed restaurant service will be provided where individual residents' health or wellbeing could be adversely affected by not dining in a communal setting.

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

- **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. This will be for a period of 10 days

Anyone you live with (or anyone in your support bubble) who does not have symptoms must self-isolate for 10 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.

- **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>