



**St Mary's Home
Margaret Street
Stone
ST15 8EJ**

24th September 2020

Dear all

We are sure that you will be pleased to hear that following the most recent round of Covid testing of our residents last week all resulted in negative tests. Our staff are tested weekly and no positive results have been received, so St Mary's continues to be Covid free.

As you are all no doubt aware, the DHSC guidance for visiting in care homes which was issued on 21st July, emphasises the need to limit risk where visits do go ahead and advises that where possible, visitors should be limited to a single, constant visitor per resident. The guidance was updated on 21st September and the single constant visitor proviso remains, the reason for this is to limit the overall number of visitors to the care home and therefore minimise the risk of infection. We at St Mary's have no desire to further restrict visiting however following the rise in Covid cases both locally and nationally, we have had to consider the options in terms of further restrictions and with effect from **Saturday 3rd October**, visiting will be limited to a single, constant visitor as per the guidance. This means the same family member visiting each time to limit the number of visitors coming into contact with their loved ones. You may be aware that many homes are not permitting any visiting but at St Mary's this decision would only be taken as a last resort as we fully appreciate and understand the importance of visits from loved ones. We believe that the enhanced infection control measures and precautions we have put in place are robust to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents at this time. Please be reassured that that visitors for those residents approaching end of life will still continue as always.

With reference to visiting, could we ask that if you are unable to make a visiting slot you have booked, please let us know at the earliest opportunity; there have been a few occasions when visitors have not arrived for their booked slot and it would be helpful if we were aware so that the slot could be offered to other visitors, particularly the slots at weekends which are booked up quite quickly.

Going forwards, in order to support the Track and Trace system we will be utilising a QR code, rather than the current manual system, which will hopefully speed up the process. Our staff will let you know when this is in place. You will be pleased to hear that the visiting huts are now almost complete, the process of installing lighting is progressing and we have purchased audio induction loops to help those residents who have hearing difficulties which will be installed shortly. Access to the huts and surrounding areas will be made clear and safe with improved lighting.

In our last email of 11th September we said that we were reviewing the way our rotations for activities and visiting operated and may make some changes going forward. We have considered rotating on a morning and afternoon basis so that each resident had the opportunity for visiting or activities every day, however following discussion with the local authority we believe that, in the event of one or more cases of Covid in St Mary's, maintaining the segregation of the floors is the strongest defence against stopping the spread of infection. We will therefore be continuing with our system of the middle and ground floors and the top floor on alternate days for the present and whilst we understand this may be disappointing to some of you, we are sure you will understand the

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reasons for the decision. Of course our staff will continue to engage with residents, providing one to one activities at all times.

We are now not able to accept flowers or plants into the home for residents, so please ensure that you only send in items which can be quarantined and wiped down such as boxes of food items etc.

Many of you will have received phone calls from the residents' key workers and have found it reassuring and helpful. The staff have had absolutely fantastic feedback about this from so many of you and we cannot stress enough what a difference it makes; thank you all so much for your kind words and support as we continue to work together for the benefit of our residents. As always we will continue to do all we can to keep you updated but please don't hesitate to contact us with your queries and concerns and we will continue to do our best to respond as quickly as we can.

Kind regards

Natalie Dibble, Julie Birks & Joanna Nott

Management Team

St Mary's Home