

Barchester Healthcare Ltd,  
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Date: 11 January 2022

Dear residents and relatives

### Visiting protocols from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Happy New year from all of us at Barchester.

We are wanting to update you on our latest thinking regarding visiting. As we promised we have been constantly reviewing the data, both our own in terms of those staff and residents who have COVID, and Government data and what is happening in the wider community, and are writing to let you know that we will be relaxing our visiting protocols, with the hope and plan being that this will go even further in the next couple of weeks.

We are very thankful for all your support over the last few weeks as we introduced restrictions on visiting, and whilst a large number of our residents and relatives have been aligned to our decision, we know that it has been a difficult time. We are pleased to see that whilst COVID case numbers in the community are still high, they are now starting to reduce. Because we took a more cautious approach we have been able to keep more of our services COVID free for longer, allowing both residents to keep healthy and well, and staff to continue caring for them, although we also appreciate that there are now a number of homes that are closed due to Public Health, and we hope that this will be for a limited period only.

In terms of our visiting protocols going forward we are moving to the approach we took for those 3 important days of Christmas which is outlined below:

1. Extending visiting indoors to include one Essential Care Giver, as currently in place, **PLUS** one other named visitor, to enable more of those closest to the resident into the home. We continue to ask that they are fully vaccinated including the booster dose, where eligible, and show proof of this.
2. We ask that the Essential Care Giver continues to have a weekly PCR test and three times a week LFD tests as they will be visiting more regularly. The other named visitor, or any visitors that are visiting at end of life do not need a PCR test, but everyone must show proof of a negative LFD test before entry.
3. We continue to balance the wellbeing of our residents wanting to see loved ones outside of the home on a day out or something similar, with the risk of COVID-19. If this is something that you think is important to do, the General Manager will complete a robust Risk Assessment and discuss with you what is possible. There are certain types of activity where the risks are higher and the advice is that, in these cases, the resident should self-isolate for 14 days on their return as well as take an LFD test every second day for 10 days following the trip out.
4. Our visiting suites, which are available in most of our homes, continue to be available to individuals who are not fully vaccinated, and any others that are not named visitors, who can visit anytime, if

they are booked in. If the home you want to visit doesn't have a visiting suite please discuss the options with the General Manager.

5. As always video calls will be supported, which we know is not the same, but many of you see as a good alternative.
6. End of life visits will continue as previously outlined.

All visiting options should be booked via our visitor booking system on our website, which we know many of you are very familiar with. Sadly, if there are any recent cases of Covid-19, visiting may be further restricted and will usually mean that only the Essential Care Giver can visit due to Public Health advice. If that is the case the General Manager will let you know.

As a reminder Essential Care Givers entering our care home services indoors will need to agree to a PCR test each week in the service, lateral flow testing before each visit and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with our staff members.

As is always the case please be assured that we will keep this decision under review during this time and we are hopeful that if the trend continues we will be in a position to open up more to visiting, but as I'm sure you are aware COVID is still very prevalent in our lives and we believe we need to continue with a slightly more cautious approach.

As always we appreciate that there may be individual circumstances that mean we need to be flexible, and we are supportive and trust our General Managers to do the right thing in those few cases, for example this could be those residents who are nursed in bed and therefore are unable to access the visiting suite, however the principle of limiting those coming into our homes we feel is right for the moment

If you do have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us with your queries and concerns, or your gratitude and thanks, and we will continue to do our best to respond as quickly as we can. You can do this through the General Manager, or through our team at [feedback@barchester.com](mailto:feedback@barchester.com). Our only ask is that you do this with kindness and courtesy to the teams that are doing their very best to help, and we know you will.

Sending our very best wishes to you and your families and wishing you all a Happy New Year.

Dr Pete Calveley  
CEO Barchester Healthcare

Julia Atherton  
Director of Nursing

We are sending this with the best intentions and with the latest data we have. If this causes offence we are deeply sorry

