

28th January 2021



Dear Customer,

We hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well during the pandemic. Please find below the latest updates in relation to the response to Covid-19(Coronavirus).

COVID 19 update

As you will be aware, the country is in third lockdown with numerous restrictions in place. Whilst infections are slowly dropping, deaths and hospitalisations remain high and we remain extremely vigilant. I am pleased to report that at present we are not aware of any staff or customers who have tested positive for COVID. Our staff continue to be tested weekly.

If you need any advice about the measures in place nationally, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

For further information on the local alert level and what this means you can check online at

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-covid-19-alert-level-and-restrictions>

As the pandemic continues, we have a wide range of measures in place to protect our customers and staff from the virus, including:-

- All care staff have full PPE (Hr masks, gloves aprons, eye protection) plus 70% alcohol hand sanitiser, also visors if required. Staff are issued with a bag to protect their PPE.
- We do not accept hospital discharges without a negative COVID test
- Individual risk assessments completed for all staff who may be vulnerable
- All care staff have had refresher training including infection control
- No staff sharing vehicles
- Full office risk assessment in place as per HSE requirements
- No sharing of office equipment including pens
- Care staff attending office wear masks and socially distance, all carers and other visitors to site must book appointments to minimise footfall
- Supervisions, reviews etc done remotely where possible
- Office staff split into A and B teams to assist social distancing – half team work from home on alternate days
- If office staff tested positive, the group would need to self isolate
- Glass screens in place for all office staff and in training room
- Increased ventilation – windows door open if practicable
- No hot desking
- Use of outdoor space for breaks wherever possible
- Touch free Hand sanitiser stations x 3 in office

- Signage and mats in place regarding social distancing, hand washing, hand sanitiser
- Increased cleaning regime
- Professional waste disposal
- Temperature checking at office entrance
- Increased hand washing facilities - antibacterial hand wash no touch dispenser paper towels
- Appropriate disinfectant spray and disposal cloths in line with COSHH
- PPE stock managed by Directors to ensure adequate supplies
- Any staff testing positive need negative test before RTW
- All staff aware of need to self isolate if have symptoms / positive test
- Regular monitoring of guidelines via Gov.uk and webinars with Head office, Local Authority
- **We have recently invested in a fogging machine and a temperature checker**

Important Update – Vaccinations COVID 19

The government has stated its intention to vaccinate the first four groups of the population by mid February, the groups are as follows

- 1) Residents in care homes and care home staff**
- 2) All those over 80 and all front line health and social care staff**
- 3) All those 75 and over**

4) All those over 70 and all those classed as extremely clinically vulnerable

Vaccinations are being carried out at GP's, in hospitals, some pharmacies and in large regional centres, our nearest being Newcastle at present. If you need assistance to attend one of these settings for vaccination please contact the office.

I am happy to update you that this week we have been able to offer vaccinations to all of our staff, and over 95% of staff have yesterday received their first jab, with second jabs booked for April. A very small number of staff could not receive the vaccine due to medical advice.

The vaccine does not prevent our staff from catching COVID 19 but it reduces the risk of serious illness from the disease. It is not yet known whether or not people who have received the vaccine can transmit the disease to others, therefore all of our staff should still be wearing full PPE.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) – Bluebird Care Update

Official guidance on the use of face masks and other PPE in social care settings has **not** changed since our last letter to you. Therefore, our Carers will continue to wear all other PPE as per last letter. **This is the case whether or not they have been vaccinated.** Please be aware that carers need soap and hot water available when they visit you, in order to thoroughly wash their hands before using their gel. This is in line with government advice, and we have issued specific guidance to our staff on handwashing.

We have ample stocks of PPE and have established reliable supply lines however we remain vigilant and all stocks of PPE are reviewed on a weekly basis.

We will send updates on a regular basis but in the meantime, please call us if you have any concerns. Our telephone number is 01845 440271. Our offices remain open as usual.

Kind Regards,

Heather Price, Director

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