

21st May 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Our community is yet again being challenged by the virus.

We received notification from Bury Council yesterday regarding the Indian variant:

You will have seen on the news that Bolton is having a hard time at the moment.

Its infection rate is currently 302 per 100,00, this means they have had 867 cases in the last 7 days.

The infection rate has doubled in the last 7 days and that was double of the previous 7 days.

We have seen in each wave of infections across Greater Manchester that often Bury, Rochdale and Oldham follow Bolton a couple of weeks later.

The rate in Bury is currently 32 per 100,000 which is 61 new cases in the last 7 days.

Whilst this is far lower than Bolton, it has nearly doubled in a week.

We are not advising that you to stop visiting all together, but we are writing to you to recommend that you pause any plans to expand or extend your visiting for the time being.

Unfortunately we have seen three residents test positive in Eventhall House.

No staff have tested positive and the residents concerned have had at least one vaccination.

As a result they are doing well with only minor symptoms.

Despite the testing, it is possible that the infection most likely came via a hospital appointment or visit.

Visiting is currently restricted on one Household in Eventhall House.

This reinforces the fact that our best protection is:

1. Uptake of Vaccination by residents, visitors and staff
2. Regular swab testing
3. Use of PPE
4. Our old friend, hand washing
5. Social distancing

Each one of the above actions reduces the risk and will keep us on track.

We are due our monthly PCR swab test of all residents and tenants over the weekend (The PCR tests go to a lab and are more reliable)

Each Care home in Bury has to implement its own risk assessment and procedures in line with Government guidance.

We are now in the privileged position of having 95% of our workforce vaccinated, significantly higher than the national average of 80% for care homes.

We have our own swabbing team and a dedicated facility and continue to undertake over 1000 tests a week.

We are therefore not advocating that we stop face to face visits.

We will introduce some changes in response to the increased risk in the community.

These changes will come into force from Monday 24th May.

- Reduce back to two named Face to face visitors from the current five.
- These visitors can be from different households
- Physical contact should be minimised but we believe that this is something that you as visitors should manage yourselves.
- Please wear your mask correctly during visits
- Off site visits are still allowed but we would urge caution and suggest that all infection prevention measures are maintained.
- We will review these procedures on 27th May and inform relatives the same day if we will be making further changes or moving back to five visitors.
- The gardens remain closed, as does the café and we will review this on week beginning 7th June, ahead of next road map date on the 21st June.

I hope this update is helpful and that we can continue on our journey to relax restrictions. Thank you for your help, support and patience.

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

13th May 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

As I'm sure you are aware, changes will take place to visiting guidance to care homes from Monday 17th May.

We have now had the chance to review the guidance and following feedback received from a number of relatives are making changes from next week.

Firstly, our swabbing regime is proving to be very effective. The Village remains virus free and it is our absolute priority to keep it that way.

The fundamental advice remains, and whilst after 14 months may sound obvious we are asking everyone to "stick to the knitting".

- Wash your hands
- Use a mask
- Keep your distance where you can
- Do not visit if you feel unwell or have any potential Covid symptoms or have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive
- Best of all get vaccinated – there is no better way to protect yourself, your family, our residents, and our workforce.
- Follow the visiting guidance
- Stick to the Government's road map rules

We are now able to increase the number of named visitors per resident to five. There will still be a maximum of two visitors at any one time or on any given day but these visitors can now come from different households.

All five of the named visitors are able to book face to face visits.

Pods visits remain independent from face to face visits and are subject to availability.

Separate guidance will be shared regarding Moorview tenants.

Residents can already go on external visits without having to isolate on their return. We encourage all relatives to undertake their own lateral flow tests ahead of such visits, and we will test residents within 48 hours of their return.

In the event of an outbreak, the lockdown period for a household will reduce from 28 days to 14 days unless a new variant is detected.

We are changing the booking line to manage the increased demand for visits:

Our new primary number is 07816 724 756 and will be in effect from Monday onwards.

The old number – 07518 104 943 – still works but we encourage you to use of the new number wherever possible from next week as this allows calls to be diverted if the first one is busy, helping to reduce delays in making bookings.

The line is open:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday – 10AM-12PM

Monday & Wednesday – 2-3PM

We are not opening the café to visitors just yet and will continue to use the designated visitor areas and pods. We hope to review these arrangements in the next two weeks.

May I take the opportunity to wish everyone Chag Sameach.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham

Chief Executive

5th May 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

In my briefing last week I did suggest that changes regarding visiting guidelines often come at the weekend!

So what do the most recent changes mean?

Effectively, residents can now leave their care home without then having to isolate in their room for 14 days when they return.

Residents can visit their relatives outdoors or visit any outdoor spaces, but will need to follow the guidelines that have been laid out:

- A resident can go on a visit accompanied by one or both of their nominated visitors or essential care giver
- The visit take place solely outdoors, except for the use of toilet facilities
- There should be no visits to indoor spaces (public or private)
- Residents will be able to access polling stations to vote if they do not already have a postal vote

Visits should not go ahead if there is a high infection rate locally or if there is a positive test for the virus on the household where the person lives.

We would advise relatives to undertake their own lateral flow tests (LFTs) on anyone intending to be part of the planned visit. These tests can now be requested directly from local pharmacies.

We will be testing any residents who go on external visits within 48 hours of their return from their trip as a precaution.

If you would like to arrange a visit for your relative please contact the booking line as normal. The staff will then coordinate with each household the arrangements for the visit.

At the moment we are assuming that these guidelines will change from 17th May to allow residents to visit inside their relatives homes – but this is yet to be confirmed.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

28th April 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

We seem to be holding our course with the Government's Roadmap and key dates.

The Village is currently virus free, and although we did record a positive PCR test from a resident this week this appears to be a false positive following further tests. The resident is well and isolating, but we have not had to close the household.

This underlines the importance of our testing regime and commitment to infection control measures. The swab testing we undertake – which now stands at over 1,000 tests each week – is the foundation upon which we keep the Village, our residents and our staff safe.

I appreciate the frustrations regarding masks, tests, limited visits and more, but this is our best path back to Village life sooner rather than later.

We believe that further guidance may be given to care homes in the lead up to the next key date which is Monday 17th May, and that there will be no significant changes before that. If changes are announced, it may be a couple of days before we can share with everyone what the changes will look like – especially if the information is shared over the weekend.

We have been busy undertaking further work around the Village. Our new main gates will offer us better security, particularly at night and at weekends. New flooring is being installed on Moorview House and is halfway through completion, with new flooring also being installed in our main kitchens. Work to install the upgraded WIFI will begin in the next few weeks, giving better signal and access to parts of the Village.

We are working with the Shul committee to support the reintroduction of regular small services, with an overall aim to support a return to full services as soon as the guidance permits.

Thank you for your ongoing support and patience. Please support us by keeping to the guidance both locally and the additional guidance that applies to Heathlands Village, especially when it comes to PPE. The news today that vaccinated people are less likely to transmit the virus is very welcome and it is undoubtedly making a difference. If you are given the opportunity, please get vaccinated.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

8th April 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Sorry for the following overload of information!

We finally received the official revised guidance for care home visits on Wednesday. Whilst the full guidance runs to approximately 10 pages – giving you some insight into the amount of regulation we have to follow – I hope the following condensed information will make sense.

Part of the Government statement reads as follows:

“In the face of new variants of the virus, we still need to be cautious to ensure we protect those most at risk in care homes, while ensuring indoor visits can go ahead. While the vaccination programme is bringing much needed hope and protection, until more is known about its impact on transmission, residents and visitors should continue to adhere to all the infection control measures that are in place now.

It is not a condition of visiting that the visitor or the resident should have been vaccinated. However, it is strongly recommended that all visitors and residents take up the opportunity to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so through the national programme.

As we continue to move through the steps of the roadmap out of lockdown, we want to allow more visiting, and more visitors, when the data tells us it is safe to do so. Our aim is that by the summer, care home visiting will feel as relaxed and normal as possible – retaining only those infection prevention and control measures that are needed to protect the most vulnerable residents from the risk of infection.

As with all elements of the roadmap we will continue to be guided by the evidence, which we will review again before making any further changes to visiting policy at the next step (no earlier than 17 May 2021).

In the event of an outbreak in a care home, the home should immediately stop visiting to protect vulnerable residents, staff and visitors.”

So – caution is still the name of the game for us.

We absolutely want to avoid any further infections or potential for lockdown on site, and you can help with this by following all of the wider Covid rules and restrictions, and by following the infection control requirements we have put in place for the Village. The wider rules which apply to us all also apply to our residents and tenants, so currently neither groups can visit other people’s homes and would be required to self-isolate for 14 days on return

From Monday 12th April

Please note there will be slightly different arrangements for Moorview House and we will send out further advice directly to relatives of our Moorview tenants.

All of the current infection control measures still apply in terms of approved PPE and lateral flow tests. Please do not visit if you feel unwell, have any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone you know to have tested positive.

- *Each resident can nominate up to 2 named visitors who can visit together if they are from the same household, or separately if not.*
- *Children can visit but count towards the maximum number allowed for the visit if they are over the age of 2. A named visitor can therefore bring a child over the age of 2 and up to the age of 11 without needing to use PPE or requiring any test.*
- *Visits including babies and very young children (up to age of 2) may also take place. These children do not need to be counted as an additional visitor e.g. two named visitors can visit with a baby or child below the age of 2.*
- *Children aged 11 and over should wear the same PPE as adult visitors and have a lateral flow test.*
- *A maximum of two children can visit at any one time and children must be appropriately supervised.*
- *Physical contact should be avoided between babies or young children and the residents they are visiting.*
- *Currently all visitor testing must be done in the care home, as visitors are not allowed to self-test at home. This may change in a couple of weeks but MHRA has to approve it first.*
- *There is no change to end of life arrangements.*
- *We will continue with additional pod and window visits where required.*
- *We will aim to facilitate at least two face to face visits per resident per week but we will review this on a regular basis, and hopefully increase this number in the future.*
- *We are reviewing when we can practically use the gardens for visits as it is still quiet cold for residents to be out for any prolonged period.*
- *The next change to the guidance will be no earlier than 17th May.*

To clarify a few additional issues that have been raised:

- *People can take pictures of their own relatives*
- *People can bring gifts, however these ideally should be something that can be sanitised, and if chocolates or food gifts are being brought please ensure they are kosher.*

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

18th March 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Today has been very exciting as we administered the second dose of the vaccine to our residents, tenants, and a significant number of staff. It has been a long, and at times, weary journey but we have got there with your support.

Today was also the first day in over year where we had no member of staff off sick or isolating due to COVID-19; another milestone and a scenario we hope to see continue.

At the bottom of this email are details of the procedures for face-to-face visiting. We have to follow the Government and Public Health guidelines, but we will support you throughout the process in order to re-start more meaningful visits to the Village. We know these have been a long time coming.

Our Covid support team will be based in the summer house in the main garden. You will see from the details that you need to have a Lateral Flow Test (LFT). These rapid tests take approximately 30 minutes to process, so you will need to arrive early and be prepared to wait in your car – or, if arriving on foot, in a designated waiting area. We are working really hard to ensure that this process goes smoothly and hope that the restrictions will ease as we progress.

I know this sounds obvious but please don't visit if you are unwell or have symptoms. The vaccine is an excellent line of defence but is not 100% effective. We all still need to stick to the Hands, Face, Space advice.

If we have any positive tests on a household we will have to suspend visiting. Additionally, there is nothing to say that Boris won't change the rules again or let his dates slip from how they currently stand.

It is possible that we will not have a security guard from the 1st April onwards, however we will hopefully have new security barriers in place instead.

We are making arrangements for Pesach as we speak, and our changeover day is Thursday 25th March. Please be aware that as an establishment we will be kosher for Pesach early, and any gifts you bring need to be kosher for Pesach. There is no main Seder this year, but we will be providing a special meal both on individual households and in Balcombe Hall. We will do our utmost to celebrate Pesach in as meaningful a way as possible.

We are conscious that our road map doesn't include dates for our Shul. The ambition is to start small services again after Pesach supported by our staff and then aim to re-establish services in time for Shavuot. We are still working on these plans.

On the 23rd March we will be participating in the National Day of Reflection organised by Marie Curie. There are a number of opportunities to just pause for a moment and reflect upon the journey we have been on. Many of us have lost friends and relatives, or know someone who has been bereaved as a result of COVID-19, and this is a chance to remember those we have lost and cherish their memory.

[You can find out more about the Day of Reflection at this link.](#)

There will be a minute of silence at 12 noon, which staff, residents, and tenants are being invited to observe together in the Village.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Kosher and more joyous Pesach.

My best wishes as always,

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

5th March 2021

Dear Friends and Relatives,

The 10th of March is the anniversary of the day we first implemented restrictions to all our services, both at Heathlands Village and in the community.

It is remarkable to think that the first person to die of COVID-19 in Greater Manchester passed away on the 8th March 2020. It is almost unbelievable to consider the journey we have been on since then, and the impact the virus has had on our country, community, and the people we love and care about.

I want to respond to several questions regarding our workforce.

We currently have 355 staff. The number of staff who have received the first dose of the vaccine is now above 90%, and approximately 10% have so far had the second dose.

We are closing in on the 95% figure of total vaccinated staff. This figure is significantly higher than the NHS workforce as well as the vast majority of care homes.

I know that many people want to know our plans regarding staff who have not been vaccinated and what our policy towards them is.

As you can imagine this is a very difficult question to answer. Our policy has been to inform, encourage and support staff; to give them as much information as we can to help them make informed decisions.

There is no current legislation that exists that gives employers the power to force staff to have a vaccine in any job role, or to dismiss them if they refuse.

A number of our staff who haven't yet been vaccinated are either waiting for their first appointment (which has been delayed because they have recently had COVID), are pregnant and seeking further advice from their GP, are already on maternity leave or long-term sick, or have a specific health problem. We even have some staff who are not yet 18 years old and are therefore not eligible for the vaccine.

Of course, we do have a few people who remain reticent or worried or have specific religious beliefs which mean they are reluctant to receive the vaccine. We are meeting with all of these remaining staff members with the aim of getting our vaccination level to 95% at the very least.

However, we continue to look to the future and the better days ahead, and we wanted to share with you our own proposed road map to recovery.

It is important to recognise that the Government's rules for care homes and supported living schemes are different to the wider advice which we all receive living in the community.

The dates we are working to are all subject to Boris changing his mind or changing the rules – or if we encounter an outbreak of COVID-19, subject to restrictions imposed by Public Health England.

The dates below correspond with the key dates in the government's own road map.

So what does *our* road map look like?

18th March

> A day to remember! Second dose of the vaccine being administered to majority of our residents and staff.

25th March

> Face to face visits can commence through our booking system, and every resident will be able to nominate a single named visitor who will be able to enter the Village for regular visits. These visits will not be in resident's bedrooms but in a designated area. The visitor will have to have a lateral flow test prior to each of their visits.

> It is not a condition of visiting that the visitor should have been vaccinated. However, it is strongly recommended that all visitors take up the opportunity to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so through the national programme.

28th/29th March

- > Beginning of Pesach

12th April

- > Visitors able to return to Moorview via a separate visitors' entrance – subject to visiting restrictions.
- > Main Village gardens to open to face-to-face visits, via booking line (if the sun shines!)

17th May

- > Further relaxation and changes to Moorview visiting scheme.
- > Coffee Shop and Café to open to visits, subject to booking and limited numbers.
- > Further relaxation and changes to visits in main gardens.

21st June

- > Face to face visits return in main communal spaces.
- > Face to face visits return in bedrooms.
- > Pod visits discontinue and booking line closes.
- > Restrictions end in relation to Moorview.
- > Further relaxation on use of café
- > No restrictions on garden visits.

What we do not know yet is when we can stop doing the lateral flow tests and what other requirements or restrictions might then be imposed.

We want to aspire to a plan and a return to normality, and the outline above is the bare bones of what we are hoping to achieve.

Ideally, as we get through April and May, we will have the ideal scenario where all our residents, all our staff, and all our visitors have been vaccinated, thus reducing the risk to everyone.

We will undoubtedly have to flex this plan dependent upon what happens as the country as a whole exits lockdown restrictions.

I hope this information is helpful and brings you hope and optimism as we progress. Our focus right now is the mammoth task of getting as many people vaccinated on the 18th March as possible. There will be no visits on this day as it will be all hands on deck.

My best wishes as always,

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive

24th February 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 354.

I will stop counting the days when we get to 365!

It is hard to believe that we have almost come full circle. Purim 2020 was the last restriction-free celebration we had, although we were already concerned at the time and limited the celebrations significantly.

Our fight to minimise the impact of infections and the virus at the Village is ongoing. We continue to see staff test positive, many of whom live locally, which reflects the rising infection rate in south Bury.

The swabbing regime continues, with the lateral flow tests helping enormously to ensure those staff testing positive do not come into work. If a member of staff does test positive, we pay them their full salary for the duration of their period of isolation to ensure that they do not experience financial hardship.

Meanwhile, Mr Johnson has been a busy man! The Government roadmap to recovery has now been shared, and with it comes a sense of cautious optimism and excitement. I think we are all ready to move forward and return to at least some of the activities which we enjoyed prior to the pandemic... though I don't think I will travel to London for a meeting ever again.

The biggest news has been the potential for people to have face-to-face visits in care homes, without the glass or Perspex in the way, from the 8th March.

We are given to understand that all our residents and tenants will be offered the second dose of the vaccine on the 18th March.

My recommendation to all families is that we delay our face-to-face visits until after your loved one has had their second vaccination.

I would ask you to consider the following question:

Having come so far, is it not better for people to receive the second dose before starting these visits?

It feels to me like we are so close to the finish line that to not to wait a bit longer is a false economy. The level of immunity that the second dose gives is hugely significant and reduces the risk considerably.

I appreciate that everyone would like to visit, and hold their loved one's hand, as soon as possible – and we want to see this ourselves. We were one of the first care homes in Greater

Manchester to get all of its residents vaccinated – the vast majority by 30th December. We will probably also be the first to get everyone their second dose.

If we can confirm the 18th March, we would begin facilitating face-to-face visits approximately a week later when the vaccine had established a greater level of immunity. This means we would be able to start visits over Pesach.

Personally, I believe the Government has got their dates wrong and should have prioritised care home residents for the second vaccine within 6 weeks, and should not be authorising face-to-face visits until it is received. Whilst Boris is surrounded by experts, unfortunately there is still no care home expert in his inner circle.

So I am asking you all to consider this proposal and extend your patience just a little bit longer.

I firmly believe that by waiting for the second jab, we will significantly reduce the risk to your relative, the other people they share a home with, and the people who care for them.

If anyone feels strongly that this should not apply to their situation, I will be more than happy to discuss it.

The details of how the visits will work are still to be considered. The visits will not take place in resident's rooms, although a different arrangement is likely for Moorview.

The visitor will have to arrive early for a lateral flow test and it will have to be the same dedicated visitor each time. An additional visitor can still visit via our visitor pods as normal.

Should we be faced with an outbreak or positive test on a household, we would have to change everything with regard to visiting arrangements – so it is worth preparing for this potential disappointment.

Ideally, the best-case scenario is for the visitor to have also had at least one dose of the vaccine.

The bottom line is that the more risks we eliminate the better.

We hope to share more information as it becomes available to us, but in the meantime please take care of yourselves and each other, and do not be complacent. We have seen for ourselves how infectious the current strain of the virus is.

Have a safe and Happy Purim,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

11th February 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Some snow and sunshine on day 341!

I begin with a brief update following on from the information I sent out on Monday.

The residents and staff on Beach House who have returned positive test results appear to be doing OK, and, whilst some are not feeling well, the vaccine appears to be doing its job and lessening the impact of the virus.

We are changing some of the arrangements in relation to visiting the Village, and the dropping-off of gifts or items for residents.

Please leave any items being dropped off for residents with the security guard and do not bring them in to either Eventhall House or main reception.

After reviewing the booking timetable and considering the days the phonenumber is busiest, we are reducing the number of days when the phone line will be open to make bookings. This change will help us manage the staffing resources needed to oversee the visiting programme.

These changes will be in place from Monday 15th February.

Times phonenumber will be open for bookings:

Monday: 10am -12 noon 2pm-3pm

Wednesday: 10am-12 noon 2pm – 3pm

Friday: 10am – 12 noon

No bookings will be taken on Tuesday and Thursday.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

8th February 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 338.

Last week was again a very busy one at the Village.

Toward the end of last week we identified a number of positive tests on Beach House. We now have a significant number of residents who have tested positive on Beach House, as well as a number of staff. As a result of this, Beach House is now in isolation and all visits to that unit have been cancelled. Beach House will be closed to visitors until 21st February.

The positive news from this is that the vaccine does appear to have reduced the severity and impact of virus symptoms, and everyone is doing ok. It does reinforce how virulent and contagious Covid-19 now is, and how important it is to maintain our visiting protocols and PPE procedures.

The staff team on Beach House are doing an amazing job to look after everyone, and accordingly we have increased the supply of chocolate!

We are continuing to increase the number of staff who have been vaccinated, and we are now at over 80% of our workforce who have had their first injection.

Please support us by sticking to the current visiting procedures.

Thank you for your continuing support and patience.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

28th January 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 325.

Another eventful week! I hope the following information will keep you in the loop in terms of what is going on.

The Village remains virus free. This in itself is a huge tribute to our staff and to your help supporting us with our infection control measures. As we see a rise of cases in care homes nationally and across Greater Manchester, we have managed to minimise the potential here at Heathlands Village.

Following on from my last update, 80% of our workforce have now had the vaccine.

Since 1st April 2020, 317 of our employees, out of a total of 350, have been unavailable for work due to a Covid-related issue – an unbelievable statistic.

The Government has given the green light for us to start using rapid Covid tests for staff. Our current testing regime has identified people who have been infectious but not had symptoms; the new tests will mean we can test staff more regularly and before they even leave home,

increasing our level of protection for residents and tenants. This new regime will start next week.

We have no news on the second dose of the vaccine. We are lobbying hard for this within 6 weeks of the first dose, as opposed to 12 weeks. There is a lot of scientific debate at the moment but let's hope for some good news on this front.

I would encourage anyone offered the vaccine to accept it. If you are not sure then get some reliable and informed advice to help you with your decision-making.

We have made progress with communication in the Visitor Pods and Josh Thomas is doing his best to resolve any issues. We are also seeking to improve facilities for visits in Eventhall House for people in our D2A facility.

The new Willow Tree House / Beach House Pod should be in use by the end of the week. We had to get some heating and power into the Pod as it sits outside the building, but it should be ready for action soon.

From Monday we will be changing our visiting arrangements to include a second constant visitor. **This means a second family member can visit on a regular basis**, although not at the same time as the first.

The current Government guidance still states it can only be one visitor at a time. This is to limit the overall number of visitors to the care home.

In simple terms, this means that whilst residents will still be limited to two visits each week, the two visits can now be from two different, designated relatives. Please can you inform Josh as to who your second nominated visitor will be.

We hope this will help improve things for both you as families, and your loved ones.

We have had a number of people turning up to visit at weekends without an appointment. Please do not do this as it will likely disrupt planned visits, and potentially causes problems for our teams.

Please keep safe and thank you for your support and patience.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

15th January 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Approximately Day 310 (I have been separated from my calendar)!

As you can imagine, our recent focus has been dominated by the management of vaccine delivery to both residents and staff. We were incredibly lucky that we had the opportunity to vaccinate another 120 staff members this week, taking our total toward the 300 mark.

In most Greater Manchester areas, the average level for administration of the vaccine in care homes is between 35-40% of residents, and 25-35% of staff.

100% of our residents who want the vaccine or are able to have it, have had it – an amazing achievement!

About 70% of staff have also received the vaccine, so we are well ahead of the average care home in Greater Manchester.

Our new additional outside visiting pod is almost complete and we hope will be available at some point next week. We are working on our testing station for when the lockdown rules relax.

Our workforce is holding up despite the additional lockdown challenges. Our swabbing regime and the diligence of staff means that the Village remains virus-free, despite increased numbers of staff testing positive. Our policy of vigilance, test early, and isolate quickly helps us enormously. As more and more staff are vaccinated, the more secure we will become.

We are having to support a lot of employees through furlough; flexible working due to the schools being closed; balancing family life; home schooling; and doing a 12-hour shift in a mask – providing hands on care is tough work under ordinary circumstances.

Official ‘clap for carers’ is on mute at the moment but don’t let that stop you! We pass on all your positive messages to our teams – so thank you.

You can help us in many ways: many of our staff use public transport and local shops, and keeping to Government advice on travel and wearing a mask keeps them safe.

I went shopping last week in Tesco and was appalled by the number of people (being completely honest predominantly 18 to 30 year-old men) who were not wearing masks!

That’s blokes for you, but unfortunately youthful arrogance will not keep them – or anyone else – safe. I feel much safer surrounded by my Fed colleagues and residents who are sticking to the rules, being swabbed and being vaccinated. Pretty soon Heathlands Village will be the safest place to live and work in Manchester.

The good news after that shopping trip is that I now have an ASDA delivery slot!

A few colleagues have described an amount of tension and less than respectful communication from some relatives when arranging the visiting bookings. I understand the tension which we are all feeling, but please endeavour to be patient and understanding.

My colleagues are doing their best, under the most difficult of circumstances, and need your support.

Please stay safe and well,

Mark Cunningham,
CEO

5th January 2021

Dear Friends & Relatives,

So day 302 didn't start the way most of us had hoped!

Firstly, let me wish everyone a healthy and happier 2021. I appreciate that the news over recent days has poured cold water on many people's optimism, however we continue to work in the best way possible to support and care for people, in the absolute belief that Village life will return to normal over the coming months.

There are no confirmed cases of the virus on site. We do take precautionary measures if someone appears symptomatic, and this will impact on visiting if we decide to close a household to safeguard the residents and staff. The new strain of the virus is clearly much more infectious and all of our measures are aimed at reducing the risks to both residents and staff.

Our vaccination programme went extremely well and, bar a couple of exceptions, all our residents and tenants received the first dose of the vaccine. There was a real buzz around the Village on the day of the vaccinations and people were genuinely excited. We have also managed to get more than 130 staff through their first vaccination, which is about 1/3 of our workforce.

We hope that with the Oxford vaccine becoming available, even more staff will go through the programme.

As far as we are aware, our residents and tenants will receive the second dose within three weeks.

So what does Lockdown Three mean for us?

Visiting

The latest lockdown rules mean that we cannot use the rapid or lateral flow tests kits to move towards face-to-face visits at the moment. Window and Pod visits are still possible. I appreciate there have been some teething problems with the pods, but we are thankfully making progress.

There are some slight changes to the system:

- To reduce contact between yourselves and staff there is now no need for you to come in to either reception area for a temperature check .
- During your booking call, we will reinforce that you should not attend if you are feeling unwell. If you have a thermometer at home, please can you check your temperature prior to visiting.
- Please complete the risk assessment at home and bring it in with you.
- Place this on the table in the pod, or on the table outside (under the hand sanitizer) if it is an outside (window) visit.
- The carer supervising your visit will collect the risk assessment when you leave and give it to reception staff to keep for our records.

From tomorrow, a new member of staff – Josh Thomas – will be taking over the booking line for visits:

“Hello everyone,

I would also like to echo Mark’s words wishing everyone a healthier and happier 2021.

I just wanted to give you a brief E-introduction from myself; as of tomorrow morning I will be on the other end of the booking line. Unfortunately, due to my beginning here at Heathlands Village being so close to the beginning of the pandemic I have not had the opportunity to meet many of you, but I have however had the pleasure of spending a lot of time with your relatives here at the Village.

The booking lines will be active from 10AM-12PM and 1:30PM-3:30PM.

All the best,

Josh”

Workforce

The biggest impact of lockdown is on our workforce; we will have to furlough a number of staff who are deemed clinically vulnerable. Of course schools being closed also causes significant problems for our staff, and we are doing our best to support them.

Of our 350 employees almost 300 have now been affected by COVID-19 in some way, shape or form. This means they have been unavailable for work due to self-isolation, quarantine or becoming ill themselves.

It is a phenomenal number, and it is down to great team work that we have been able to push through the daily challenges and keep moving forward.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham,CEO

22nd December 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 288.

Apologies for the brief update; our situation, and the advice we receive, continues to change almost daily.

The Village remains free from the virus and we are continuing our extensive swabbing program to ensure the health and wellbeing of both our residents and staff – and even the occasional dog!



We have been informed that our residents will receive the vaccine on Wednesday 30th December.

The vaccine will be administered by NHS staff at Heathlands Village. At the moment we don't have any other details and everything is subject to change – but day 296 is one to look forward to.

We are both excited and thankful that the vaccination process will go ahead this side of New Year.

Unfortunately, we will have to **cancel all visits** on this day, apart from anyone visiting a relative who sadly is at end of life. We will offer an alternative day where possible.

We now have three pods up and running. We are fine-tuning their usage, so please bear with us whilst we get things right. The feedback we have received is very encouraging, and they are definitely warmer than the window visits, which I know have been character building!

Please be aware that we will be asking all visitors if they are from a **Tier 4** area. Current guidance from Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership means we cannot facilitate visits from anyone living in a Tier 4 area.

We will continue to do our best to keep everyone updated with any changes over the festive period.

Please take care of yourselves.

Kind regards

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

16th December 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Our 282nd Day starts with the positive news that our first cohort of staff received their vaccination against COVID-19 yesterday.

This is excellent news. Whilst it was only a small group, it shows that we are making progress down the path to a brighter, healthier and safer future.

Karen Johnson, our Clinical Director, has led the way helping to re-assure those people who were nervous or worried about the vaccinations. Karen said:

“I feel so privileged to have been able to have my COVID-19 vaccination yesterday. The scientists have worked so hard to get this vaccine ready to help protect us from this deadly virus – which has not only severely affected our Village, but which has taken the lives of so many people, young and old alike.”

We have not yet been notified of when residents will receive their vaccination.

The problems with transporting the vaccine outside of the hubs where they are stored are very real; it appears more than likely that our residents will be offered the Oxford vaccine once it is approved. This will possibly be at the end of the month, allowing more widespread vaccination of our residents and workforce in the new year.

We have taken delivery of what are being called the ‘lateral flow tests’ or ‘rapid tests’, but as yet we haven’t received permission to use them. This is because they are only 50% accurate if used on their own and this presents too great a risk. It is likely that a system will be considered where relatives have a standard test followed by a rapid test; the rapid testing would allow face-to-face visits.

As soon as we receive further information we will share it. The testing regime is quite convoluted, and it will require us to convert the summer house in the garden into a ‘testing station’.

Our first two visitor pods should be available for use from the end of this week, and before 25th December, we hope to have four indoor pods available for use.

One will be a separate wooden building in the garden of Willow Tree House and adjoining Beach House. We will continue to offer window visits, but appreciate how difficult and unpleasant the weather is making these. Ultimately, we will be providing a combination of window, pod and face-to-face visits and our commitment to you and our residents, – as it ever was – is to achieve this as soon as possible.

As we continue to celebrate Chanukah, I hope you have enjoyed seeing and hearing our virtual choir. I have included the link just in case you missed the singing talents of our residents and staff... and Monty the dog! It shows what great innovation and enthusiasm exists here, alongside a determination to celebrate no matter what.

[You can enjoy their musicality and wonderful performances by clicking here!](#)

The majority of our staff celebrate Christmas, which will arrive on the 29th Day since we introduced COVID measures back in March. It has been an emotional and physical roller-coaster for many, with over 280 staff having been affected in one way or another by the virus, either directly or indirectly. Some of our staff have lost loved ones and people they care for, and some continue to have health issues as a result of the virus. It has been incredibly tough.

I want to pay tribute to every single member of our workforce who has worked hard to keep the people we care for safe, whether in Heathlands Village or in the community. No matter what job people do, everyone has worked together as team and endeavoured to do their best. This has been difficult as advice, restrictions and policies changed on an almost daily basis.

I am very proud of everyone involved, and proud of how we have responded to the pandemic. We couldn't have done this without your encouragement, patience, understanding and support. Thank you.

I hope that 2021 will see our Village life return to normal and that the sights and sounds of people living life to the full will be heard loud and clear.

I hope 2021 brings everyone the health and happiness we have so missed in 2020.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

9th December 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 275.

The information we receive about rapid swab testing and vaccinations is literally changing by the hour, and we want to keep you updated.

For now this is what we know!

The Village remains virus free.

The visitor pods are now on site and currently being constructed. As soon as these are completed we will let everyone know.

We have not yet received any rapid test kits or lateral flow tests that will allow face-to-face visits.

We have received consent forms for staff and residents for the vaccine. We will be contacting named relatives as appropriate, to discuss consent for those residents who are unable to understand and give consent themselves.

We have not yet been given a date when we will receive the vaccine or instructions to attend the vaccine hubs.

Our visiting regime will remain the same until either the pods or lateral flow tests are available.

If we are given a specific date for the vaccination of residents we will cancel all visits on that day, as the vaccination process is an obvious priority and it will take significant staffing resources to implement.

Apologies for this brief and factual update but I am aware that many of you will be hearing lots of information on the news, and there is often a difference between the headlines and what is happening on the ground. We are working closely with Bury CCG, Infection Control and the NHS to move things forward as quickly and safely as possible.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

2nd December 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 268.

It has been a busy few days, with many changes in policy that we hope will have a positive impact on visiting at the Village.

The Village remains virus free with no symptomatic or positive cases. We did have to briefly suspend visiting to Beach House last week, but after testing all the staff and residents everyone was found to be negative.

I will first provide an update on our current arrangements on site, and will then endeavour to comment on various announcements in the news over the last 24 hours which will affect care homes.

We have taken the decision to move our residents off from Oakwood, which is in Eventhall House, and move them to the new Willow Tree House in the main building.

The first floor of Eventhall House will now not be in use, and the residents on D2A (Discharge to Assess) will remain on the Simon Jenkins Nursing Unit on the second floor.

The moves will take place during the week beginning 7th December, and visits will be suspended on the days affected by the moves. New arrangements will be put in place for relatives of our Oakwood residents and they will all be informed of these, including where the new visits will take place.

The new Willow Tree household is lovely, and the garden area will very soon be finished. However, we will not be admitting the chickens to the new chicken run until spring!

Relatives can now make more than one booking a week, subject to availability. The booking system will remain the same for the time being.

At the moment all visits remain outside of the building. I appreciate that the temporary shelters are not ideal and for now you will have to wrap up warm. As soon as the internal pods are delivered we will make these available. We know there are sometimes problems with communicating through glass and windows, but we hope that this arrangement will now be short lived.

Our policy on visiting residents who are sadly at end of life has not changed throughout the pandemic. I am proud of the fact that we have fought for and supported these crucial visits, and they will continue. Please be aware and sensitive to the fact that if you see a relative entering the building that it may be for this reason.

The visiting arrangements for Moorview House Supported Living are different, as they fall under different guidance from the Government. I know that some people have struggled with this concept but the arrangements are fully risk-assessed and have worked well. This has enabled us to evidence to infection control that our measures are effective and that we can begin to apply what we have learnt with Moorview across the Village for all visitors.

Update on the News

Please be aware that whatever news and changes Matt Hancock announces on the BBC at breakfast time regarding care homes will not happen immediately (if only it did!). The Government may infer it, but sadly this is not the case.

Increased tests for staff

We believe that we will be receiving an increased supply of swab tests, meaning that we can test our staff twice a week.

This is a huge logistical challenge; we already undertake 300+ tests a week and have employed and trained additional staff to carry out this process. It pays dividends as we have been able to identify any potentially infected staff early.

The impact on our workforce remains high but we have not allowed staffing levels to drop. Since the pandemic began, over 270 staff out of 350 have now been unavailable for work due to a Covid-related issue.

Rapid testing for visitors

This is the real jewel in the crown. We have been informed that visitors will be able to enter the building if:

1. They test negative on every visit
2. Wear the correct PPE
3. Follow all infection control measures

Obviously this regime cannot start until we receive the rapid testing kits – but we have not been informed when they will arrive. We will be creating a testing facility outside of the main buildings which will allow visitors to be tested.

Visits will still need to be booked and all of the other requirements will remain in force.

If there is a COVID outbreak in any household, all visiting will be suspended to that household.

As soon as we receive the test kits we will let everyone know the new arrangements. Until then, we have to stick with current procedures

Vaccinations

We are extremely lucky that we have staff who are trained in giving vaccinations. This is a special skill requiring significant training and it is unusual for a care home to have staff trained to this level.

This, we believe, puts us at the forefront of being able to vaccinate our residents and staff. Both of these are high priority groups.

Much will depend upon which vaccine is made available as to how quickly it will be rolled out.

There are significant temperature storage issues and protocols to be followed. Once again – when we know, you will be the first to know.

Our commitment remains the same: to ensure that we can facilitate face-to-face indoor visits whilst keeping everyone safe as soon as possible.

If you are the only family member receiving this update, please share it with other members of the family who may not receive the briefing directly. We do not have the email address for every relative and need your support to share information.

Thank you for your ongoing support and patience,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

20th November 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 254.

The focus of this update is primarily to share our new information on visiting with you. There is no change from last week to the COVID status of the Village, and we have no new infections.

The Moorview visits have started and, despite a few teething problems, are going well.

I am pleased to share the fact that Bury Council have approved our risk assessment for the start of our safe visiting programme, and our arrangements have been given the green light by the Director of Public Health.

We have also had a remote inspection by the Health & Safety Executive. This gives some insight into the level of compliance we have to observe.

Before I share the details of how to arrange a visit and who can visit, I need to reinforce how much we need your support for the arrangements we are putting in place. I appreciate that not everyone agrees with the level of restrictions or the Government's approach, but our avowed aim is to develop and refine our scheme so that ultimately everyone can enjoy more relaxed and normal visits.

Right here and right now, the situation is what it is! We need everyone's support and patience to get this off the ground. Bending the rules, changing the rules, or using artistic licence is more likely to result in Bury removing their support of our visiting programme than anything else.

So here goes!

Visiting will start on Monday 23rd November.

There are 5 visiting areas:

Area 1 is outside the Activity Centre

Area 2 is outside the Coffee Shop/Cafe

Area 3 is outside the Library

Area 4 is outside Children's Centre

Area 5 is outside Oakwood's office

All these areas will have some form of a shelter, so visitors will be protected if it rains.

Each area will have a chair and small table.

We are working on alternative arrangements for those residents who are too unwell to be moved to a visitor area.

The visit will be behind glass at this time.

We are suggesting that mobiles are used for better communication.

Each location will have a mobile phone set up inside for the resident to use, which will be attached to a speaker to hopefully allow residents to hear more easily.

Once the visitor and resident are both in place, the carer who is with the resident will ring the visitor mobile so both parties will be able to talk through the glass.

We will laminate the phone number of the mobile that the resident will be using and place it on the window for you to see, in case the communication fails or the line drops.

Each area will be cleaned and sanitised after each visit both inside and out.

[By clicking this link, you can view a site map of Heathlands Village.](#)

This map will inform visitors of which Reception area they should attend, depending on which visiting location they are going to. For example:

Visitors using areas **1** and **2** will go to the Main Building Reception, and visitors using areas **3**, **4**, and **5** will go to Eventhall House Reception. Visitors will then be able to use the hand sanitiser and have their temperature checked.

This is also where there will be an exchange of the visiting documents that you will receive and fill out before your visit. A link to these can be found below.

It is from this point that a member of the Customer Services team will escort the visitor to the visiting area.

Visitors are to wear masks when entering the site; this can be removed once at the visiting area so that the resident can clearly see the face of their visitor. However, if someone outside the visitor pod is in the same area then the mask will need to be put back on.

Visits will take place each day apart from Saturday. This is due to operational reasons, not because of Shabbos, although that was taken into consideration.

The Visiting Location Areas are as follows:

Nursing (Wolfson): will be at **Area 1** – Activity Centre

First Floor Residential: will be at **Area 2** – Coffee Shop / Cafe

Unit 2(Hamburger): will be at **Area 3** – Library

Beach House: will be at **Area 3** – Library

D2A: will be at **Area 4** – Children’s centre / EH

Oakwood: will be at **Area 5** – Oakwood on the decking outside the office

The following are the visitor timeslots which will be bookable:

Nursing (Wolfson): 2:00, 2:45, 3:30

First Floor Residential: 11:30, 2:00, 2:45, 3:30

Unit 2 (Hamburger): 10:45, 11:30, 2:00, 2:45, 3:30

Beach House: 10.45, 11.30, 2.00, 2.45, 3.30

D2A: 10:15, 11:00, 2:00, 2:45, 3:30

Oakwood: 11.30, 2.00, 2.45, 3.30

The numbers to ring for visiting are:

Mornings, 10.00am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday: Rebecca on 07849 085059

Afternoons, 1.30pm to 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday: Kelly on 07518 104943

The lines will open for bookings from Thursday 19th November.

We will need to know **who** the designated visitor is for each resident. Due to regulations, that person, **and that person only**, can attend. Please do not swop visitors, or bring babies or young children with you.

Unfortunately, there will be no facility for an answer machine so you will need to keep ringing until you get through. We will endeavour to make sure that each resident gets at least one visit per week, and more if we can accommodate it.

If we have a positive COVID swab result in the household where your relative is living, we will have to stop visiting for this unit.

If we have to cancel your visit for any other reasons relating to the ill-health of your relative, the Team Leader from the unit will ring you.

[By clicking this link you will be able to download, print out and complete the visitor document. This is a Visitor Declaration form, and the Track and Trace form.](#)

If for whatever reason you are unable to fill these out, there will be copies available at reception for you to use. **Please bring a pen with you.**

Our previous responsible visitor code still applies:

Do not visit if you are unwell, have symptoms of COVID, or have been subject to Test and Trace restrictions

Do not visit if you are subject to quarantine or self-isolation requirements

Follow the PPE requirements

Remain in your designated Visiting Area

Treat all staff with respect and courtesy. They are doing their best under the most difficult of circumstances

Thank you for your help and support,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

13th November 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Saturday will be Day 250 of our battle with the virus, marking a milestone which few of us anticipated in April.

What has defined our journey so far has been the exceptional teamwork, commitment and bravery of all our employees, both at Heathlands Village and working in the community, to keep people safe and well.

This week saw us reach another unwelcome milestone: our 250th member of staff was unable to come to work due to a COVID-related issue. This means that since the middle of March we have seen two thirds of our workforce take time off due to shielding, self-isolation, Test & Trace, or due directly to illness from COVID-19.

In the last week we have seen a significant increase in people being 'Test & Traced' or being asked to shield under the new clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) rules. This has caused a lot of operational challenges but we are determined to ensure that all our support services continue and that we maintain our quality of care.

Testing

We had one positive test this week on our Discharge to Assess (D2A) unit. The person has no symptoms and has previously tested negative. This household is currently in lockdown with no admissions, and the person is in isolation as an additional precautionary measure. Our inhouse testing continues and remains an excellent line of defence.

Visiting

As people may be aware the Government released guidelines on visiting late last week. This required us to complete a series of risk assessments and to submit a document to the Director of Public Health for approval. We have done this and are effectively waiting for the green light.

What does this mean?

We will be providing details early next week of how families can book to arrange a visit to see their relative.

Until we get approval from Bury Council, we cannot give a date for the visits to start but believe the new regime will begin – at the latest – a week on Monday (23rd November). If we can start sooner, we will.

These visits will be window visits and we have constructed some temporary shelters to protect people from our beloved Manchester weather.

Our plan is to start with these window visits but as soon as we have our People Pods available we will move to inside visiting.

The visiting system for our supported living scheme, Moorview House, will run differently as it is covered by a different set of guidance requirements. We are aiming to start Moorview visits next week.

However, both visiting schemes do have similar requirements, and we will be updating and sharing with you our responsible visitor code.

In a nutshell:

1. There will be one designated visitor per resident, and for the time being **one visit per week**
2. People must book in advance and complete the visitor form
3. The form asks people to confirm that they do not have any symptoms and have not been in contact with anyone who has tested positive within 14 days

As you can imagine, there is a lot more advice to share but all of the measures are designed to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents and staff.

As we did back in June, we hope to evolve and refine and, where possible, relax the visiting requirements – but for now we need your support, patience and understanding to get the scheme up and running and working effectively.

We will have two staff helping to manage the scheme who will no doubt introduce themselves next week, along with all the information you will need to arrange your first visit.

To prepare you for any potential disappointment, if we receive a positive test on any household we are required to immediately suspend visits.

We anticipate the booking of visits will be a considerable piece of work for us, at a time when our staffing resources are already stretched, but we are determined to make this happen with your help.

It would help us enormously if you as a family could decide who will be the nominated person to visit. We know this is a difficult enough decision in itself. When my Mum was in hospital some time ago, she could only have one visitor and she told the nurse in charge to let the most sensible, calm and talented of her children visit...my brother got the job!

I am sure that like me and all of my colleagues at Heathlands Village you will be excited and emotional to see this situation move forward. As someone on the radio said this week – “We are not out of the woods yet, but maybe we have found the right path.”

I will leave you with this optimistic view and look forward to seeing many of you again soon.

Tonight marks the annual BBC Children in Need programme. Just like us – and most every organisation in the world – they have had to adapt and evolve with the changing realities around us, and the show will look markedly different to previous years.

However, just like ourselves their dedication and commitment hasn't wavered – and I'm delighted to say that not only do they support the work we do, but we had our own little Children in Need visitor this week – who brought a lot of smiles to a lot of faces with his Pudsey ears! He might live with me, but all it takes is a biscuit or some treats and he'll follow you home, too!



Thank you for your support, and please stay safe.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

5th November 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Today is Day 241 on our Village calendar.

You will all appreciate that it has been a turbulent week, and we have been working extremely hard to keep ahead of the changes that have been announced and the consequences of the second lockdown.

I will do my best to update you on a number of key issues which we are facing:

Testing

The Village remains virus-free with no symptomatic residents at present, which is a reflection of the huge efforts of all our staff. We are due to re-test all residents over the weekend; this has previously thrown up positive tests that have subsequently been re-tested and shown to be negative – but regardless of the outcomes, we have good processes in place to minimise any risks.

Our testing regime is working well, and we are now swabbing hundreds of staff each week. This has resulted in identifying certain members of staff and preventing them from coming into work when they have tested positive. The majority of these staff members have no symptoms in the early stages of the virus, and without the testing system we have put in place, we would be in great difficulty.

Our hope is that we can get access to quicker, more accurate tests. The sooner we identify that someone is positive, the safer it is for everybody.

Our door scanners are also working well, reinforcing and constantly reminding of the need for masks, as well as checking the temperature of everyone who comes in.

Unfortunately, as we all know, Bury continues to be a leader in a competition nobody wants to win. The infection rates in our area are much higher than in many other parts of the country, as shown by the latest figures released by Bury Council today:

“With 1073 new cases recorded in the seven days to October 31, Bury’s infection rate has risen from 549.8 per 100,000 to 561.8 per 100,000 and continues to be among the highest rates in the UK.

The four-week summary in Bury:

Week ending October 31: infection rate 561.8 (1073 new cases)

Week ending October 24: infection rate 549.8 (1050 new cases)

Week ending October 17: infection rate 418.9 (800 new cases)“

Whilst these figures do not make for happy reading, they underline the incredible job our staff are doing, and reinforce the importance of every decision we take to keep those we care for safe.

As Bury Council say in all their briefings: “Together, we’ve got this.”

Visiting

There is a lot of information circulating about this topic at present.

We received advice from Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership – or GMHSCP to their friends – regarding visits at the end of last week, and the updated National Guidance arrived last night. Effectively, we must submit an extremely lengthy risk assessment document, and complete an individual risk assessment for every single resident. The main risk assessment has to be submitted to the Director of Public Health in Bury before we can start visiting.

Some of the requirements are onerous, but we have begun working on them already and hope to submit the documentation as soon as possible.

We have now commissioned our ‘People Pods’ but encountered a delay due initially to the designer himself catching COVID, and then problems with the supply of materials – specifically the glass. In the meantime, we are constructing some temporary outdoor weatherproof window pods.

There are plans for a number of Pods across site, but to begin with there will be two side-by-side in Balcombe hall. Access for visitors will be via the outside door at the back of the Village.

We will inform you as soon as our visits can go live; this remains our number one priority.

The Pods are not fully funded by the Government and will cost approximately £30,000 – about £6,000 each.

If anyone knows of a company or individual who would like to sponsor one, please contact our Director of Fundraising and Marketing, Raphi Bloom, on raphi.bloom@thefed.org.uk.

Household Moves

Most moves around site have now taken place and the teams did an amazing job of reassuring and supporting both residents and each other; we have also endeavoured to redecorate rooms between people moving out and people moving back in.

Staff teams have been slightly re-jigged, but residents will still be cared for by many familiar faces.

Discharge to Assess

There was a suggestion in the press last week that we are opening a COVID infection ward on site for the NHS.

This is not the case.

We are moving our D2A Unit, which has been in place at Heathlands Village for several years, onto the Simon Jenkins Unit.

The D2A scheme works by admitting people – members of both the Jewish and wider community – when they are discharged from local hospitals, for a period of rehab on the unit before they are fully ready to go home. Bury Council have a team on the unit which provides Social Work assessments, Occupational Therapy, and Nursing assessments to help this process.

It is possible that we may increase the service, for people who are not infectious but remain unwell or are post-operative, to support our local hospitals.

Our staff

We get frequent emails and letters thanking our teams and their staff, and these are very much appreciated. We are of course continuing to support all our staff as much as possible.

The Government has sent out letters for those people who are clinically extremely vulnerable – or CEV. This is the new terminology for people who were previously shielded, and will have an impact on our workforce.

The rules are not as strict as they were previously, but it does mean that once again we will see staff either having to work from home, or simply isolate at home.

The decision to consolidate our workforce across site was informed by our anticipation of these developments, including the recent unit moves around Heathlands Village.

Keeping In Contact

We have launched an appeal to raise money to upgrade the Wi-Fi across the village and to install new technology enabling simpler and more regular contact between residents and their loved ones.

We believe that the future will require us to have a much more robust and comprehensive system in place, to ensure that everyone can remain connected and to enable the use of more engaging and improving technology.

We are investing in Facebook Portals for every room in the near future. These portals will attach to the TV, creating a much better way of have face to face conversations.

Where possible, we will be asking people to purchase one for their relative's room. If we buy them in bulk, the cost of the portal is approximately £125 each. In instances where this is not possible, we of course will raise the money.

We care for many residents who have no direct family of their own, or whose family may have financial difficulties, and so if you feel able to buy a portal for your own relative *and* for someone else, that would be a true act of kindness.

The overall cost of the project, to purchase and install the Portals, and to upgrade the Wi-Fi so that the system runs smoothly in every room and for every resident, will reach £50,000. We are determined to achieve this as soon as possible, and any contributions will make this vital task easier.

More information on this project is also available from Raphi Bloom.

Thank you for your support, your understanding, and your patience.

Please keep safe and follow the rules; difficult as they are, they keep our employees and residents safe.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

16th October 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Day 221.

After a turbulent week in Greater Manchester, we have been waiting to consider the implications of any increase in the local lockdown or tier restrictions. As I go 'to press' there are no further changes.

Yesterday, the Government did update its guidance to care homes on visiting. For local areas with a high local COVID alert level (high risk or very high risk), visiting should be limited to exceptional circumstances only, such as end of life. Effectively, therefore, we remain as we were.

Whilst Boris and Burnham continue their debate, we have been busy. Our aim is to have everything in place to facilitate safe visits as soon as the restrictions allow.

Today we installed temperature and mask scanners in both receptions. At main reception if you fail the scan, the door simply does not open and key staff are alerted. This is part of our long term strategy to facilitate safe visiting.

We now have the completed plans for our "People Pods" and hope to begin construction of these as soon as possible, as well as sharing visuals of them with you next week.

There will be five pods in total and they will be completed to a spec that keeps everyone safe and the Fire Brigade happy. As previously mentioned, we see the construction of the pods as a long-term investment that will help to ensure that people get to see their loved one on a regular basis. We are also exploring other ideas with infection control that would support safe visiting.

Our regular swab testing continues to highlight random positive tests, particularly amongst staff. Again, the real challenges are those people who haven't been 'Test & Traced' and do not have symptoms – but are COVID positive. Our in-house testing regime is proving vital as a backstop, and where a test has been positive we have been able to inform and isolate quickly.

We have had a positive test in the main building, although this individual has previously tested positive some time ago and is asymptomatic, so we are awaiting a re-test. Similarly, we have had positive tests in Eventhall House but the individuals are asymptomatic and we are awaiting re-tests.

I appreciate any positive test anywhere in the Village will cause anxiety but the Clinical team are extremely proactive, vigilant and professional. Our care and support staff continue to work in very challenging conditions and as we all now know, wearing a mask for prolonged periods adds another dimension to the skilled work they undertake.

There will be a delay to any planned moves until we have confirmed that there is no infection in those areas.

I would like to pay tribute to all our staff who are juggling their own responsibilities with children, their own elderly parents, travel restrictions, financial worries and health concerns, and who yet turn up and make a difference every single day to the lives of the people we care for.

The fantastic pictures of the Simchas Torah lunches around the Village shows the hard work that goes into making every day meaningful for our residents and tenants.

Thank you for your continued patience, encouragement and support,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

8th October 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Today is our Day 213.

In a week that has been dominated by the news of rising virus rates across Greater Manchester, we have been completely focused on keeping the Village, our residents, and our staff safe.

Our latest swab testing results have been very useful in monitoring the health of our workforce. Our staff are being extremely diligent and aware when it comes to reporting symptoms and whilst we have seen several staff members test positive, the source of the infection is clearly linked to family members who are at school or college.

Vigilance and robust PPE measures remain our best defence.

I stood in the socially distanced queue for my flu injection this morning with a group of colleagues, and felt very proud of a number of people who had clearly overcome their fears because “it is the right thing to do – we have to keep people safe”. Of course, for many, the promise of a Fed sticker and chocolate was enough motivation in itself!

We are continuing with the development of our move plans and I know the teams are working hard to have conversations and make sure everyone is kept in the picture. Our aim is to keep disruption to a minimum and to ensure that everyone is well cared for throughout the changes.

As we look forward to Simchas Torah, we hope to ensure that the celebration is a joyous and meaningful one for all concerned – with particular thanks to our Catering team for creating such a delicious menu.

We hope to be able to share some plans and pictures of our new people pods soon, and want to reassure everyone that our absolute ambition and commitment is to connect people with each other as soon as possible.

Please take care, thank you for your support, and may I take the opportunity to wish you Good Yom Tov,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

30th September 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Over the past 200+ days we have been met with the sort of challenges no one could have ever envisaged 12 months ago. In the face of the devastating impact of Coronavirus, we have been resilient, innovative, proactive and focused.

However, we cannot ignore the long-term impact of the virus on our services and the people we care for. The number of people we care for at the Village has significantly reduced; this is not just the direct result of COVID-19, but also the impact it has had on admissions and the respite care we offer.

Current restrictions make safe admissions very difficult for all concerned and it will be a while before Village life returns to its full potential.

The financial impact on our charity has been significant and whilst we have benefited from amazing communal support and the National Care Home emergency appeal, we are very much aware of the immediate fundraising challenges that the charity sector faces. Therefore, we must explore ways to reduce our costs, otherwise our long-term sustainability may be threatened.

Sadly, this will mean us closing several of our care households and relocating residents.

The changes will **not** directly impact on any residents or tenants living on:

- Moorview
- Beach House
- Oakwood
- First Floor Residential

Willow Tree House will remain closed for now.

It will be necessary to move some or all the residents who currently live on:

- Hamburger (Unit 2)
- Wolfson
- Simon Jenkins Nursing Unit.

Effectively we will be moving our general nursing care to the main building.

Oakwood and the current Discharge to Assess unit will remain on Eventhall House.

I appreciate that this news comes at a time when most people are unable to visit their relative and it has the potential to cause anxiety and concern. Everyone affected will be contacted by a member of our care team to explain what potential moves will take place and how this change will be managed.

Our aim is to cause as little disruption as possible and ensure continuity of care.

These moves will enable us to maximise our support of people, and for teams to support each other through what will undoubtedly prove to be a very challenging winter. The changes will also support our infection control plans and our safe visiting proposals.

The changes will allow us to save money and more importantly safeguard jobs.

We have not taken this decision lightly and some disruption is inevitable. We hope to have completed all the moves before the end of October.

We held a staff briefing today and we will be talking to all the residents affected by the moves, considering each person's communication needs and understanding.

If affected you will be contacted by one of our Team Leaders, Clinical Managers, or Admissions Manager and we will fully explain everything to you.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding through what is an unbelievably difficult time for everyone. Our absolute commitment is to ensure the wellbeing, health and happiness of all our residents and to return our Village life to normal as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

29th September 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Welcome to Day 204.

Firstly, I want to update everyone that the resident who previously tested positive in Eventhall House last week has subsequently tested negative. With no other positive tests in this area, it is being treated as a false positive test by Bury infection control.

We are continuing our regime of testing, and know that issues like this will crop up. False positive tests are unlikely – but they do happen. We are being as vigilant and as thorough as possible to keep everyone safe and well.

Our residents have all received their flu injections via their GP, and next week we will be offering all of our staff free flu injections. This is being offered in partnership with Bury CCG who will be undertaking the injections on site.

We normally have a high take-up of staff who sign up for the injections, but this year are hoping for even higher participation. This is another way in which we are working to keep everyone safe.

With no end to restrictions in sight, we have made representation to Bury Council, the Director of Public Health and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership regarding care home visiting. We believe that we can re-introduce a safe visiting regime, alongside a 'dynamic risk assessment', that will enable visits to take place while continuing to minimise any risk of infection.

I am sure many of you are frustrated and sad regarding the enforced separation from your loved one and are worried about the impact this absence will have. We are therefore preparing the Village for a long-term safe visiting programme.

We will be creating a number of internal visitor pods in areas across the Village. These will allow face to face visits to take place indoors behind screens, and will limit access to the building and avoid the use of communal spaces.

Our building represents a number of challenges, not least in that there are many people who do not live on the ground floor and that accessible ground floor space is limited. There are also fire safety restrictions which we need to observe.

We have a design and construction team who will be working together to produce the pods and we hope to install them as soon as possible. There is currently a significant shortage of Perspex both locally and nationally (makes a change from toilet rolls!) but we are working on this.

Once we have the plans in hand, we will be presenting our risk assessment to the Director of Public Health and hope to recommence visiting. We will re-open the booking line and will let you know as far in advance as we can when this is likely to happen.

There will be some changes to the visiting procedures in line with Government advice and one thing we will be asking is that visitors use the NHS App.

Next week we will be installing temperature scanners in both of our reception areas. This is yet another measure which will help us to manage our workforce and minimise the risk of infection.

Thank you for your ongoing support and patience.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

22nd September 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

I am writing this update following Boris Johnson's address to the House of Commons about the new restrictions coming into force. This was not the start to the New Year we were looking for and has rather dented our hopes to move forward regarding activities and visiting.

We will of course be looking at how these changes impact on both the care we give at Heathlands Village, as well as in the community to the many isolated and elderly people we help.

We introduced swab testing across site over a week ago. There are currently issues with the timeline when it comes to us getting the results back as they are taking too long for some people – but we hope to see this improve.

One of our routine tests did show us that we had a resident who returned a positive swab result in Eventhall House. The resident does not have any symptoms and has been with us for some time. So far, we have not had any staff members test positive in this area. There is some potential for this to be a false positive result, so we have re-tested all staff and all residents and await the outcome of these tests.

The greatest challenge we face is the fact that some people can contract COVID-19 and never display any symptoms. We know this can be the case through the antibody testing we did in July and August.

As previously explained, when we come across a positive test, we isolate the individual and restrict access to that area.

We constantly reinforce the need for handwashing, PPE (especially facemasks) and distancing – although this is difficult for our staff if they are giving personal care. The new Government message of *Hands, Face, Space* is a clear indication of how everyone can take responsibility for keeping each other safe – [and more information can be viewed in this video](#).

We are looking for some long term solutions to the current visiting restrictions and hope to receive further guidance from Public Health England.

Thank you for your continued patience and support.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

11th September 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Today marks the 186th day of our Journey, and I am pleased to report that the Village remains virus free.

Sadly, as you may know, Bury has joined most of Greater Manchester in the 'red zone', putting us at risk of further Government intervention. The two areas with the highest rates of infection are Whitefield and Prestwich, where the infection rate has shot up by almost 60%.

The infection rate has particularly increased among people aged 18-39 and this poses significant risks in terms of inter-generational visits.

There has been much discussion about care home visiting in the recent news; some care homes have allowed no visitors at all since March. As you know we began facilitating outside visits in June, moving to safe, indoor visits in July. Throughout that period, we were able to support nearly 900 meetings between family members.

We have waited with bated breath for news of a relaxation in the local lockdown situation – we have even had staff on standby to re-start the visiting booking scheme – but sadly we have been unable to implement these plans.

The local lockdown arrangements give us no discretion whatsoever in terms of visitors. What was previously guidance is now a requirement. This is backed by potential action enforced by the Council, as well as both Public Health England and the CQC.

I can only imagine how difficult and upsetting the current situation is for you as relatives, and for our residents, having glimpsed light at the end of the tunnel only for it to be swiftly snuffed out.

In the month of August 2019 we had approximately 4,200 visitors to the Village. In August 2020, that figure was 122 and the majority of those visitors were professionals.

It is a dramatic change and one we are very conscious of. We have raised the issue of visits at both a local political level and via representation from Care England. We believe our previous policy and procedures were sufficient to keep everyone safe, and our hope is that we can re-instate this programme at the earliest opportunity as we recognise how valuable family contact is.

I know many of you are upset and frustrated, and we share your distress.

We will continue to do our absolute best to keep everyone safe and as soon as the requirements change we will put our plans back in place as quickly as possible.

You may wish to take a look at the Residents & Relatives Association website which is pressing the Government on its decision-making regarding care homes: <http://www.relres.org/>

This Sunday we will be starting our regular swabbing programme with support from Bury Infection Control. From Sunday to Tuesday we will be swabbing and testing all of our residents, together with as many staff as we can. This will be more than 500 people, which as you can imagine presents a huge logistical challenge. However, the results of these regular swabs will help us to identify potential sources of infection and help protect everyone in the Village.

Despite having over 350 staff, our infection rate has been low. This is entirely due to our workforce being responsible, respecting the advice on masks, social distancing and hand hygiene, and taking immediate, appropriate action if feeling unwell. I am so proud of everyone in this respect. We have all seen people who have chosen to ignore the advice given, but our teams know they are protecting their family and our Fed family – our residents and colleagues. This takes discipline, commitment and professionalism.

We gave all our staff thank you cards and Fed Hero badges this week to acknowledge the role they have played during the pandemic and are continuing to play going forward.

We hope to be able to clarify what arrangements we will have in place for Rosh Hashanah early next week, and we will let you all know what will be happening. Regardless of how the next few weeks unfold, life in the Village is firmly focused on the upcoming Festivals, and our residents are preparing in good spirits.

Thank you for your continued support, understanding and patience.

Wishing you a safe and restful weekend,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

1st September 2020

Dear Friends and Relatives,

We have been asked to share the following information with you, which has come from Bury Council.

Our continuing thanks for your support and confidence.

“Coronavirus restrictions must remain until we get the rate down”

Health and council leaders say that Bury should remain under extra restrictions until the number of new Covid-19 cases comes down.

With Bury having one of the highest infection rates in England and rising – and being three times the national average – they agree with the Government that now is not the right time to lift measures and allow households to mix indoors.

Today, the Government is lifting three more Greater Manchester districts – Trafford, Bolton and Stockport – out of local restrictions due to falling infection rates in those boroughs.

Bury’s rate, however, has risen for the sixth consecutive week and now stands at 35.2 per 100,000 population. These numbers are likely to be even higher as not everyone notices their symptoms or gets tested.

Councillor Andrea Simpson, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: “We all want the Government to lift restrictions in Bury as soon as possible, but we accept that they must continue – our infection rate is increasing while the rate is falling elsewhere.

“It’s clear and simple – if cases don’t start to fall, we risk going back into lockdown.

“Unfortunately, too many people (who are not exempt) are not wearing masks in shops, are still meeting up in large groups from several households, and not keeping two metres apart. A few then catch the virus, and bring it home to spread among their families.

“The council and the police are carrying out enforcement of the restrictions, visiting a range of bars and restaurants and giving advice and in some cases warnings to premises which needed to toughen up their COVID-safe arrangements. We have also contacted all the supermarkets in Bury reminding them of their responsibilities and the need to enforce the wearing of face masks unless people are exempt.

“But ultimately the only thing that will work is for people to take responsibility for their actions and follow the guidance and the law.

“With schools and colleges about to reopen next week, it’s essential that we all work together to reduce the risks of transmission.”

The council is responsible for ensuring that premises are operating in accordance with the Covid-19 safety guidelines – any breaches can be reported to the email address licensing@bury.gov.uk for pubs and bars and commercial@bury.gov.uk for wider businesses.

Complaints regarding breaches of the law, such as households meeting each other indoors or in private gardens, should be reported to the police through their 111 number.

Cllr Simpson said the number of new coronavirus cases was spread evenly across all five neighbourhood areas in Bury.

“Some may argue that very small areas in Bury could have the restrictions lifted, but this is a recipe for confusion. If you lived in Elton, for example, would you know where the boundary was with Church ward?

“The virus knows no boundaries, and everyone from Ramsbottom down to Sedgley Park must unite to get the infection rate down.”

The restrictions in Bury are:

You must not meet people you do not live with inside a private home or garden.

You must not visit someone else’s home or garden – even if they live outside the affected areas.

You should not socialise with people you do not live with in other indoor public venues – such as pubs, restaurants, cafes, shops, places of worship, community centres, leisure and entertainment venues, or visitor attractions.

Everyone (unless exempt) must also wear face coverings in shops/supermarkets, public transport, banks and post offices, cinemas/theatres, places of workshop, libraries/museums and community centres.

Wash your hands frequently and stay two metres apart wherever possible.

Lesley Jones, Bury’s director of public health, said: “Household transmission remains an important source of new infections, as people spread the virus they caught in the community to their families.

“Those aged 18-39 account for more than half of the new cases in Bury, and the percentage of positive tests has also increased.

“It is essential that people take part in the track and trace system, and self-isolate and get tested if they are contacted.

“We are shortly to open seven walk-in testing centres across the borough, which will make it easier for those without transport to be tested.

“Above all, this virus is spread through close contact with someone who is infected – just like other viruses such as the flu and common cold. That’s why it’s essential to maintain social distancing and exercise good hand hygiene.”

The Government has published a list of Frequently Asked Questions on what you can and cannot do: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/north-west-of-england-local-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

7th August 2020

Dear Friends and Relatives,

We quietly passed day 150 on Thursday.

It was a real pleasure to chat to so many of you on zoom this week. I recognise what a disappointment the cancellation of visits has been for everyone, but we will continue to monitor any changes in guidance and requirements which will allow us to resume.

We are currently upgrading all of our computers and screens and installing zoom across site to enable improved individual updates from Team Leaders regarding your relative. We will let you know as soon as this is ready to start.

There were a number of questions this week asking how we have been supporting our staff, who I know feature highly in terms of your admiration and respect for the work they have done during the pandemic. I thought I would share some of what we have done to help.

As I have mentioned to some you already, we have almost 400 employees and over the course of the pandemic have seen approximately 170 off work due to shielding, self-isolation or because they were ill.

Such an unprecedented event and crisis had a significant impact on staff welfare and wellbeing. We recognised this almost immediately once we started to see people becoming ill with COVID-19 on site.

All the staff who worked at Heathlands Village through March, April, May and June were on the frontline when it came to tackling the virus. The work was hard, often extremely hot, emotional, stressful, physically tiring and at times frightening. People were worried and fearful, and those who contracted COVID were, in the main, very unwell.

A few staff were very badly affected by the virus with one husband and wife team who both work for us ending up in intensive care. We are very grateful for the fact they both recovered.

We recognised that the use of agency staff increased the risk of cross infection and so where possible used our own bank staff or asked people to work overtime. However, staff had to be restricted to one household or unit to minimise risks. The pressure on the individual teams and managers was enormous.

We introduced a series of welfare measures to help support, reward and recognise the valiant efforts undertaken by our workforce. This initiative was led by our Quality and Training manager, Alison Lightfoot, and supported by our HR manager, Jo Ingber.

The support we offered was as comprehensive as circumstances would allow, and included:

- Access to employment support and advice
- Provision of occupational sick pay to employees who tested positive and who were not entitled to this benefit
- 1-1 welfare support from Alison Lightfoot
- Signposting to other sources of help (bereavement support, legal advice, counselling)
- Support from Impact psychology
- Transport to work via volunteers to minimise both infection risks and travel issues
- Top-up of furlough pay to 100% for first 12 weeks
- Provision of food parcels and essential shopping

- Free meals on duty (which remained in place until end of July)
- Flowers and gifts sent to people affected by bereavement
- Phased return to work plans
- Donated gifts and goody bags
- Donated food treats (ASDA, Dominoes, Subway)
- Fun quizzes with voucher prizes
- Provision of extra uniforms
- Thank you cards from the Board of Trustees
- Thank you, messages, and words of support, from relatives
- Masks for safe use of public transport and for family members
- Flowers sent to key members of teams as special recognition
- Information and guidance notes on how to keep safe
- Regular updates from CEO and Senior Team
- Most importantly – lots of chocolate

We should be very proud of the response and support we gave to our key workers, both as an organisation and as a community.

We are also very grateful for the support and gifts we received from many donors and relatives. The words of support and encouragement made a very special difference.

Take care and keep safe and well,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

3rd August 2020

Dear Friends and Relatives,

Today marks Day 147.

In response to a number of queries, please see below the directive we have received from Bury Council regarding visits to Heathlands Village. We have to comply with this mandatory request:

Please find the following advice from the Bury Public Health team:

Visits to care homes

Following last night's announcement (30/07/2020) about restrictions being put in place in Greater Manchester we advise that non-essential visits to residents in care homes, including garden visits, are suspended until further notice.

We will keep the situation under review and notify you when the advice changes.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/north-west-of-england-local-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

Our visits booking line at Heathlands Village is currently suspended, but as soon as we are allowed, we will re-open the system. If you have any concerns or worries please contact the Team Leader or Nurse Manager for the household where your relative lives.

We will inform everyone when we visits can commence once again.

Kind regards,
Mark Cunningham

CEO

30th July 2020

As many of you will no doubt have seen on the news this evening, the Government has re-established a partial lockdown across much of the north of England, including the whole of Greater Manchester. This is in response to a number of spikes in COVID-19 cases across the region.

As such, we have taken the preemptive decision to suspend all visits to Heathlands Village until further notice.

We understand that this will be distressing to those of you with visits booked in over the next few days, but this decision has been reached by considering the necessary precautions we need to take to ensure the safety of our residents and staff. As from day one, we endeavour to be as far ahead of the curve as possible with regard to keeping the virus at bay and this decision is rooted firmly in that aim.

We will continue to monitor the advice from the Government and Public Health England and will keep you informed with any developments as they arise.

Once again thanking you for your continued support and trust,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

17th July 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Today marks our 130th day, and we are increasingly seeing some things return to normality in the Village.

Please accept my apologies for the brief update this week. Operationally, we have seen a lot of familiar pressures return – which we take as a good sign.

Our visiting regime continues on the same basis, utilising what we believe are safe and positive arrangements for all concerned. The Government has still not issued formal guidelines for care home visitors, and many other homes are still not allowing visitors within their buildings.

We believe that if safely done, following all the PPE and social distancing guidance, that there are real benefits for everyone, particularly in relation to people's mental health and wellbeing.

Please continue to follow the procedures and if you are unwell or have been in contact with someone who has had COVID-19 symptoms do not visit. The Village remains virus free and we aim to keep it this way. Any positive test on site would undoubtedly result in us closing visits in the household affected.

Thank you for your ongoing support and patience.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham

CEO

9th July 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

We've now reached Day 122.

Thank you to everyone for your feedback and support regarding the changes to the visiting system we have in place. This regime will remain in place for the time being, and we are making slight changes as we go along to try and improve things.

We all need to be really mindful of the issue that has faced Hillingdon Hospital since last Friday. Hillingdon has had a further outbreak of the COVID-19 and as a result over 70 staff members are having to self-isolate – and a number have tested positive. The hospital has had to close to emergencies and admissions

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/08/hillingdon-hospital-closes-due-coronavirus-outbreak/>

This is exactly why we are maintaining our emphasis on safe visiting, limiting the number of visitors to the site and minimising indoor interaction between different households or units.

If you book in for a visit:

Please respect the limitations on the number of individuals who can visit

Do not visit if you feel unwell, have a temperature, or any of the well-publicised symptoms of COVID-19

Do not visit if you have been identified as needing to isolate as part of the Track and Trace service

Wear PPE. We will provide this if you don't have any

Wash your hands

Do not eat or drink during the visit; we are also not providing drinks

Keep socially distanced (We know this is difficult, but the Hillingdon outbreak is thought to be due to a lack of hand hygiene and a lack of social distancing)

Under no circumstances wander into or around the building. The only place you can enter is the designated visit area. Our café is closed to visitors

If anyone needs to use the toilet facilities they will need to leave the visiting area and go to either the reception area in Eventhall House or the main building. You will be able to use the visitors toilet which is located at the front entrance.

Many care homes are still not open to visitors, but we believe that with your support and cooperation our arrangements minimise the risks and keep everyone as safe as possible. If we have a further outbreak, we may have to close to visitors again.

By sticking to the guidelines we have in place, you are not only protecting your own loved one but everyone else's too, as well as our amazing staff who continue to provide care and support in an uncertain world.

We will not be opening the main dining room to everyone just yet. We understand people want to see this return, but we are reluctant to do so until we have completed our antibody testing. So far we have tested over 100 members of staff.

Another exciting piece of news which we have confirmed in the last few days – our hairdressers is re-opening. As far as our residents and tenants are concerned, this is the best news for 122 days!

Ahead of this, we will be swab-testing the hairdressing staff. We will only be permitting the two resident hairdressers who work in the salon – there will be no mobile hairdressers on site yet. The hairdressers will open Tuesday to Friday, and it will work on appointment only, with only two people in the salon at any one time.

It will take a while to sort the backlog, but those of you lucky enough to still need the regular attention of a hairdresser will know how important an issue this in terms of how it makes you feel – but we all have to be patient.

We are now looking at undertaking regular testing for all residents and staff, potentially on a weekly basis. You will appreciate this means over 500 people, which represents a massive logistical exercise, but we have been at the forefront of the swabbing programme and aim to continue this.

We are open for admissions, subject to rigorous testing before people's arrival and a period of quarantine. We are making everyone aware of the visiting restrictions before admission.

We have also just completed the work on Willow Tree House, our new dementia residential household. This was started last October and was intended to be finished by Pesach, but as we all know things didn't quite go to plan.

Thank you for your continued support, kind words and patience.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

1st July 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Our Day 114.

Heathlands Village remains free of the virus, which is the most important news.

We have been working extremely hard to reinforce policies and procedures to minimise the risk of any return of COVID-19. Our process of testing staff for antibodies is continuing and so far we have tested fifty staff members, with a further fifty to follow. This gives us enormous insight into how the virus affected our workforce.

As you might expect, the results of these antibody tests show that some staff who have never had symptoms at all had, at some point, contracted COVID-19. I imagine that as testing rolls out to more and more people in the community, this will prove to be the case for many others.

We are taking admissions in line with strict criteria around testing and infection control. Sadly, there are many people who – although they survived COVID-19 – are requiring care and support and now need residential or nursing care.

Earlier this week, we were thrilled to open up our dining room to Moorview House tenants. These tenants effectively form their own social bubble but, even so, we employed social distancing where appropriate.

We recognise that the weather has proved to be a challenge when it comes to visiting; not all of our gazebos survived the weekend wind and rain. We now feel that we have reached a stage where we can safely accommodate visiting inside the building subject to strict procedures. The issues currently affecting the City of Leicester are a stark reminder that this is not over, and we will continue to ask people to comply with the arrangements we put in place.

Therefore, from Monday 6th July we will be hosting visiting sessions inside. The locations for the visits will be as follows:

Activity Centre: two allocated spaces for use by Wolfson and Hamburger Units as before

Coffee Lounge: one allocated space for use of First Floor Residential. Beach House will also use this area if needed

Library: one allocated space for use by Moorview House and Beach House

Purple Room (Eventhall House): two allocated spaces for the use of Simon Jenkins Nursing Unit and D2A (Discharge to Assess)

Children's Centre (Eventhall House): One space for use by Oakwood

Oakwood will also have a gazebo put up at the fire exit facing the assisted bathroom for visitors to sit under, with the fire exit open. This is for the benefit of residents who would prefer to remain on the Unit.

It will mean some rules need to be adhered to by our visitors:

- Do not visit if you are unwell or have been in contact with someone who is unwell
- Do not visit if you are subject to Track & Trace notification and isolation

- You will need to wear a mask or visor for the duration of your visit. We can issue visors to regular visitors which can be kept and cleaned and then reused by the same individual. These visors may help in communicating with some residents.
- You will be offered sanitiser for your hands before sitting down
- You will need to wait outside the room to be let in by the carer who has brought the resident/tenant to the meeting point
- Please avoid touching surfaces and always maintain social distancing
- Please do not bring anything to eat and drink
- If possible please do not use our toilet facilities. If you have travelled a long way or are in need of the facilities, don't worry – we will direct you to the nearest ones available

We have had a change of shift when it comes to bookings. The system which will now be organised by Molly Cunningham and Charlotte Johnson, and we will let people know the new phone number soon.

The pattern of bookings will remain the same; the change of staff and arrangements may cause a few teething problems so please be patient with us.

We have decided against using the gardens for visits because of the unpredictability of the weather and the fact that our residents and tenants are increasingly making use of them.

Thank you for your understanding and support. We *will* get there eventually and hope that the physical distance between you and your loved one will diminish as we move forward.

The most important issue by far is when will our hairdressers re-open! We sincerely hope that this will be from Monday, 13th July. We are currently negotiating with the hairdressers regarding the arrangements, but are unable to facilitate visits from private hairdressers at the moment.

Please stay safe and well.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

26th June 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

We've reached Day 109.

A warm few days have brought their own unique challenges when it comes to working in PPE, and our care teams have been working in extremely uncomfortable conditions.

I'd like to give a particular shout-out to our night staff, who – after a 12 hour shift – have had to try and sleep during the day, which is not easy when it is so warm.

We have no residents in isolation across the Village which is an extremely positive, emotional and joyous moment. It is one we are determined to maintain.

Thank you to everyone for your support and commitment to keeping the Village safe. Whilst we have had some residents and tenants who have seemed unwell, their tests have all been negative. We can sometimes forget that once upon a time people did feel unwell and it had nothing to do with a pandemic.

Our staff will continue to maintain the discipline that has helped us over the last few weeks. Regardless of what anyone says, our mantra is wash your hands, keep socially distanced, and use PPE.

Balcombe Hall, our main dining room, will open back up to Moorview House tenants from Monday starting with breakfast, which for some tenants will be their first meal outside of their flat for months. What will be a special moment for many, we are able to utilise the whole dining room in order to keep people safe and provide an opportunity to share a meal – albeit at a distance.

A number of my colleagues have taken part in the antibody testing trial on site, approximately 50 staff members in total. This requires an actual blood sample but will tell if you have antibodies in your system which would indicate whether you have had the virus. This will help us in managing and understanding our workforce challenges moving forward.

Thank you to everyone for your support of our visiting system. We know it isn't perfect, and the weather has also been a challenge. It has prevented us from putting up the marquee but we have purchased a number of gazebos which we will be deploying over the next few days to keep both the sun and the rain at bay.

We received some guidance in the last few days which we are now reviewing that will support us to move forward. The current system will continue and we will review our plans next week.

Thank you for all your positive comments and thanks to staff, many of which we have incorporated into a video that we sent to our entire workforce today.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

17th June 2020

Dear Friends & Relatives,

Well, we've made it to Day 100.

It is incredible that we have been fighting this virus for such a long time. We always said that this was a marathon not a sprint and it has certainly proved to be the case.

This particular race is far from over and we are continuing to enforce stringent measures to keep our employees, residents and tenants safe. All of our staff continue to wear PPE and we are distributing face coverings to all staff who need them for use on public transport.

The overwhelming feedback regarding visits has been positive; it has been an emotional time for all concerned, but we have been fine tuning the process thanks to your feedback.

We still await official Public Health England advice on visits but we remain comfortable and confident with the procedures we have in place. We had hoped to erect the marquee in the garden this week, which we intend to use going forward to facilitate visits. Unfortunately we had to delay this because of the thunderstorms. We lost our last marquee thanks to torrential rain so have had to take a pragmatic decision.

Until the process evolves, I would advise bringing a brolly on your visits; if you don't have a brolly, you are living in the wrong town!

For now we are sticking with the system we have but we will let you know as soon as there are any changes.

I appreciate that there are many relatives who are themselves shielding and not able to visit yet, and we will continue to do our best to keep you in touch.

We are now permitting external health care professionals to visit in line with advice from Infection Control, as a number of our residents and tenants require reviews of specific health care issues. Such visits may be from district nurses, foot care practitioners, physiotherapists or the mental health team.

Each visit is considered on a case by case basis and reviewed by the Clinical Team or Registered Manager (Moorview) in terms of the risk versus the need for health care intervention. These visits are strictly controlled and subject to all PPE requirements. If you have any queries relating to this, please contact Sue Cleary or Karen Johnson.

In response to a number of enquiries, our onsite hairdresser will remain closed. The Shul will also remain closed for group services.

We have continued the process of swabbing and testing staff and residents and hope by Friday that all households will be clear. We are also planning to be part of an antibody testing trial for staff. This will provide huge insight into our workforce and who has or has not been affected by COVID-19. The insight gained will also help with the support of other care homes across Bury.

I have included a 'Thank You video' from Bury Council which has been sent out to care homes across the area, paying tribute to the role all care staff have played in the face of such extreme adversity. A lovely thing to share with our colleagues and the community.

Thank you for your continued patience and support,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

11th June 2020

Welcome to our Day 94.

Our focus over the last week has been on supporting those employees who are still off sick, coordinating the swabbing of our residents and colleagues, and arranging for you to visit safely.

We still have a number of staff who are officially shielding, although some are now returning to work following medical advice. The mammoth task of swabbing all our residents has been a challenge and has returned a few positive results despite the residents not showing any symptoms. The same thing has happened with some of our staff and a few people have had to self-isolate as a result.

Generally speaking the number of people affected is much lower than we expected and this is very positive. We hope to have all the test results back before the weekend. We may have to repeat some tests as we go along as the system is not without its logistical problems.

Our experience of finding people testing positive very much reflects what is happening in wider society. There will be people using shops, public transport, places of worship, and visiting family and friends who are COVID positive, infectious but have no symptoms.

Our advice therefore to staff is to continue to maintain their social distancing, wash their hands and wear PPE where appropriate. I would advocate this advice to you and your family, too!

We have officially welcomed many relatives back on site for the first time and facilitated a number of visits. We know the system isn't perfect and it will get better but the main thing is keeping everyone safe. This is our number one priority.

I appreciate how emotional some of the reunions have been and I have spoken to some of our residents who were overjoyed, energised and simply thrilled to have met up with their loved ones. There have been virtual hugs all round!

I appreciate that some of you can't visit yet because you yourselves are shielding or at high risk. We will continue to do our best to support you and your loved ones over the coming weeks.

Our aim is to review and refine our visiting arrangements on a regular basis to make them less and less restrictive, whilst maintaining people's health and well-being. We are still faced with lots of competing demands and operational challenges, but we will get there. The feedback we have received so far has been very positive and encouraging.

I am including a picture of my hero of the week. Many of our staff have climbed the dizzy heights of success when it comes to going the extra mile, but John Curley – our Maintenance manager – is proof that some of our heroes have sunk to new depths! John popped up out of the drain outside Eventhall House as I came into work, proving that not all our challenges are COVID-19 related.

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding and support,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

3rd June 2020

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your patience whilst we established a safe system for visiting your relatives. Our aim is to ensure that, during visits, we maintain the same safe environment that we have upheld for the last 3 months.

Part of this safety measure has resulted in COVID-19 testing being carried out for all residents and tenants over the last three days. To coincide with this, tests are currently in progress for all staff based onsite who have not (at any point) tested positive for COVID-19 previously. Results from this testing will help to determine if we have any current asymptomatic people onsite.

To date, the test results returned for residents and tenants have been negative. If, however, we receive two or more confirmed COVID-19 cases on a unit, visits for that particular unit would be suspended until the 14-day isolation period ends. Unfortunately, Wolfson residents cannot join the family visits until 11th June for this reason.

Visiting

Bookings will be arranged on a first come, first served basis.

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Available visiting days:

Monday to Friday and Sunday

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Time:

You will be advised of available time-slots when ringing to make your booking

We have allocated a 30-minute slot for each visit. Please respect this time and please do not overrun your allocated time

We have liaised with Team Leaders to agree allocated time-slots.

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No. of visits per day:

2 visits per day for **Oakwood** residents

3 visits per day for **Beach House** residents

4 visits per day for all other units, including **Moorview House**

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Meeting Points:

Designated meeting points have been marked out onsite. There are six for the main building and three for Eventhall House. Please arrive no sooner than 5 minutes before your meeting time to allow us to escort other visitors away from the area. A member of staff will meet you at the garden gate to guide you to the allocated meeting point. Routes to the designated areas are marked out. Please wear a mask if you have one for entering the main garden as you may be approached by residents. You will be asked to use hand gel provided.

No. of visitors per visit:

Maximum of 2 people per visit from the same household.

We cannot accept visitors from different households due to limited social isolation space.

PLEASE NOTE: If a resident or tenant becomes unwell and is therefore not able to meet, you will be contacted to rearrange your visit. If you are unable to visit for any reason, please inform the unit where your relative lives to cancel as soon as possible so that we may inform the resident/tenant that their visit has been cancelled.

To arrange a booking:

The booking service will be open from the 4th June 2020.

To make a booking, please ring the following numbers at the days/times stated:

Monday to Thursday

10am – 12 noon – 0161 772 4750

2pm – 4pm – 0161 772 4047

Friday

10am – 12 noon – 0161 772 4750

Bookings will be taken and allocated to allow each resident/tenant to receive at least one visit per week. Dependent on bookings taken, some residents/tenants may receive more than one visit if time-slots are available.

To simplify the booking system, we would ask you to arrange for only one member of your family to make contact with us to arrange bookings. Our aim is for all of our residents/tenants to receive at least one visit from their family where possible.

The success of this booking system is dependent on us all working together, as we have over the last few months. We appreciate the support we have received from you, and we ask you to please bear with us as we roll out this booking system. We are sure if we work together, we can make this a great success.

Stay safe and well. We hope to see you soon.

Thank you again for your patience and support.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

28th May 2020

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Really, there should be some kind of fanfare for reaching Day 80.

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Perhaps we all should just quietly acknowledge that this experience has been life changing, and reflect on how far we have come and how far there is still to go.

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In the absence of any fanfares or brass bands, please throw your energy into what may be the final Clap for Carers tonight. Make it especially loud. A twelve hour shift when it is so hot – whilst wearing a mask and plastic gloves and aprons – is incredibly debilitating, and makes what is a hard, physically and emotionally demanding job even tougher.

Thank you to everyone for your emails. I haven't yet been able to respond to all of them or all of your messages individually but I will try. My spell of absence meant my inbox had well

over 1000 emails that needed reading. Top tip: I always try to prioritise reading emails that have the word chocolate in the subject heading.

Today is an extra update that focuses on our visiting plans.

We had developed plans that would have seen us start allowing visiting next week, but we have learnt today that Bury NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have agreed to swab test all of our residents and bring a team of clinicians on-site to do this.

This is an extremely positive development and will give us great insight into the health status of all residents in Heathlands Village.

The swabbing will start on Monday 1st and will continue until possibly Thursday.

We are so pleased and relieved to finally get this arrangement in place. Karen Johnson, our Director of Clinical Services, has worked tirelessly in advocating and lobbying for this essential support. Well done Karen!

This means we cannot start our visiting regime until after the Bury Infection Control team have left the site. This essential screening is a priority that we cannot ignore.

As yet, we don't have a clear indication of when the results will come back. Our experience at the moment is varied, with the quickest being less than 24 hours – but on average results are received around 48 hours later.

We will send everyone an email on Tuesday 2nd June with details of how to arrange a visit. We will then be in a position for people to contact us from Wednesday onward to arrange visits for the following week, beginning on Monday 8th June. I appreciate this is further away than we thought, but the delay is for a very good reason.

We will send details on what we will be asking you to do, where to go, who can visit etc.

Please discuss with the Team Leader or Manager on your loved one's household about the pros and cons of restricted visiting. I know this is an incredibly tough call and so I can only advise that you have the conversation and decide what works for your relative.

We will be keeping an eye on the advice given by the Government via Public Health England and Bury Local Authority, as this may result in some arrangements changing. We are also trying to understand the impact of Track and Trace on our workforce and staffing, as the potential impact is not clear.

Thank you again for your patience and support.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

27th May 2020

Welcome to our Day 79 update.

We have again enjoyed a stable and manageable week.

With nearly 400 staff members, Bank Holidays always create additional operational demands but this one passed with minimal problems.

We still have a significant number of staff who are shielded or furloughed for a variety of reasons, and on top of this we have approximately 20 staff currently off sick – but this is the lowest level since we went into lockdown.

At the start of the day, I was able to say the site was COVID-19 free. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case and we have one resident who is being isolated. We are also seeing sporadic members of staff test positive and having to isolate.

This is our biggest challenge: how do we keep the Village site COVID-19 free? As lockdown relaxes, the concern is that whilst our staff have remained extremely disciplined about infection control and social distancing, the people around them and the communities in which they live may not be so guarded.

This is the most likely route of infection back into Heathlands Village. We remain worried about the impact of a second and third spike, and are reluctant to let our guard down in any way.

We began our own lockdown process on 10th March, as opposed to 23rd March when the Government announced the first nationwide lockdown plans, and as we come to celebrate Shavuos on Friday, we will have maintained our regime for 81 days.

As I write this, I can hear some of our residents outside in the garden singing ‘Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag,’ and the Morecambe and Wise classic ‘Bring Me Sunshine.’

A daily lesson in finding the silver lining, and resilience in the face of adversity.

We are extremely disappointed that the promised swabs have not yet been provided, as this makes planning and managing our workforce very difficult. We have also not yet received the specific advice we requested from Public Health England or Infection Control, but we are fighting to get this.

The reality of what is said in press meetings, and the actual experience on the ground, is very different.

The team has been working on the arrangements for safe visiting. We hope to start next week and we will send out a further email regarding the booking process and how we will manage this.

We know it has been a long time and how difficult a situation this is, but we are moving forward. Please do not bombard the units or households for information as they will be

unable to help; we will share the information as soon as we can. Again I appreciate your continued patience and understanding.

With warmest regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

20th May 2020

Our Day 72 update.

I would like to start this briefing by making a request!

We have been aware for some time that a number of relatives have forwarded this briefing to the local press. I would like to ask that you treat this information as personal to you, your family and your relative. We very much see friends and relatives as being part of the Fed family, and it feels disrespectful to share information with the wider public when it is so personal.

We are frequently contacted by the press and out of respect for those families who have lost loved ones, and families who live far away or are worried, we endeavour to be sensitive and provide information that reflects the challenges that we have faced – without compromising privacy and dignity.

We have turned down a request to share our updates directly, and I would ask that people respect this.

The last week at Heathlands Village has been settled. We have no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 or people who are symptomatic.

The number of staff who are off self-isolating or sick has also dropped below 30 for the first time since early April, and we no longer have any staff in hospital.

We have sufficient PPE and resources in place to manage the site and deliver care effectively. We are still not going to open up the main dining room, and will continue to manage and keep individual households or units separate.

The most common question we have received over the last week has been “When can I visit my relative?”; it is one we have wrestled with significantly.

We know it has been a long time for everyone concerned. Indeed many of our own staff are in a similar situation, and are unable to visit their own parents or loved ones in other care homes – so we understand the pain, anxiety and sadness.

We have taken extensive advice from Bury Infection Control Service on the matter, but I hope that by sharing the following it will give you an idea of the complexities involved in minimising the risks, as well as how we can aim to move forward.

What has to be said is that the COVID-19 challenge is not over – far from it.

All care homes are faced with unique challenges in terms of their design, layout, staffing resources, PPE and the impact of COVID-19.

We cannot focus on what happens elsewhere. We have to focus on our own situation and manage it appropriately.

The decisions that we make are informed by Public Health England and Bury Infection Control, together with the knowledge of our own resources and capabilities, and the people we care for.

Here are our thoughts:

We want to facilitate visits as soon as we can, but everyone must acknowledge that in doing so, there are inherent risks that can only be minimised. The obvious risk is to your relative – but there is also a risk to our staff, as well as to *you*, the visitor.

We cannot yet facilitate visits whereby people enter the building or individual households, but the advice from Bury provides us with certain other options.

Who could visit?

- Immediate family, and no more than two visitors – as long as they live together.
- Only visitors who are symptom free and have not knowingly been in contact with anyone who has had COVID-19 symptoms

Should I visit?

- This is a real dilemma. A lot of our residents have adjusted to what is a new normality, but we recognise that their quality of life is enhanced by your visits, love and conversations. There is a balance to be struck and everyone's situation and understanding is different.
- We would advocate that you discuss visiting with the Team Leader or Manager of the household where your loved one lives. We have to acknowledge that restricted visits – i.e. visits through windows which do not allow for physical contact – may cause more distress than they are designed to alleviate. Not being able to give or receive a hug is the saddest part of this virus.

I undoubtedly contracted COVID-19 from a spontaneous hug from a resident, and I was wearing PPE at the time.

Where would the visit take place?

- Our initial visit arrangements would mean that relatives or visitors remain outside of the building. We would bring residents to a number of designated areas where they can chat through the windows. We would utilise a different ground floor area for each household as some of our care provision is located on upper floors.
- We recognise that some of our residents are not able to get out of bed and this represents an additional challenge which we haven't yet resolved.

How would the visits be arranged?

- We will provide a booking system and a dedicated member of staff to coordinate the arrangements. We cannot facilitate a lot of visits at the same time.
- Visitors will have a time slot, and these will avoid medication rounds and meal times as this is when our staffing resources are most stretched.
- As previously highlighted, visitors must be symptom-free.
- All visitors will be required to wear PPE which we will provide – although if you have your own that would be a great help.

What could cause a visit to be cancelled?

- We recognise that this would be extremely upsetting for all concerned, but if either yourself or your relative was unwell on the day proposed, we would discuss cancelling the visit.
- If we have an outbreak of COVID-19 in a given household, we would not facilitate visits.
- If we have people tested and the results are positive, this may impact on these plans. I will explain more on this below.

When will this start?

- **We would aim to start as soon as possible – but this is dependent upon advice from Bury Infection Control.**

How often will I be able to visit?

· We will try to ensure that everyone who wants to visit gets the opportunity, and be fair and equitable to all involved. We would ask families to consider and prioritise who would visit. If every grandchild wants to visit, we will struggle!

We are waiting for further clarification from Infection Control and Public Health on a number of questions:

- If a resident has been confirmed as having had COVID-19 and is no longer infectious can we offer a more relaxed visiting?
- What will be the impact of being tested? We are starting to swab and test those staff and people who have not been symptomatic.

How can you help and support us?

- You have been incredibly supportive, patient and understanding throughout this period – and we ask you to please continue this as we enter a new phase of the virus.
- Our staff remain under intense emotional and physical pressure. They appreciate your kind words and will continue to do their best.
- Please do not visit and seek to access the Village without discussing with us first. Some unannounced visits have caused upset.
- If you are concerned about the health and wellbeing of your relative, please talk to us about your worries. Please don't make arrangements directly with the NHS, private consultants or GPs, or seek hospital admission without discussing it with us. If someone goes into hospital for any prolonged period we would be unable to admit them back into Heathlands Village without a negative test.

I appreciate that there is a lot in this email to take in and you will have a lot of questions.

Our ultimate aim is to reunite you with your loved one as soon as possible with minimal risk to all concerned.

Thank you again for your continued support and encouragement.

You may notice on our Facebook page or on the fundraising page on our website that our unofficial pet therapy dog is raising money towards parties for our residents.

[Monty's Pets Provide Entertainment \(PPE\) appeal has now gone live – and you can find it here!](#)

Regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

14th May 2020

Day 66 of our journey.

I am so happy to be back, and want to thank you again for your kind words of support. Coming back into work Monday was a very emotional moment, especially when one of our residents said “Nice to see you but where’s your dog Monty? Is he ok?”

It’s always good to know your place!

Due to popular demand, the Shihtzu will be making a guest appearance at some point. For those not familiar with Monty, he was our unofficial therapy dog early on in April.

I am aware that a number of my colleagues are still battling the virus. It is horrible and I genuinely have great empathy for what they are going through. I am sure you will join me in wishing them a speedy recovery.

Coming back to work when you have been off is always an anxious moment, regardless of whether you have been ill, working from home or furloughed. I can only say that you don’t always realise what a great team of people you work with and how much you miss them.

So what does the change in COVID-19 guidance mean for us?

Whilst most of the working world has been at home, the vast majority of our staff have been coming into work or working extremely hard from their own home. For many people, the idea of going back to work will be a novelty, but they will let their guard down and assume everything is back to normal.

We know that it isn’t. Our residents, and the people we care for in the community, are still vulnerable and our workforce needs to be protected.

We have seen approximately 30 positive tests from 70 members staff who have been tested. We still have approximately 30 members of staff off sick.

The Village is fairly stable at the moment with the vast majority of areas being COVID free. We are caring for 28 residents and tenants who have tested positive but are now no longer infectious, something to be very thankful for.

We still greatly mourn the loss of the many friends no longer with us.

Essentially, we will not be changing anything over the next two weeks. There is a belief that this week’s relaxation will cause an increase in diagnosed cases, and we are asking all of our

staff to continue to embrace all the guidance and use the PPE we have purchased when required. The most important thing remains social distancing and regular hand washing.

Now is not the time for us to take our eye off the ball. We have come a long way and it has been arduous and emotionally very upsetting, but we need to stick with our plans for now.

Some of our staff will be returning from home-working due to the difficulties in maintaining their work activities at home. They will be working no more than two to an office and we have put other measures in place.

From hereon in we will be sending out a weekly briefing, and we will try to confirm the day soon.

Thank you again to everyone for your support, patience, encouragement and kind words – and the chocolate has definitely helped.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

7th May 2020

Welcome to your Day 59 update!

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for the messages of goodwill I received. I really appreciated your thoughts and kind words.

It all started when I came down with a temperature, and was swabbed in a lovely car park in Bury. Up until that point, I felt OK!

Unfortunately after that, the virus decided it had had enough of messing about with me and properly took hold from there on in.

Having COVID-19 gives you great insight into the impact the virus has on vulnerable people. It is a very unpleasant experience and one that I am grateful to have come through. I know that sadly not everyone has been so lucky.

I have not been alone in contracting the virus, and this week we passed the milestone of our 100th member of staff returning to work after being in isolation or off sick.

I am currently working from home but hope to be back at the Village later this week, although most probably on Monday.

I want to pay tribute to the management team and all of our fantastic staff who have continued to ensure that our day to day work and the care that we provide has continued under the most difficult of circumstances. They have been heroic.

We have lost a lot of residents who were very much our friends and characters who made the Village such a special place to live and work. We have also lost some much-loved service users in the community.

For some of our staff who have been off sick or in isolation, coming back into work has been heartbreaking when they have discovered that people they cared deeply for and about have passed away. We recognise what a loss these people are to the many families we support, but also the impact these losses have on those care staff who have formed bonds and friendships over the years.

The Fed is very much built around people who are amazing characters – dedicated, hardworking, fun and committed. No one exemplified this more than Diane Taylor.

Diane was our Clinical Nurse Manager on nights. She had been off work poorly since December 2019, and so it comes with extreme sadness to inform you that Diane passed away on Sunday 3rd May.

Diane had worked at Heathlands Village since November 2008. Working nights meant that she was not a familiar face to everyone but she was a vital part of our nursing team. Diane received the Dr Simon Jenkins Award for Excellence in Care a few years ago, an accolade which was richly deserved. Karen Johnson, our Clinical Director, offers a fitting tribute:

“Although only small in stature, Diane had a huge presence when she was in work and was an excellent clinician. We always knew that when Diane was in, we could rest easy as she would ‘have’ the site and we needn’t worry.

We will really miss her. Not only was she a great colleague, she was a friend as well.

Our thoughts and love go out to her husband Martin, daughter Sarah, granddaughter Felicity and son Graham.

Rest in peace Diane x”

The management of COVID-19 across site has been extremely proactive, and we are now seeing areas of the Village which are symptom free. We will continue to manage this over the coming weeks and months. Even if the Government begins to ease the lockdown policy, we will have to continue to be vigilant and disciplined when it comes to hygiene and infection control.

Until we receive further guidance, we will not be relaxing our rules on visitors. I appreciate that in one of my more optimistic updates I did suggest that we could consider ways to facilitate visits but until we have clear guidance on how to do this safely from Bury Infection Control, we will have to continue with our current protocols.

I understand how upsetting this is, but I think that whatever changes the Government decides to implement after the weekend, it may be a while before these can be applied to care homes.

From Monday 11th May, we will begin taking new admissions. There will be strict guidelines in place for this and every admission will be screened and swabbed to ensure they are not infectious. We are very aware of people in the community who are frail and in need of care

and we will do our best to provide help and support to these individuals, some of whom have waited many weeks in isolation for help.

As we look forward to the weekend, Friday marks the anniversary of VE Day, the end of the Second World War in Europe.

It is ironic that we have been fighting our own battle to preserve the lives of those who fought and lived through the war.

It is a great reminder of the privilege of caring for some of our community's most vulnerable people, a reminder of who they are and what they have been through, and the sacrifices they made on our behalf. It is a day worthy of celebration.

Thank you for your ongoing support, encouragement and patience.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

30th April 2020

Day 52 in the Village.

First of all, we begin by apologising for the reduced number of updates over the last few days.

As you may be aware, our Chief Executive, Mark Cunningham, has been off work with COVID-19. Whilst he has been unwell for over a week, we are pleased to say that today he is feeling a little better and we hope to see him back in work in the near future.

Please rest assured that in Mark's absence we as the Senior Management Team are ensuring the smooth running of The Fed and Heathlands Village.

Many of our relatives, staff, residents and tenants have enquired about Mark, and we have told him how much he is missed and to take time to get back to full strength. All of us from our Fed Family wish him a speedy recovery and we are sure you will join us in sending him our very best wishes.

It appears as though we are coming out of the other side of the primary COVID-19 battle for our residents. We are now seeing less symptomatic residents on a daily basis and those residents who had tested positive previously are hopefully on the road to recovery.

We do still have some of our Fed family in hospital, and we wish them all a full and speedy recovery, when we will be overjoyed to welcome them back home.

Sadly though, we have experienced devastating loss over the last few weeks. Tragically, nine of our residents who were symptomatic of COVID-19 have passed away, together with nine residents who were tested and confirmed positive. We have also lost six residents who passed away, but we are confident that they did not have the virus.

It has been a period of great loss for our Fed community and our most sincere and warmest thoughts go to those of you who have lost your loved ones. Each of those numbers represents someone you loved – and who was deeply loved by our staff – and we wish you all a long life.

Our staff have also been affected and so far we have had 21 members of staff test positive for COVID-19. Many of them are currently in the recovery phase, whilst we are relieved and happy that some are already back in work. At various points we have also had up to 60 staff members off sick or in self-isolation.

We now have more swabs available and can test any resident who becomes symptomatic. We also have a very good current supply of PPE, and staff are now using PPE with everyone, treating all residents as though they were symptomatic to ensure maximum safety inside Heathlands Village.

Your constant messages of support and encouragement have been more of a blessing than you can ever know. Our staff are all doing an incredible job and we are so proud of them all.

The cards, letters and emails are all shared with the appropriate teams and give them huge strength to carry on their crucial work.

Lucian O'Neil, our Moorview House manager, particularly wants to thank families for their amazing messages of support during the last few difficult weeks.

Whilst there have been far too many messages to list them all here, there are two in particular we wanted to print. We feel they highlight the feelings that we ourselves have towards our staff, and show the level of care and strength that they have had since this crisis began:

“We are absolutely in awe. Thank you for being our frontline warriors.”

“You are being thought of, and our eternal thanks for all you do – the team are truly heroic.”

We take this moment to end our update to you with a message from one of our Honorary Patrons, Lady Beryl Steinberg.

“In my privileged position as Honorary Patron of The Fed, I watch and feel full of humility at the work of all the staff in these very unusual and difficult times. I wish to thank you most sincerely for your dedication, care, love and hard work taken whilst looking after the Heathlands family.

It is so lovely to see some residents outside doing exercises in the beautiful sunshine we have been having and to have seen them enjoying the recent singing by Benji Salomon and the band for Yom Ha'atzmaut. I know how much the families appreciate this care whilst they are unable to visit.

A big thanks as well to the wider community for their great support at this time.

'Thank you'. These are two small words, but behind them, a mountain of appreciation to all who care for the residents of Heathlands Village.

Let us pray it will not be too long before we can resume "normal service"

Let us hope we are through the worst now, and looking toward a brighter future.

Thank you as ever for your ongoing support and faith.

Our warmest wishes,

Karen Johnson – *Director of Clinical Services*

Sheila Heywood-Holt – *Director of Operations*

Bernie Garner – *Director of Community Services*

Raphi Bloom – *Director of Fundraising and Marketing*

Dominic Irving – *Director of Finance*

24th April 2020

Day 46 in the Village!

Apologies for the reduced number of updates over the last few days.

Unfortunately I started to feel unwell at work on Tuesday and after a quick check from one of our highly skilled nurses, it was established I had a high temperature and was sent home.

We had quite a number of staff affected this week which has been a challenge, but the vast majority of us have now been for a swab.

I was sent to the car park of the old job centre in Bury – not quite the environment you expect for being swabbed, but the nursing staff doing the testing were lovely and said I had been very brave!

It's ironic really that most of our staff who live in Bury have been sent to Manchester Airport for swab tests, while I live about two miles from the airport and was sent to Bury.

Like everyone else, I will find out the results in 24-48 hours.

Although I haven't been in work, I have been able to be part of the daily management zoom meetings and was able to watch the clapping last night on CCTV as everyone left work. It was a moment to be proud of, as people received their applause and in turn stayed to applaud their colleagues and friends. Lovely to see and well deserved by everyone.

We have sadly lost some more of our wonderful residents in recent days. Our thoughts are with their families, but also with the staff who have provided such dedicated care and who also feel the loss of such lovely people whom they have inevitably become very close to.

We are continuing to recruit new staff and have been holding small induction sessions over the last week. This is helping us to ensure that we can continue to deliver the care and support that our residents and tenants need.

We are not yet taking new admissions other than those people who are already our residents but have been in hospital and now need to come back to us. People returning to us will no longer be infectious.

I hope to be able to provide a more detailed update next week. We want to start formulating plans around how we could facilitate family visits safely as we know how important this is for everyone.

In the meantime we will continue to do our utmost to keep the people you love and care about safe and well. Below are a couple of photos from the last few days, showing the fun and innovative ways our staff are keeping people active, happy and reassured.

Thank you for your ongoing support, encouragement and understanding.

Kind regards

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

12th April 2020

Our Day 33 will be coming to a close as you receive this update.

We have taken the decision to lock down further, and have closed Balcombe Hall – our main dining room. This effectively means we are now caring for people on the Unit in which they live.

This represents a number of challenges for us as we have had to change the way that teams work to provide meals and support. We believe this is the next step in terms of what we can do to protect people's health and keep them safe.

We haven't done this sooner because it is a model of care that is so difficult to maintain for any prolonged period.

For those residents that have dementia, who are confused, or who have learning disabilities, this is a decision that is incredibly hard to understand. We know people find comfort in routine and in their friendships across the Village, and to that end we are doing our best to explain why we have put these changes in place, and give some space and feeling of normality where we can.

We will update families where there is a change in someone's health and will do our best to continue keeping you informed.

We do have enough PPE (masks, gowns, gloves etc) but are using it at a rate of knots. Thank you to all those people who have donated PPE, helped us source it or donated money to help pay for it; we have probably used more PPE in the last 4 weeks than we would normally use in a year.

I repeat what I said in an earlier email: if you have any contacts or are able to help, please let us know.

Our staffing levels have been under strain but we have been able to get staff tested at Manchester Airport and some are now returning, having been confirmed it is safe for them to do so.

Thank you for your kind messages of support. So many of our staff have cancelled rest days or the time they had planned with their own family and courageously and selflessly come into work.

I am very proud of the kindness, compassion and understanding that our "Village People" (as we call them!) have all shown in the most difficult of circumstances. Not all heroes wear capes – ours wear masks.



Again I can only thank you for your patience, understanding and support. I do not underestimate how hard this is for you too.

Look after yourselves and keep well.

Kind regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

7th April 2020

As day 29 draws to a close, we have change the title of our update from COVID-19 to Heathlands Village Update. A small change, but an important one – we are trying not to be dominated by this virus or be defined by it.

The last few days have been extremely challenging, and it has been an emotional time for us all.

Sadly, we have seen a number of people reach the end of their life's journey and that brings a great deal of sadness for their families of course, but also the staff who have cared for them – in some cases care which has been provided for many years.

Our thoughts and love go out to these families, and we wish them all a long life .

The majority of people who have passed away were not affected by COVID-19.

However, it is increasingly difficult to say that there is no one in the Village who is COVID-19 positive.

We have a number of residents who have had the virus and are no longer infectious. We monitor people's temperature on a regular basis but it is apparent that a temperature is often related to an underlying health condition or infection. Our policy is to monitor and isolate people where we can, and where we are concerned, we seek immediate medical advice.

We have been keeping one step ahead of the guidance when it comes to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It seems strange that after a year dominated by PPI, we are now completely focused on PPE.

Our care workers and other key staff are now wearing face masks when in close personal contact with our residents and tenants, and this makes a challenging job even harder.

We also don't want to cause unnecessary distress to our residents who live with dementia and have no concept of what is happening in the world around them, and so we are trying to protect and care for people the best way we can.

If you speak to your relative, please help to reassure them.

What this new directive means for us is that our stocks of PPE will be under great pressure. We will need to find more masks and more disposable gowns, and small personal bottles of hand gel are also very helpful.

If you have a business or contacts who could help us secure more stocks of masks, gowns and hand gel then please let us know. We have had some lovely donations but will need much more. We estimate we may use more than 150 masks every day, so if you think you can help us, please do.

We have tried very hard to maintain Skype and phone contact between our residents and their loved ones, but more than half of the team we dedicated to this task are now or have been

self-isolating. We know how much this contact means to you and we will do whatever can, but it will be increasingly difficult over Pesach for us to re-task staff.

We have also re-deployed quite a number of staff into different roles to support teams under pressure across site.

We are now beginning to be offered swab tests. These test opportunities are like gold dust but we are getting more than our fair share, and this is helping us bring colleagues back into work.

We are still trying to put as much daily content as we can on social media, showing and celebrating what we do best – helping people live life to the full, feeling safe, valued and cared for.

Our staff are heroic – we know that you know that. Thank you for all your words of encouragement and good wishes.

Our communication will be sporadic over yom tov, but may I wish you again a healthy and Kosher Pesach.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

3rd April 2020

I would like to inform you of an unprecedented Emergency Appeal to the UK Jewish community that has been launched this week by The Fed, Jewish Care and Nightingale Hammerson – along with the National Association of Jewish Care Homes.

Due to the gravity of the situation, all three charities are engaging with their donors to ask them to please support this extraordinary campaign.

As the UK's three largest Jewish residential care home charities, they have come together in a historic landmark moment to help the most vulnerable older members of the Jewish community through the COVID-19 crisis by launching this joint emergency appeal.

As the Coronavirus crisis bites harder, The Fed, Jewish Care and Nightingale Hammerson are asking the community to be there for those who need them most in their greatest hour of need.

Together with the National Association of Jewish Homes, **the campaign aims to raise seven million pounds** in order to support their vital services during this national emergency.

The Fed, Jewish Care and Nightingale Hammerson provide care homes for more members of the Jewish community across the United Kingdom than anyone else. Between them, they are currently caring for over a thousand older Jewish people day and night, many of whom have underlying health issues which makes them very vulnerable to COVID-19.

In addition, they care for many thousands who are most vulnerable and in need in the wider Jewish community.

In Greater Manchester, London and the South-East, the three charities have already made significant changes to the way they work. The three care home providers have already invested heavily in personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep residents and staff safe, but know that much more will soon be needed. They have also provided new technology to make sure that care home residents can make video calls to their loved ones now that visits are suspended.

Office staff have been redeployed to front-line caring roles, where they can make a huge difference and alleviate some of the pressures on other care staff. Additional sick pay costs and agency costs to replace ill staff have also substantially added to expenditures.

Furthermore, as more and more older people from the community are discharged from hospital to free up NHS beds and cannot be looked after in their own homes, the three organisations must be there for them too, and care for them in their care homes as well.

So far, under these most challenging of circumstances, all three charities are managing to cope with the increased need.

However, they all know that the situation is escalating further and more money is needed to continue to meet their vulnerable client group's needs.

Vital funds raised from the **Jewish Homes Emergency Appeal** campaign will be split between the three care home providers, with 10% being donated to smaller care homes across the community that are part of the National Association of Jewish Homes (NAJH).

As Hillel the Elder said – “if not now, when”.

[To donate, please visit the Emergency Appeal website here.](#)

I am also attaching below a video of what was an extremely touching moment that occurred yesterday at Heathlands Village. Ralph Marcus, one of our Moorview House tenants, recently asked me how residents could show their appreciation and thanks to our wonderful staff.

The answer – as is often the case – was a simple but genuine moment of thanks. As we all #clappedforcarers last night, our residents did the same for our exceptional teams.

My best wishes to you as always,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

1st April 2020

Day 23 coincided with April Fools Day, but as we are all being kind to each other no one has been caught out!

I am not sure that we have quiet days at the moment, but it has felt quite peaceful and relaxed today.

One of our residents living on our Oakwood Unit who went into hospital at the beginning of the week has now tested positive. There have been no further people showing symptoms, so our hope is that the prompt action of the staff and our rigorous infection control measures are helping.

Sadly, one of our residents living on the first floor passed away today. This was not COVID-19 related.

We wouldn't normally mention such an event, but we don't want people to make assumptions or worry too much. Our thoughts are very much with the family concerned because a bereavement is difficult under normal circumstances, and things, as we all know, are even more difficult at present.

We are working with guidance from the Beis Din to ensure the Village will be kosher for Pesach. We are faced with some challenges – especially in Eventhall House – however, we will do our best to implement appropriate arrangements.

We have spoken to many of our residents and tenants regarding arrangements for Pesach, and as always they have given us great advice based on their knowledge and a pragmatic view of the world that only comes with age and experience. Based on the average age of our residents and tenants, this accumulative knowledge equates to about 16,000 years of life experience and so we would be foolish not to listen.

The consensus has been that people do not want a formal Seder.

Meal times will be the same and table arrangements will be similar to normal. Our catering staff will still make this a special evening and we will provide a Seder plate to all those who would like one.

Our supplies and staff teams are under pressure, but are holding up under the challenge.

Thank you again for your patience, support and kind words.

Regards,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

30th March 2020

Today is officially Day 21 for the staff and residents of Heathlands Village.

That said, we actually began to implement changes to our cleaning regime and policies in early February. This was never going to be a sprint!

We have had some additional admissions to hospital from Oakwood and continue to care for a number of people who have shown some of the symptoms.

We are extremely excited to be welcoming back home today a lady who was diagnosed with COVID-19 and is now well enough to return. I am delighted to say that she is no longer infectious.

It shows we can beat this virus and that the professionalism and dedication of our care staff does make a difference. We are so grateful and thankful – and if honest, completely overjoyed.

We are not managing anyone with clear symptoms anywhere elsewhere in the village

We are approaching the point where we will need to ask for help with getting essential staff into work, as the bus routes are soon going to be revised – and in some cases suspended altogether.

We are looking at the protocols for this, and once we have clarified who needs help and where from we will send information out and invite people to volunteer.

Today I reminded our incredible staff how wonderful they are. Day after day, despite the challenges, they keep turning up for work and doing their job with diligence and great care.

Aside from them all being heroes, I have another idea why they are just so good!

“I know things have been tough but you have been doing a great job and your resilience has been amazing.

I am convinced this is because we are all Mancunians at heart. It doesn't matter where you were born, once you work and live in Manchester you get to be part of the team and as my favourite poet, Tony Walsh, says:

And there's hard times again in these streets of our city

But we won't take defeat and we don't want your pity

Because this a place where we stand strong together

With a smile on our face, Mancunians Forever.

Because this is the place in our hearts, in our homes

Because this is the place that's a part of our bones

'Cos Greater Manchester gives us such strength from the fact

That this is the place.

We should give something back

Always remember. Never forget. Forever Manchester. "

Thank you for your support, patience and understanding.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

28th March 2020

This is day 19 of our journey, and I hope you are all well and looking after yourselves.

Did you hear the applause on Thursday night? It was for NHS and social care staff who are doing a great job on the frontline. We are extremely lucky to have some amazing staff here.

We understand that our resident who went to hospital and was confirmed with COVID-19 is doing well and we are sending all our love. Once clear of the virus we will welcome her back and have a small celebration. We will always keep someone's room for them and our commitment to people who may have to go to hospital will be to do our best to get them back to our – and their – home.

We will begin to see increasing numbers of people with symptoms, even if these are not COVID-19. Our methodology is to treat people with potential symptoms as if they have the virus, and try to isolate them as much as we can without causing distress. If we are concerned about your relative we will contact you.

Apologies for the brief update, yesterday was hectic. If you pay your Council Tax to Bury we had your monies worth over the last few days. The support has been excellent. If you get a chance to email your local councillor or MP, do say thank you for us – the support has made a huge difference.

Our supplies, staffing levels and medication stocks are all good. We are having one or two problems with a few food items, particularly rice for some reason – so if you own a paddy field, please get in touch!

I hope you all had a good Shabbos and wishing you a lovely weekend,

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

26th March 2020

It is important for you to know that if a resident presents with symptoms of COVID-19 on the unit where we care for your relative, we will contact you directly to explain and discuss further.

A resident living on our Oakwood unit, who went into hospital on Tuesday, has been confirmed as testing positive for COVID-19. The person remains in hospital and we are sending all our love to this person and their family.

We are reviewing the other residents of this unit, keeping a close eye on them and keeping their families informed. A number of staff members have gone into self-isolation.

We had already begun to manage our care units more individually and separately to minimise movement of staff around site. We are continuing to refine and implement these plans.

Our hygiene regime and plans have helped us up to now and we will continue to follow the guidance provided daily to us by Public Health England and Bury Council.

It is reassuring to note that:

- We have plenty of facemasks and personal protective equipment. Staff will be supplied with these as they are needed
- Our food stocks and supplies are fine
- There are no problems with medication supply

I know this news will make you worried and anxious but we are working extremely hard to keep everyone safe.

Thank you so much to the person who came in and dropped off the mini hand gel bottles which will be distributed to as many staff as possible.

Thank you as well to Rayburn Trading who donated the staff goody bags containing chocolate and treats for our social care heroes.

I know some of you are ready and waiting to come in and help us. Trust me when I say that you are part of our back-up plan – our super-subs on the bench. We know you are there and when we need you we will ask.

Keep well all of you. Continue to enjoy our social media posts. We are trying to promote happiness and reassure your loved ones.

Just today, we have celebrated one resident's birthday – both with family joining virtually on Skype, and with his Fed Family together in the Activity Centre; we have enjoyed a full range of activities; and our Golf Course in the Garden has never been more popular. Cards and

letters continue to arrive from across the community and our residents feel as loved and cared for as any other day.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

25th March 2020

Today is day sixteen of our Coronavirus lock-down. We are managing some huge challenges and we know there are plenty more to come.

There are no diagnosed cases of COVID-19 at the Village or amongst our staff.

Unfortunately, we are not able to send out updates everyday so please don't be concerned if a day goes by without hearing from us. We will continue to keep you informed and up to date as often as possible.

It was a real treat earlier today to be able to wish 'good morning' to staff – some finishing the night shift, and others arriving for the day – in their droves. They are truly a bunch of heroes. You can see some photos of them being greeted this morning on our [facebook page](#) .

We have been putting in place a number of measures to help keep our workforce well; providing free meals; additional paid sick pay to support those who are ill; and stocking our Village shop with essential food items which we don't usually sell to make shopping easier for staff.

We have circulated your many very touching goodwill messages to our staff, too. Thank you for these – they make a huge difference. As a society, we have always loved and embraced the NHS, and it is fantastic that our social care heroes are getting the recognition they equally deserve.

And by the way – some of our residents were out playing golf on the front lawn today. We were officially the only golf course in the UK open for business! You can see photos of this, and our other activities from today, on our various social media channels too!

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

23rd March 2020

I very much hope that you were able to celebrate Mother's Day with your families in some small way over the weekend. We did try to do our bit and opened up the Heathlands Village wine cellar to cheer people up!

We have no diagnosed cases of COVID-19 in the Village and no residents or tenants who have clear symptoms. An increased number of staff are self-isolating but this week we will be welcoming back some members of staff who were previously self-isolating.

I hope some of the events which we have posted on social media have helped to raise your spirits. The other positive news is that we seemed to have resolved the parking issue at the Village!

I very much appreciate how difficult a situation this is and would ask for your support with a number of issues:

Visiting the Village:

Where possible we are asking relatives not to visit, and unfortunately we cannot facilitate 'distance' meetings via windows or across the garden. Although this seems like a lovely idea, in reality it can be very upsetting and unsettling for residents and difficult for our staff team to manage.

If you need to visit to drop something off please may I ask you to leave it at Eventhall House reception, with clear instructions as to who the item is for, and who from.

Very disappointingly, a couple of visitors were rude to our reception staff over the weekend. These employees are on the front line of keeping our residents safe. Please support them and recognise how stressful their role can be. Fortunately, in general, family members have shown great patience and understanding of the current situation for which we are very grateful. Hopefully these incidents are a one-off.

Special Visits:

As you may be aware, there are a number of people in our care who are approaching the end of their life. This is unrelated to COVID-19. In these circumstances, we are able to permit family visits. If you hear that someone has been able to visit a resident of Heathlands Village, please respect the fact that it might be as a result of these very difficult circumstances.

Staff Travel:

We are assessing the impact of reductions being made to the public transport network. Some of our staff need to take two – and sometimes even three – buses to get to work, and the same number home. We are looking at how we can support them with travel and may need to enlist a limited number of volunteers to bring designated members of staff into work and to take them home again, subject to certain conditions. If we need to implement this we will let you know.

Thank you for all the good wishes we have been receiving which we have shared with our Fed heroes.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

20th March 2020

Firstly, apologies for this being only a brief update.

We have no confirmed cases of COVID-19, or people displaying clear symptoms, at the Village.

The sunshine has meant that many residents have been able to enjoy a stroll outside – have a peep on social media for a video of two delightful ladies offering words of wisdom from our front garden. While you're there you can view some members of staff using long-forgotten talents to keep our residents suitably coiffured!

We have received quite a lot of guidance today from Public Health England and the Local Council on various protocols, which we are implementing.

We are not short of anything we need in terms of supplies and we are meeting the workforce challenges well.

We are exploring how to support staff affected by school closures and the reduced public transport services.

Our Senior Management Team is working a seven day rota to provide support to all of our teams. Our Community Services Teams deserve special recognition for the way in which they are helping those elderly people who are home alone.

We will be reviewing our plans for Pesach next week and hope to clarify these for all concerned.

I am conscious that Mother's Day this year will be tinged with mixed emotions but we intend to make it joyful and it will be scones and cream all round!

Thank you to everyone for their good wishes and support. We circulate your letters and emails to all our staff and they are morale boosting and heart-warming.

We will endeavour to catch up with you in full on Monday, but will be posting on social media from Sunday onwards.

Thank you for your support and patience.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

19th March 2020

As you know, we are doing our very best to keep you updated on a regular basis and I am very grateful for your patience and understanding.

There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Heathlands Village, nor is anyone displaying clear symptoms.

Our staff are continuing to follow the guidance provided by Public Health England (PHE). We had direct contact with them today and they confirmed that the information shared with you yesterday is correct.

We have been contacted by a number of individuals telling us they represent the Government, PHE, the Council or the Press. The majority of these calls have been verified as either scams or people misrepresenting themselves. We are not responding to press enquiries from individuals or organisations we do not know. As a result, if you contact us, our Customer Services Team may ask you for more information than usual.

From tomorrow, a temporary security guard will be stationed at our main entrance, supplied by the Community Security Trust (CST). This is to reassure staff and help enhance our site security at this unpredictable time. We are hugely grateful to the CST, who despite the challenges we all face, continue to look after us.

It would help if you could let us know in advance if you are intending to visit to drop off any items for loved ones. Our Customer Services Team can let the security guard know to expect you.

We also want to let you know that we have decided to close our CHARITY BOX shop in Cheetham Hill for the time being, so please do not take donated goods there. Similarly we cannot accept them at Heathlands Village either.

We are continuing to post some lovely good news stories on social media; please look us up – we hope they will help lift your spirits.

Our Activity Centre staff are working tirelessly to set up video calls and facetime sessions between our residents and their loved ones during the Heathlands Village lockdown. If you would like to set up an appointment, please contact Shoshi Black on shoshi.black@thefed.org.uk.

Mark Cunningham,

CEO

18th March 2020

I appreciate how difficult the current situation may be for you all and I can only thank you for your good wishes, support, understanding and kind words.

We began to take protective measures and plan around the Coronavirus over six weeks ago, and these decisions have served us well.

There has been a recent development which we must draw your attention to. We admitted a gentleman to the NHS Discharge to Assess Unit (D2A) in Eventhall House on 11th March. Having come into our care from hospital free of symptoms, on 15th March he developed symptoms of Coronavirus and returned to hospital the following day.

We were informed this morning that he tested positive. Our thoughts and good wishes are with him and his family.

For the time being, we will not be admitting anyone to – or discharging anyone from – this unit.

We have taken advice from Public Health England who state that it is *NOT* necessary for any staff who came into contact with this gentleman to self-isolate. This is only required if they should develop symptoms.

No other patients on D2A, or residents of Heathlands Village, are showing any symptoms, nor any staff member.

The advice is simply that we continue to follow the hand hygiene and infection control measures already in place. We have face-masks available for staff use should Public Health England at any time direct us that these need to be used – this is only necessary if we are caring for someone with symptoms of the virus.

We are sorry to have to relate this news to you knowing that this is likely to cause you additional anxiety, but please be reassured that we are, as ever, being as proactive as possible, seeking regular advice and following it *to the letter* with professionalism and calm.

There are further updates we want to share with you to illustrate how we are managing things generally:

We are currently part of a briefing network which includes the National Care Forum, the Jewish Leadership Council and Bury Council and Clinical Commissioning Group. The decisions that we are making are informed by our collaboration with these groups and instructions from Public Health England and the Care Quality Commission.

As you will appreciate, things have been changing daily, but I hope the following information will re-assure you that we are doing everything we can to keep our residents and workforce safe and well.

You will be aware that we have cancelled or suspended many of the services we deliver from Heathlands Village. Most of the organisations that use us as a base are now working off site and most of our back-office staff are now working remotely.

We have restricted visitors to our home and cancelled all non-essential meetings. Before visitors even get through our front door, a team of volunteers are asking them if the purpose of their visit is essential, if they are symptom free, and prompting good hand hygiene. You may hear that we have contractors on site. Those working on Willow Tree House are in an area separate from the rest of the village. There are others who are not separate, who are completing essential health and safety and fire safety work. It would be folly not to allow this.

Sadly, our Communal Seder has been cancelled. We have not yet clarified arrangements for our main Seder, but we are taking advice from the Beis Din.

We are not providing day services and most of the guests who we were expecting for respite care for Pesach are no longer coming. We are however still admitting anyone who would otherwise be left with no care at home and thus placed at risk.

We have no problems or interruptions to our food supply and delivery chain and no problems with medication supply. Our catering team has already produced and frozen over two weeks of meals as a contingency measure.

We have stocks of cleaning products. These are under pressure, but we are working with Bury Council and the NHS for re-supply.

Generally, our workforce is well and in work, the new advice of 14 day's isolation is a significant challenge. The additional challenge will come if staff are affected by school closures or the need to support their own relatives.

Everyone is working extremely hard, supporting each other and doing their utmost to reassure and care for our residents.

At this stage we believe we have enough staffing resources to provide cover if needed, by drawing on staff from different departments and avoiding the use of agency staff. We are providing additional training in-house if required.

Thank you to all of you who have volunteered to help as care givers. At this moment in time the best strategy is for us to limit resident contact with families but if staffing levels were to deteriorate, we would consult with you and potentially invite your help and support.

Please be assured that if your relative becomes unwell or significantly distressed we would find a way for you to visit.

We will still encourage residents to attend medical appointments or clinical reviews if these are critical, but the likelihood is, they will be cancelled by the GP or NHS.

We will try to put as much information as possible on social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter. If you have not yet embraced social media maybe now is a good time. You can follow our day to day news and access information via:

For twitter: [@FED_Manchester](#)

For Facebook: [@THEFEDManchseter](#)

If you are not receiving this email directly and would like to do so, please email

info@thefed.org.uk

You will need to tell us your relative's names, the relationship to you and your email address.

Of course, you can still phone your relative's care unit to see how they are doing and leave anything for them such as letters, presents, chocolate or magazines at either reception.

We are changing our activity programme to help keep people active and entertained and we are hoping to expand our Skype abilities so that more residents can keep in touch with loved ones via video.

Our hope is that the unprecedented challenges we face, will turn out to be character building rather than life changing.

We are drawing our strength and resolve from your amazing relatives and loved ones who are a lesson in stoicism and courage – and a great privilege for us to care for.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

16th March 2020

We are revising our arrangements day to day.

We have therefore taken the decision to stop all volunteering on site at Heathlands Village.

We do have volunteers outside the entrance to Heathlands Village, and this will continue to help us manage the safety of our residents.

Arrangement are also being made to ensure resident activities continue with our in-house staff.

If circumstance change down the line, we may need to call upon our volunteers for additional help as the situation develops.

Once again, we thank the community for their understanding during this difficult time. The health and safety of our residents is always of paramount concern to us.

Mark Cunningham

CEO

15th March 2020

The Fed's top priority is the safety and protection of those in our care.

As communicated earlier in the week The Fed has taken a number of steps to help prevent the spread of coronavirus at Heathlands Village. These include placing external hand sanitising stations at the main entrances, installing extra hand sanitisers internally around the Village and instituting a deep-cleaning regime that is being carried out multiple times daily by our tireless housekeeping team.

Following advice from the Department of Health, all staff and residents are being reminded to wash their hands at every opportunity, which represents the most essential way of combating the spread of the disease.

As of Sunday morning 15th March, we have also taken the very difficult and painful decision that in order to keep our residents, along with our staff and volunteers safe, we have suspended all visits to Heathlands Village.

Exceptions to this will be for relatives visiting loved ones receiving end of life care and visiting medical professionals. To support this, we will do whatever we can to help facilitate phone calls, FaceTime or a Skype call with a loved one instead of a physical visit.

We understand that this will be distressing for both residents in our homes and their relatives, however it is important that we take all precautions necessary to prevent the spread of coronavirus to those we care for.

All Children's Groups & and the Pesach Play Scheme are also unfortunately cancelled.

It is important to note that no one at Heathlands Village is currently unwell with coronavirus.

Contingency and response plans are in place for various scenarios which may occur as a result of coronavirus impacting the UK more widely. The Fed is regularly reviewing the situation, and our Directors are meeting every day to review the situation, along with our measures and plans. Our Trustees are also being kept informed of all decisions.

The Fed will continue to be led by the advice issued by Public Health England, the UK Government and the World Health Organisation.

Once again, in the face of this serious and almost entirely unprecedented time of international concern, we thank the community for its support for our decision making.

Mark Cunningham
Chief Executive Officer

Karen Johnson
Director of Clinical Services

Anyone with specific concerns or wanting more information is asked to contact Raphi Bloom, Director of Fundraising and Marketing, on 0161 772 4800 or raphi.bloom@thefed.org.uk