



# Achieve together

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May, 2020

## Re: COVID-19: Continuing to keep our service safe

Dear Family Member,

I am writing again to keep you updated on how Achieve together, our teams and the people we support are doing as we remain in a period of self-isolation that I know is very hard for many.

We are continuing to send out family communications via all our homes across England and Wales to ensure good local contact, but in addition, we have a [dedicated section of our website](#) where you can access the latest COVID-19 related resources, our business continuity plan and see some of the wonderful activities taking place. We will be undertaking a refresh of our databases in the next month to ensure we have all the latest up-to-date contact details and consents from families to send out policy and general communications directly where appropriate.

As you will know, we continue to strictly follow the guidance and advice of the Government, Public Health England, Public Health Wales and other relevant authorities relating to COVID-19, to ensure everyone stays as well and healthy as possible. Sadly, this continues to mean no family visits. Homes are working hard to maintain communication with families, and if you have any ideas on how we could improve do feed them in via our Family Liaison Officer: [Helen.Woods@achievetogether.co.uk](mailto:Helen.Woods@achievetogether.co.uk).

The teams have universally stepped up to the challenge of keeping COVID-19 out of our homes. Whilst it is impossible to ensure that we remove the risk completely, less than 0.5% of the people we support are symptomatic and whilst care settings remain a potentially high-risk environment for the spread of the virus, the incidence rate remains incredibly low. It is a testament to the dedication and focus of our wonderful teams on infection control that we are in this position. However, should there be an instance of a positive case within the home of your loved one, we will ensure the manager keeps you aware, and that you know what measures we are taking to keep everyone safe.

I wanted to update you in this letter on PPE and testing. On PPE, as in all other areas, we have always followed the latest government guidance - not always easy as it has been



changing regularly. We have a dedicated national team working to ensure that all services have access to the PPE that they need when they need it. This includes liaison with all the government helplines, local authorities and NHS trusts as well as with our local and international supply chains. The team has been doing a fantastic job.

Our staff are wearing masks for their day-to-day jobs where there is personal care or contact and we recognise that this can cause heightened anxiety for people we support. So far, the feedback has been positive, and in many services, people have adjusted well as we seek to use social stories and easy read guides to explain the changes. However, understandably, for some services and for some people we support it is particularly hard, and we are seeking to gather information from families to share with Learning Disability England, Care England and DHSC on this topic to lobby for some more nuanced guidance for services provided to people with a learning disability or autism. You will find a link to our survey on this subject [here](#). The questionnaire should take less than five minutes to complete, we would be grateful for family perspective so please do complete it if you would like to contribute.

On testing, the position is improving in many parts of the UK as more access to testing is being provided. The testing is being carried out in homes in many cases and we have provided easy read guides to the homes to ensure that tests are effective and cause as little anxiety as possible to the people we support. We are lobbying hard to get testing for all, and we have a team dedicated to ensuring both our staff and the people we care for are treated as a priority.

Finally, I thought you might be interested to know that we ran our spring survey this March asking for feedback from family members and found that 94% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of care and that 97% felt comfortable approaching the service manager or staff with any issues, which I was really pleased to read. We need to work harder to ensure that family members know how to share a compliment or, when necessary, a complaint as only 40% of respondents were clear on this. We always love to hear your feedback, so if you would like to send us a compliment or a complaint, please leave us a comment [here](#). You will also find this link on our website.

I hope that you are keeping very well through these strange times. If you have any further questions, please view the [COVID-19 family resource section](#) of our website, email our Family Liaison Officer: [Helen.Woods@achievetogether.co.uk](mailto:Helen.Woods@achievetogether.co.uk) or, as ever, do address any questions or concerns specific to your loved one with the team at the service. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for understanding and ongoing support and encourage you to have a look at our website and the materials provided there, which are being continually updated.

My best wishes to you and your family,

Emma Pearson, CEO