



## Insight on COVID-19

### Care Homes:

# What relatives of Greenwich care home residents are telling us.

## Care Home Staff

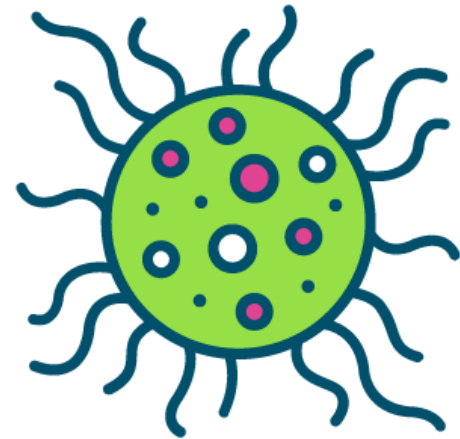


Everyone we spoke to gave thanks to care home staff for all their dedication and hard work during this difficult time. Relatives praised care given to their loved ones and the efforts each home had taken to keep residents safe, made doubly difficult in groups of elderly residents – most of whom living with complex needs arising from multiple chronic illnesses. Although disappointed not to visit loved ones in person, care homes made it easy to keep in touch with residents via telephone, Skype and zoom.

**'Whenever I call I am reassured by the morale of every member of the team who answers my call. My brother always sounds happy and content and full of praise for the people caring for him.'**

## Staying safe

Making sure loved ones continue to stay safe is a significant worry for relatives. Relatives want to know if care homes do, or don't, have Covid+ residents, if all residents and staff have been tested, if staffing ratios are being maintained (with staff self-isolating or unwell), how care homes are ensuring agency staff (who work in more than one home) don't pass the virus on from one place to another, if enough PPE is available, and what other steps (beyond the use of PPE and stopping visitors) are being taken to keep residents safe.



Some care homes are restricting residents to their rooms, but others allow residents access to communal areas. It's not clear to relatives why different homes are taking different approaches.

**'I don't know what's happening, I feel left in the dark.'**

A regular, weekly, short newsletter to relatives, for reassurance, during this time of uncertainty would be welcomed.

## Hospital discharge



Relatives are worried that the Lewisham and Greenwich Trust are still discharging patients back to care homes without testing, potentially spreading the virus to other residents.

**'They told me he didn't need a test because he had no symptoms. He went back [to the care home], and then he got sick. When they tested him, he had Coronavirus.'**

## General concerns

All resident/relative meetings have been cancelled, making it difficult to raise general concerns with care home staff and management.

Relatives want to know if and how activities with residents are being maintained, how residents are accessing medical care (when needed), if care plans are being reviewed regularly and how relatives can (remotely) take part in care plan reviews. In some homes, relatives have concerns about cleanliness or the quality of food, but with no resident/relatives meetings it's harder to raise issues informally.

Relatives want resident/relative meetings re-established as soon as possible using Skype or Zoom.

Those taking part in our Care Home zoom call told us that meeting and speaking with other families of care home residents gave them informal support, discussing concerns with those in a similar situation made them feel less alone.



## The future



The longer term impact of the coronavirus pandemic on care homes is a worry for relatives. Relatives want to know when they might be able to visit again, and what protection can be put in for visits to take place safely.

**'I want to know how they will work social distancing in care homes once this is over'.**



## How we collect feedback

We collect feedback in a variety of ways, including; calls from individuals who come to us for information, signposting and support, zoom calls with specific groups of service users, contact with peer-led patient groups, information from support groups run by charities or community groups, and intelligence shared by local mutual aid groups, and our volunteers. **The feedback in this briefing is based on information shared by 12 families of residents in Greenwich care homes.**

You can contact us via phone: **07903 685 533**, by email '[info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk)', you can join our weekly information, signposting and support sessions every Wednesday and Friday or, for care home residents, and relatives and friends of residents, you can join our **monthly Care Home Zoom meetings**. Email [info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk) for the login and password to access our sessions.



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