COVID 19 POLICY AND PROCEDURE

MANAGING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC AT FERNLEIGH CARE HOME

This Policy and Procedure is to set out guidance and key messages to support planning and preparation during the Covid 19 pandemic. The aim of this policy is to provide staff involved in the care treatment and support of residents with suspected or diagnosed Covid-19 information and guidance on maintaining their safety and the safety of those that they care for.

IDENTIFYING RESIDENTS WHO MAY HAVE COVID 19 AND HOW WE RESPOND.

Following Public Health England guidelines, we suspect Covid 19 in any resident with a continuous cough and/or high temperature (at least 37.8). We are also vigilant as some residents have presented with non-respiratory tract symptoms such as new onset/worsening confusion or diarrhoea as well as losing their sense of taste and smell. As Fernleigh care home staff have detailed knowledge of the residents they are well-placed to recognise these signs.

Residents have their temperatures taken twice daily. 7.30am and 6.30pm using a tympanic thermometer (inserted into the ear).

Once care home staff have a suspected case that resident is isolated to their room between 7-14 days as from first day of symptoms as we do not have a dedicated isolation facility. Full PPE is worn at all times. This consists of gloves, aprons, face masks and visors and goggles.

Upon display of symptoms our local GP is informed who then advises on the medical treatment plan and isolation requirements. Fernleigh has worked alongside GP’s to take part in video consultations when required. Fernleigh Care Home staff can also measure heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate and pulse oximetry.

In the instance of a large number of residents with suspected or confirmed Covid 19 Fernleigh will work closely with local infection teams to separate symptomatic and non-symptomatic residents.

Residents who ‘walk with purpose’ require specific consideration. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT WILL NEVER BE USED AT FERNLEIGH. If necessary, Fernleigh will work with community mental health teams and dementia teams and adhere to DOLS guidelines. Full risk assessments will be completed where required.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING AND ESCALATION

The Covid 19 Pandemic has provided Fernleigh with an opportunity to visit or revisit advance care planning, including escalation to hospital. It also gives the opportunity to discuss how Covid 19 may affect residents with multiple comorbidities. These care plans are created and/or reviewed alongside the GP’s held by telephone calls or video conferencing. The ACP includes decisions about whether hospital transfer would be considered (for oxygen therapy, intravenous fluids and antibiotics) for Covid related illnesses. In some instances, professionals will make the decision not to escalate a residents care into hospital. These are not decisions that are taken lightly and Fernleigh care home works closely with healthcare providers to support families and residents if these difficult decisions have been made.

Fernleigh will also work with GP’s and local pharmacists to recognize and anticipate residents who are approaching end of life and ensure that anticipatory medicines are in place so that they can be prescribed and dispensed at short notice and avoid delays in caring for residents approaching end of life.

SUPPORTING CARE HOME RESIDENTS AND STAFF

Fernleigh care home staff are encouraged to work with residents to address their fears about Covid 19 especially while they are unable to have visitors. The Covid 19 pandemic adds strain on care home staff who already work under challenging circumstances. Management will support staff who feel isolated by holding regular staff meetings via social distancing measures and conference calls.

MAINTAINING SERVICES

Fernleigh works with local authorities to establish plans and work out ways that we can contribute to keeping people safe across the local area including the following:

* Use tools to report capacity for bed vacancies (such as the Capacity Tracker)
* Use tools for the secure transfer of information such as NHSMail and Egress
* Increase the use of conference calls to ensure advice from GP’s, acute care staff and community health staff can be given

LOCKDOWN – ALLOWING VISITORS

Fernleigh is on lockdown until further notice. This means that visiting is not allowed unless it is considered an essential visit, i.e. doctor paying an urgent visit or district nurse administering injections. Families are asked not to visit during this pandemic but measures are in place to maintain contact either by video conference calls, closely monitored social media, speaking to families through the ground floor patio doors at an acceptable social distance and standard telephone calls.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Public Health England have stated that the PPE requirements for care home staff are the same as those for hospital staff on general wards. Fernleigh provides and will continue to provide all PPE. It is sourced independently, and stocks are monitored and re-ordered by Management. Fluid repellant three ply masks and visors and goggles are used for one complete session whilst gloves and aprons are changed after dealing with each individual. PPE is double bagged securely with disposable rubbish bags and put into a clinical waste bin. We have a dedicated clinical waste disposal team. All staff are trained in hand hygiene. We have a designated PPE hub situated next to the main entrance where staff are to enter upon arrival to take their temperatures and equip themselves with their PPE before starting their shift. Handwashing facilities are in this designated area and hand sanitizing pumps.

INFECTION CONTROL

Fernleigh has instilled a four hourly disinfection routine whereas alongside the normal cleaning routine, frequently touched surfaces are disinfected. These include handrails, telephones, intercoms, door handles etc. Staff use disposable cleaning cloths which are then double bagged and tied securely.

Handwashing and hand sanitizing dispensers are located around the home on all corridors, toilets, bathrooms and shared bedrooms.

We work closely with our COSHH supplier to ensure the products we use are suitable to combat infection control and that we always have a good stock. The Home and individual rooms are kept properly ventilated by opening windows whenever safe and appropriate.

Staff are aware not to shake dirty laundry to minimise the possibility of dispersing spores through the air. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people’s items but items heavily soiled with body fluids such as vomit or diarrhoea are disposed of with the owner’s consent.

CONSENT AND CAPACITY

Covid 19 and the symptoms surrounding it – may have a profound effect on our resident’s ability to consent to care or treatment. It may impair the judgment of residents to such a degree that a Best Interest decision may need to be made. In these instance staff are to follow current guidelines with regards to Mental Capacity Assessments and the recording of Best Interest Decisions.

TESTING RESIDENTS

Fernleigh Care Home has sourced home testing kits for all residents and all residents have been tested. All staff have also been tested. Any residents or staff who develop symptoms in the future will be tested as well as new admissions following current guidance.

NEW ADMISSIONS

Fernleigh currently welcomes new admissions that have been Covid tested as negative. All new admissions will be barrier nursed and isolated for 14 days upon admission as an extra precautionary measure.

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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The Government has provided some emergency legislation measures to support local authorities during this pandemic.

* Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid from day one of sickness to support those affected by Covid 19. It is a temporary in response to the outbreak and will lapse when no longer required.
* Any staff employed on a zero hour contract may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay if their average earnings are at least £118 per week. (Calculated over an 8 week period). Those who are ineligible are able to claim Universal Credit
* The government will also bring forward legislation to allow small and medium sized businesses to reclaim SSP paid for sickness absence due to Covid 19.
* Furlough support can be sourced for the companies employees where deemed necessary.