



## Media Release

embargo until time/date

**Date:** 8 April 2020

### Hospital and Care homes visits to cease where possible

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A difficult decision has been made to stop all visits to Princess Elizabeth Hospital, Mignot Memorial Hospital, Oberlands, the Lighthouse Wards and Care Homes in the Bailiwick of Guernsey where possible. Regular visiting by family and friends was stopped a number of weeks ago to shield the frail and vulnerable in Hospital and care Homes. Care Managers and Ward Managers had discretion to allow only limited visits by loved ones where someone was in the very last stages of their life.

This decision was reviewed over the weekend and has been given further ethical consideration this week based on emerging evidence. It has been agreed to alter arrangements for visits for the continued protection of residents and their family & friends, staff and the wider public. The new arrangements are as follows:

**Care Homes** – no visits are allowed by family and friends for the foreseeable future. This is important to protect the staff and residents. The outbreaks we have seen in the homes have been shown how vulnerable these settings are, and these measures are considered essential in the circumstances. This will be kept under constant review.

**Hospice** – No routine visiting, but end of life visits will be individually assessed. Where visits can be safely accommodated with appropriate safety measures, then staff may allow it under controlled circumstances.

**Hospital** – visits will not be allowed on COVID-19 wards or with COVID-19 patients. In other wards routine visiting cannot be allowed, but end of life visiting will be looked at on a compassionate case by case basis. Such visits will only be allowed if they can be managed safely. In general even this visiting will be discouraged.

Family and friends should contact Hospital wards and Care Homes for advice about ways to maintain contact with their loved ones, including the delivery of essential supplies & gifts.

Dermot Mullin, Director of Hospital and Adult Community Care Services said:

'I understand that this decision means that family and friends are unable to see their loved ones at this time – some of whom will be extremely poorly or receiving end of life care. This is a decision that has not been taken lightly and one which has been considered by the Bailiwick Ethics Committee.

It is important that patients and residents can maintain contact with their friends and family during this difficult time. We are recommending the use of both old and new technology to keep in contact. Exchanging letters or cards with your loved ones is still a great way to keep in touch. Both the hospital and Care Homes can support connection using mobile phones or tablets to enable video and audio calls.'

Arrangements are in place for relatives of residents in Care Homes where cases of COVID-19 have been reported to have the additional support of a social worker. Community Services are also coordinating check in telephone calls to people who are isolated at home and not receiving the usual level of contact with the outside world. If a relative in a Care Home would like a check in telephone call from our team, please contact the Care Home to make arrangements. Hospital staff will continue to provide updates to family members.

HSC is working jointly with the Care Home Owners Association, Public Health Services and the Medical Director to make decisions for the welfare of the residents and the wider population. Ensuring safe staffing levels is paramount across the Care Home Sector while we try to minimise transmission. A call has been made for anyone in the community with previous experience in caring to apply for temporary paid employment. So far we have received expressions of interest from over 100 carers which is an amazing response from the community.

If anyone interested in some temporary paid employment and would like to help please contact Community Services who are coordinating a rapid recruitment programme together with Guernsey Care Home Association, on tel 725241 ext 3313 or email

[Vicky.trench@gov.gg](mailto:Vicky.trench@gov.gg)

Recruitment to these additional roles will ensure safe care can continue while there is added workload pressures and reduced staffing. The same rigour to recruitment selection and induction of essential skills will be applied.

We know how distressing and difficult being apart from your relatives is for everyone. We will be reviewing this decision in line with Public Health guidance on a very regular basis and ask for your patience as we do what we can to protect you and your loved ones.

**Ends**

## **Notes to Media**

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