

Helpsheet to support relatives dealing with end of life

We know that dealing with end of life is very upsetting and we have prepared this guidance to help support you during the current coronavirus outbreak.

End of Life Care

The term 'End of Life' can be interpreted in many ways, for the purposes of this helpsheet it refers to the last few days of an individual's life.

Last Days of Life

The decision that your relative is considered to have entered the last few days of life will be made by a medical professional and discussed with the individual and essential care / health providers. A discussion may also take place with relatives, local housing managers and anyone else that your relative may wish to know or who supports them.

Where there is an Advance Care Plan or Respect form (also known as DNR or DNACPR), it is important that this is displayed where it can easily be seen by those providing care or attending in an emergency in order that your relative's preferences are supported. This is the case whether someone is receiving palliative care or not.

If your relative is willing or able to talk about their plans we would encourage them to do so with family, friends, carers or our local managers - whoever is best placed to have and support those conversations.

Visitors

We want to make every effort possible to ensure that residents, who are in the last days of their lives, are enabled to have key visitors in line with government guidance. The comfort brought to a dying person and their families, by being able to be together at this time, cannot be underestimated. However, it is important for the protection and safety of everyone else on the housing location that this is as closely managed as possible and we would ask for your support in ensuring the following: -

Visiting needs to be for immediate family only - if there is a large family group, government advice is that visiting should be staggered, with ideally only two family members visiting at a time.

- In line with government guidance all visitors should be free of the symptoms of Coronavirus/COVID-19 and not in self-isolation.
- It may be possible to enable the family to remain connected by using alternative means of communication e.g. Skype, WhatsApp.

- We will assist by identifying the quickest and most direct route from the entrance to the resident's flat, in order that visitors can avoid contact with anyone else.
- There should be clear signs denoting the handwashing area which should be fully equipped with soap, paper towels and waste bin. We ask that visitors abide by government guidelines and practice social distancing within the scheme.
- In line with government advice visitors are advised to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if visiting someone who is symptomatic. This would need to be provided by visitors themselves and should be removed before leaving the flat and disposed of in line with current advice (bagged for 72 hrs within the flat before being disposed in normal way).
- Visitors are asked to remain in the resident's flat for the duration of their visit. On their visit to/from the flat, they are requested to maintain a minimum two metre 'social distancing' from all colleagues and other residents.
- Only facilities in the residents' flat should be used by visitors, they should not access communal toilet facilities elsewhere in the building other than initial handwashing.

Actions to support you in the event of a death

In exceptional circumstances and to enable us to support you at this difficult time if the next of kin is unlikely to be available at the time of death, we recommended that you give the local manager **written** details of any required actions in advance – this could include any contact details for a preferred funeral director. This means that when death occurs anyone on site or our On-Call team can contact the preferred funeral director and ensure that the registered GP is informed as soon as practicable.

If Covid-19 is confirmed or suspected at the time of death

- Everyone should maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) or be in another room from the deceased person.
- If family or care staff need to provide care for the deceased person this should be kept to a minimum and appropriate PPE should be worn as the virus remains infectious and may be exhaled during the process.
- The funeral director **MUST** be informed that the resident has had suspected/confirmed Covid-19 so that they can take necessary steps. Be aware that collection of the body may take longer than usual.
- If collection of the body is delayed for any reason, we ask that you please notify the local manager so they can take any necessary action.
- Once the resident's body has been removed their flat should remain locked for 72 hours with the advice that no one is to enter the flat during this period.
- After 72 hours immediate family may visit to remove personal belongings and perishable goods. It is advised that PPE is worn. All waste from the resident's room and PPE must be bagged and removed from the room and then placed inside another bag. These bags can then be disposed of safely in the normal way.



- Where family may be self-isolating and unable to visit, we will ask your permission to enter the flat after 72 hours with the master key to remove any perishable items. We will take an inventory and photographs of anything we remove and share these with you.

Should family and loved ones who were not present at the death wish to view the deceased resident this will need to take place at the funeral directors.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the local manager in the first instance.