**Sample Nursing Home Template Letter**

Dear Resident/ Relative/Carer

We are all aware of the current Coronavirus/Covid-19 crisis and that people over the age of 70 are particularly vulnerable. We must do everything we can to minimize the risk of infection in our care homes.

This letter explains the actions we are taking to help minimize the risk to residents, staff and healthcare professionals visiting the home.

**1. Looking after healthcare professionals**

If our doctors and nurses become ill, the NHS’ ability to help patients is severely reduced. So, we want to do all that we can to help healthcare professionals stay fit and well.

The best way to minimize the risk of infection is to keep direct physical contact between healthcare professionals and patients to the absolute minimum.

Care homes will now be using smart phones to make video ward rounds and to assess residents. GPs can then decide if a personal visit is needed. If it is, doctors will wear a face mask and gloves to cut the risk of infection to themselves and passing it to others.

Please do not request doctor visits unless these initial smart phone assessments have been made.

**2. Patients with dementia**

When a care home resident suffers from dementia, treating Coronavirus/Covid-19 infection is particularly challenging. These residents will find it difficult to understand what is happening to them and may become distressed.

Where possible, care home staff are encouraging these patients to stay in their rooms to prevent spreading the infection to others.

**3. Advance Care Agreements in Severely Frail Patients**

Many residents in our care homes already have agreements setting out how they wish to be treated if they become ill. For many, this includes not going to hospital for further care.

Where a resident does not have mental capacity, these choices will often be agreed with the next-of-kin or with the person holding power of attorney.

Under normal circumstances, we make these choices calmly and without pressure. However, we find ourselves in exceptional circumstances.

Realistically, if one of our residents does develop Coronavirus, the only reason for admitting them to hospital would be for ventilation. However, given the pressures that the NHS is under, they are unlikely to be prioritised for treatment in hospital. We therefore feel that should our residents develop Coronavirus, it would not be in their best interests to admit them to hospital.

We care deeply for all our residents and, in the event of infection, we will continue to provide the highest levels of care and consideration. Even if residents become seriously ill, we will do everything we can to ensure they are comfortable.

If you are unsure about the status of a relative’s care plan, or if you wish to consider revising it, please contact the care home manager as soon as you can. The care home staff can also help arrange a conversation with the doctor, if you feel you need more information before making a decision.

If you would like to discuss any of these issues further or would like to make your own comments or suggestions, please contact the care home management team.

Many thanks for your attention and understanding.

Best wishes

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