

MARCH 2020

NEWSLETTER



A message from our Director



Hello to you all, March is here already and there's some promising signs of spring popping up everywhere. We have a scattering of beautiful snowdrops in our office garden and there's even been a spell or two of much needed sunshine! 1st April will be our first year anniversary of new ownership of the business and I'm proud of the achievements we have made in just 12 months.

We have implemented improvements across the business in the way we do things. We have provided development opportunities for our much-valued staff team, to help us retain the best care professionals at Bluebird Care.

We have also seen the introduction of our brilliant new Health and Wellbeing check service.

We have unfortunately seen the arrival of a new Coronavirus, COVID-19, in the UK, and you will find that this is a key focus of this issue. Our priority is to keep you and our staff team as healthy and well as possible. We are giving COVID-19 careful consideration and reviewing our practice as and when new guidance from Public Health England and our Community Infection Control Team is available. We are maintaining communication with these agencies.

Please feel free to pick up the phone anytime to us to let us know how you feel about the service, ask questions and make suggestions about our service. We're always happy to listen.

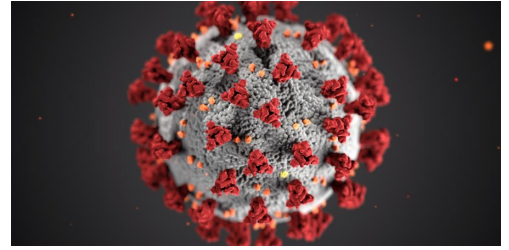
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Bluebird Care Office Telephone Number: 0113 2589677

COVID-19 UPDATE



We provide essential support services to our customers. Our responsibility is to ensure our Care Professionals stay fit and well so that we can continue to provide an excellent service to you and to ensure that as far as practicable, we are taking measures to keep you safe from transmission of the infection. Therefore we are taking our response to the virus very seriously.

Public Health England have issued specific guidance to social care providers in community and residential care settings. We are following this guidance and keeping abreast of daily updates as they become available on the Public Health England blog. We have been in direct contact with our Leeds Community Infection Control team based at Chapeltown Health Centre and they have provided really helpful and reassuring advice.

Firstly, it's important to put concerns about COVID-19 into perspective, Donna Hepworth from the Leeds Community Infection Control Team says,

“Based on the information we have available to us, COVID-19 is no more dangerous to health than seasonal flu and statistically less dangerous than many other infections. The measures to take if customers present with symptoms of COVID-19 are no different to social care providers usual infection control procedures. These include regular and effective hand washing, using gloves and aprons and removing personal protective equipment before leaving customer's homes.”

Donna added,

“Although not related to COVID-19, it is really important that all customers have had their seasonal flu vaccination as this remains a significant threat to the health of vulnerable people.”

It's understandable that our customers and the general public may be concerned about COVID-19 because it is a new virus. However, we want to reassure you that whilst we are risk assessing this situation continuously, if you need essential care and support, we will ensure that you continue to receive the care that you need.

We have a robust Business Continuity Plan in place and all of our office colleagues are able to provide care and support should we experience higher levels of staff absence than usual, due to requirements for some people to self-isolate.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Here's some information and guidance about COVID-19 and what measures we are taking as a business. If you have any questions at all about the virus, please contact myself or Sophie Lowndes (Infection Control Lead).

What are the symptoms of the virus?

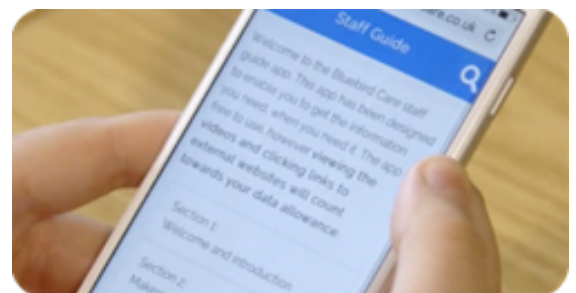
The symptoms of this new coronavirus (now known as COVID-19) include fever and respiratory symptoms including coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild. The best way to prevent being infected with the virus is to avoid being exposed to it. Here at Bluebird Care, it is business as usual and all care and support visits to all customers will continue. If we are required to change anything about the way we support you, we will discuss this with you.

According to guidance from Public Health England and our Community Infection Control Team, there is no need to do anything differently with infection control procedures, in any care setting at present.



Our standard infection control procedures are robust. We ensure that every member of our team is provided with training on Infection Prevention and Control when they join our team and they have a refresher session every year. All staff are given practical training on effective hand washing and we hold a healthy stock of gloves and aprons in the office. There is no limit on these and our Care Professionals come and collect these whenever they need to replenish their supplies.

Every Bluebird Care team member has access to all our policies and procedures including our **Infection Prevention and Control policy** via an app on their mobile phones. The app is called the, Bluebird Care Staff App. If you would like a copy of this policy, please feel free to request a copy by contacting us at the office on 0113 2589677.



COVID-19 UPDATE

We have provided our team with additional Infection Prevention Kits more for reassurance than anything because nothing really replaces the most effective measures, which are already well embedded in our practice i.e. hand washing, gloves and aprons.

The additional kit we have provided our Care Professionals with includes:

- **Antibacterial hand wash**
- **Antibacterial surface wipes/bottle of antibacterial spray**
- **Kitchen roll for hand drying**
- **Hand sanitiser spray** (not to be used as a replacement for hand washing but as an additional measure)

Here are some things you can do to help keep yourself and others visiting your home stay safe from viruses.....

- **Wash your hands often** - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if hand washing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- Wash your hand towels on a hot wash regularly. If you would like your Care Assistants to do this for you, please call us at the office and we can ensure that this is noted on your care plan.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- **If you are worried about your symptoms or those of a family member or colleague, please call NHS 111.** People should not go to their GP or other healthcare environment.



COVID-19 UPDATE

Should our Care Professionals be wearing facemasks?

No. During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19 and do not need to be worn by staff in domiciliary care settings.

Would you like some additional support to keep your home clean?

If you struggle to clean your home, we will happily provide additional support to you and clean your home for you. If you would like to increase your care package, just give us a call at the office and let us know what you'd like.

We have taken some additional infection control measures at our Bluebird Care office site:

- Staff have been briefed on the symptoms on COVID-19 and given instructions to stay at home if they experience any symptoms of COVID-19, including a high temperature or persistent cough. Any member of our team with these symptoms will self-isolate for at least 7 days.
- Antibacterial hand wash and hand washing instructions are in place in bathrooms and the staff kitchen (this was always in place and isn't something new for us)
- All staff will wash their hands upon entry/return to the office; after greeting visitors and after accepting deliveries
- A deep clean of all office equipment and facilities.
- Daily clean of all touch points such as door handles, light switches and office, bathroom and kitchen surfaces.

Leave us a review on  **homecare.co.uk**

Online reviews are really important for businesses today.

When people start to think about buying care services, it's helpful to read about other peoples' experiences of our service. Typically people speak to others who have used our services or look online for reviews about us.

You may have noticed that our Care Professionals have left you a free-post review card in your home. We would be really grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to complete this card, seal it and post it. If you would like your Care Assistant to post this for you, once you have sealed it, they will be happy to do so.

If you use the internet and have an email address, you could leave you review on www.homecare.co.uk/submitreview, so others can make an informed choice when choosing a home care provider. Thank you in advance!

We're promoting.....



Eating and drinking well is so important to help us stay healthy and alert. Do you have a poor appetite? Are you feeling tired and low in energy? Losing weight, poor appetite and being dehydrated shouldn't be expected as a normal part of ageing.

We're sharing some tips from Age UK to help you Eat, Drink and Live Well.

16th - 22nd March 2020

Eat little and often. If you find it hard to eat a big meal, that's ok, just eat little and often. You could try having 6 small meals throughout the day instead on 3 large meals.

Beans on toast or a crumpet with lashings of butter is always a nice warming snack.



- If your appetite is better at breakfast or lunch time, make that when you have your main meal.
- Try to eat something every 2-3 hours even if it's only something small.

You can increase your protein and calcium intake of milk by using fortified milk. You can use this in hot and cold drinks, on cereals and in in sauces or custard.



Fortified Milk Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 pint of full fat milk
- 4 tablespoons of milk powder

Instructions

Add a little bit of the milk to the milk powder in a jug and make a paste.

Add the rest of the milk into the jug and stir well

Pour it back into the bottle or use from the jug.

We now have two Oral Health Champions in our team who can offer support on keeping your mouth gums and teeth healthy. We'll be sharing some oral health tips in our next issue. If you would like to discuss oral health, please call our office and ask for Sophie or Wendy.

