



Retirement living – FAQs for residents and relatives

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Some schemes use a scheme minibus for shopping. Is it OK to continue with using these?

If shopping cannot be undertaken any other way, then these trips can continue within the context of a risk assessment, such as reducing the number of residents on the bus. Residents must however understand the risks associated with leaving their homes and must seek to hold onto the principles of social distancing and personal hygiene. Alternative means of shopping should also be considered, such as online, click and collect, MHA buying in provisions that residents can purchase from individual schemes.

With regard to contractor visits arranged by MHA (repairs/ maintenance visits) - are these classed as essential?

Advice has been issued by MHA's Estates team to schemes. The Scheme Manager must liaise with Estates and the Head of Housing if there are any concerns relating to the continuation of any plan and, where there is a COVID-19 outbreak, then access will need to be postponed.

Are the day centres to continue to operate?

The principles of social distancing need to be observed. This means that people must avoid gatherings, including those with friends and family and use other means such as phone, internet and social media.

People are strongly advised to follow the above measures to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible, particularly if people:

- are over 70
- have an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

For this reason we have suspended our day services having consulted with commissioners/ funders and having advised attendees. Staff from these day centres need to be available to be deployed elsewhere where possible and where needed.

A number of schemes host external groups/ meetings – are these non-essential and therefore should these be cancelled temporarily?

All external groups/ visits/meetings into schemes must be cancelled.

What do we do about regular scheme activities/ gatherings that only involve MHA residents?

Guidance regarding social distancing is being issued or updated on a daily basis. It can be found as follows:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

You must keep up to date with this and gatherings are now strongly advised against. Due to this guidance MHA have suspended all resident activities that we facilitate. We are aware there are small independent group activities in your schemes, these are being risk assessed to see if they can continue. Managers are thinking of innovative ways of avoiding isolation for those staying in their homes.

What instructions are there for staff who might be providing care to residents who have been asked to self-isolate?

Our colleagues are constantly reminded to the MHA Infection Control Policy and associated documents to keep up to date with guidance and training.

A risk assessment needs to be completed as each case will be different.

Where residents **do not have symptoms** then the principles of social distancing can be applied where possible, care support can be discussed and scaled down (where safe to do so) and contact time limited. Hand washing and the use of gloves and aprons are essential.

Where a resident **has symptoms**, in consultation with the resident, advice must be taken from the GP and the local infection control team. Where someone is acutely ill then emergency services must be contacted.

As flats are considered 'home' and there's no clinical waste contracts, PPE needs to be double-bagged, labelled with date & time and kept for 72 hours before disposal.

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external household waste bin.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Hard surfaces, for example door handles and table tops must be cleaned

Does MHA have enough stocks of PPE, hand sanitiser and hand soap?

This issue is being centrally resolved by MHA to make sure all of its sites have enough PPE, hand soap and/ or sanitiser. As an organisation, they are working with relevant trade bodies and the Government to make sure services like those provided by MHA are classed as a priority for these supplies.

Guest room bookings

All guest room bookings have been suspended as there might be a need for us to use these in the future for staff.

What about hygiene for visitors?

Good hygiene, such as hand washing and use of hand sanitiser, should be observed by anyone entering the building.

Some Retirement Communities have a regular visit from someone who sells groceries and visit the scheme weekly – can this continue as this is of benefit to residents.

These can continue with appropriate risk assessment.

Some sites have Live at Home staff co-located in shared offices – is this to continue?

Yes. Our colleagues from Live at Home are going to be helping us out where they can, particularly where community groups have been cancelled.

Many residents have private arrangements with cleaners - are these essential?

Individual residents can continue to make their own arrangements however it is important that they are aware of the risks associated with visitors regularly visiting their home.

Will bistros be closing?

Following the government's announcement to close all restaurants, bars and cafes, MHA will be closing all its bistros and not providing an eat-in service. This will be replaced by a meal delivery service to all residents' homes.