

The coronavirus outbreak has presented us all with a scenario unprecedented in our lifetimes.

We wanted to provide complete reassurance and share with you some insight as to how we are continuing to practically manage and deliver the vital services our customers need while ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of our customers and staff is our number one priority.

Riverside operates in nearly 100 local authorities, providing a variety of retirement living, supported housing and non-accommodation based homelessness support services to over 9,000 people. Each service and context is different, and we are working actively with local partners to identify the right responses for each one. Limiting the spread of any infection and ensuring that our customers and colleagues who are affected are well supported is our main focus.

Our Executive Team and Operational Teams are holding daily COVID-19 briefing calls to ensure we are following and sharing government advice and also ensure that we are minimising any risk to our customers and colleagues. We are communicating regularly with colleagues across the business sharing information, resources, guidance and best practice.

New measures in place

For all our accommodation-based services, to date, we have put the following measures in place:

- **Risk assessments:** A staff risk assessment to ensure we are aware of any who are at greater risk due to underlying health conditions and are asking those affected to work from home.
- **Self-isolation plans:** A self-isolation plan for each customer to ensure that all of their basic needs can continue to be met, starting with those over 70.
- **Advice and information:** Written letters to all of our customers and their families providing advice about COVID-19 and explaining the actions we are taking.
- **Meeting customer needs and staying safe:** We are working with families and care providers to help meet the basic needs of customers who do need to self-isolate – specific guidance has been produced detailing how colleagues can engage with customers safely where this is not possible.
- **Communal spaces and activities:** We are discouraging the use of communal spaces in our buildings and have put on hold, indefinitely, all activities that involve customers congregating together.
- **Limiting visitors to essential care only:** We are discouraging non-essential visitors to schemes and services and are recommending that visitors be limited to those conducting some form of caring responsibility, be that the provision of care or supporting with supplies of food and medicines, etc.
- **FAQs for staff and customers:** We have developed frequently asked questions for both staff and customers and are sharing a range of advice and resources around critical information including PPE.
- **Key worker status to aid travel:** We have provided all our staff with a letter explaining their key worker status, to be carried at all times and that will enable them to travel to and from their place of work in our services.
- **Additional support to keep services open:** Colleagues from across Riverside, who do not work in customer facing roles, are volunteering to cover in services and provide crucial support to qualified staff where needed and help cover any sicknesses and absences that occur and ensure that services can remain open.

Coronavirus: sharing good practice

As this situation evolves, we are keen to understand what good practice is emerging in your area, share what we are involved with elsewhere and contribute any relevant expertise or support we have nationally to your local response. Please keep in touch with your local Riverside contact for any new updates and advice or if there is anything locally you think we can support you with. You can also email us at info@riverside.org.uk

The Independent Living logo features the words 'INDEPENDENT LIVING' in white, bold, uppercase letters. The text is centered within a dark blue, multi-pointed star-like shape that has a lighter blue gradient and a white outline.