



MIDDLETON HALL  
RETIREMENT VILLAGE

## **Covid-19 Updated Information for Middleton Hall Retirement Village Independent Residents and Families 2021-22**

### **5. Middleton Hall – Independent Residents Bulletin – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – Covid Bulletin No.3**

With government returning to Plan A and the UK gradually moving towards a policy of living with Covid, the main reason for this, is the success of the vaccination programme where almost 85% of the adult population are fully vaccinated and 65% have had the booster vaccine.

Despite the number of cases of Covid-19 continuing to fall nationally over the past week; locally, we have seen an increase of more than 100% new positive cases, over the past 7 days. We have still had some positive cases within our Co-owners, but through our regular testing regime, we have been able to identify these quickly and have been able to determine that the infection has been acquired within the community.

In follow up to last week's bulletin, the government have now issued more detailed guidance around visiting in Care Homes. As expected, this new published guidance is very similar to what was previously in place, with the main responsibility still on care providers to risk assess and keep everyone safe. We have updated our visiting options in line with these changes but still need to take into consideration the high local infection rate.

As we start to see further restrictions easing and hopefully as the weather starts to improve, we will be able to re-open some more of the clubs and facilities within Middleton Hall. We can inform you that some new therapists have been employed within Middleton Spa and Tai Chi classes will resume again from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Our external members of Middleton Spa will be able to use the Orangery before or after their gym/pool sessions between the hours of 10am – 2pm. Please could we remind all independent residents to wear a facemask when walking through the main building. Facemasks do not need to be worn in The Orangery or Middleton Spa.

We remain cautiously optimistic that the overall situation will improve over the next few months, and we will all return to a more relaxed way of life. We continue to have our weekly Contingency Meeting, where we review any new guidance or developments and will keep you informed of any changes.

Kind regards

Colin Inglis - Care Director

### **4. Middleton Hall – Independent Residents Bulletin – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022**

We have seen several changes to government guidance over recent weeks with further easing of restrictions on the wearing of face masks, plans to change the testing regimes for the Co-owners mid-February and changes to the visiting arrangements within the care services from today. Regarding the changes to the visiting guidance from today, we wished to update everyone on how we will implement these changes at Middleton Hall.

Whilst we welcome the announcement on the easing of restrictions, we still await the full updated guidance on the visiting arrangements, which is expected to be published this week. Until we receive the more detailed guidance, our approach will still be to limit the number of visitors to the care services at any one time, to 2 per resident. We are happy to no longer limit the number of visitors to the 3 designated visitors for indoor visits. All visitors should continue to book visits prior to coming to Middleton Hall, as we are still requesting proof of a negative Lateral Flow Test on the day of the visit.

Despite the number of cases of Covid-19 continuing to reduce nationally over the past week; locally we continue to be well above the national average, so we are trying to balance the easing of restrictions with still keeping everyone as safe as possible. As previously advised, all of the care services have been affected to some degree by some Co-owners having to self-isolate, but fortunately we have been able to ease lockdown restrictions within all of the care services from 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Although from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the wearing of facemasks for the general public is no longer required by law, people are still encouraged to wear a face covering in crowded places. The wearing of face masks in care settings is still required by both visitors and Co-Owners, to comply with infection prevention and control guidelines. We will provide further clarity as soon as possible, in relation to some services e.g. The Orangery/Spa area, that are shared with both care residents, independent residents, and visitors. Until we are in a position to provide more information, the current arrangements still apply.

Yours sincerely



Colin Inglis - Care Director

### **3. Middleton Hall – Independent Residents Bulletin – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

We are now 2 weeks into 2022 and I feel fair to say, the new year has not started as well as we all would have hoped. As expected, over the holiday period, the Omicron variant has spread incredibly quickly and we have seen this affecting some of our Co-Owners directly, as well as others having to self-isolate, due to being in close contact with outside positive cases. By carrying out the daily LFT testing, we have been able to pick up these cases up early and reduce the risks to our residents and our Co-owners.

Almost all services have been affected to some degree and fortunately, we have been able to provide some continuity across all services, despite the recent absences. Although in some areas our staffing numbers are not ideal, which affects the level of service that we are able to deliver, please be assured we are doing the best we can, and our priority will always be to keep our residents and our team as safe as possible.

Once again, we have seen the different departments within Middleton Hall pulling together to help support each other during this particularly challenging time. We are also grateful for the patience and understanding shown by everyone, particularly when we have had to follow the guidance from the Health Protection Team, in putting in place additional restrictions around visiting within the care services. We have worked within these guidelines, and at the same time have tried to take a reasonable approach when some exceptional circumstances have arisen.

On a positive note, it looks like the number of new positive cases both locally and nationally has started to fall, and the scientists believe that with new medications, improved vaccines and a greater knowledge of Covid, they are optimistic that the current pandemic will end in 2022, and we will learn to live with Covid. New antiviral medication has been approved and new vaccines that are in development include nasal sprays as well as skin patches.

There has been no change to the advice from the Government in that as soon as you are eligible to have your booster vaccine, you should arrange to have this administered, to give everyone the best protection possible from

severe illness. All of our care services residents have had the booster vaccine and we are making steady progress within our Co-owners in having their booster.

There are changes from 17<sup>th</sup> Jan to the length of time people now need to self-isolate, the period of self-isolation may be reduced after 5 full days if the person tests negative on a LFT, both day 5 and day 6 and does not have a temperature. Day 1 is the day after any symptoms or the date of when a positive test was taken. If the result of a LFT is positive on day 5 then there would need to be a negative LFT on day 6 and day 7 before self-isolation can end. Daily LFT's should continue for the remainder of the 10 days following symptoms, or the date when a positive test was taken.

We would still advise that If you have any visitors or visiting professionals in your home, effective hand washing, wearing of face masks and good ventilation in your property is important to keep everyone safe.

Best wishes



Colin Inglis - Care Director

## **2. Middleton Hall - Residents and Relatives Bulletin – 1<sup>ST</sup> December 2021**

With new developments over the weekend, we wanted to keep everyone up to date with the most recent information. The number of daily new positive cases has steadily increased over recent weeks and potentially this may continue, as we learn of more reported cases of the "Omicron" variant. Because of this new variant of concern, some regulations have changed immediately, and further recommendations have been made by the JCVI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) regarding the booster vaccine rollout.

From 30<sup>th</sup> November the wearing of face coverings will be made mandatory again in shops and on public transport. Travel arrangements for those returning to the UK will change from 30<sup>th</sup> November, to include PCR testing within 2 days of arrival and to self-isolate until a negative result is obtained. The Government has taken on board the advice from the JCVI (Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation) which include:

- Booster vaccines being made available to everyone over 18 by the end of January '22
- Everyone eligible will be able to book their booster from 3 months from their second vaccine. These will be prioritised in order of vulnerability and includes those aged 40 and over
- Younger age groups are also being invited to have their vaccines and boosters, with children between 12-15 to be invited for their 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine 3 months after the 1<sup>st</sup> dose

Research has shown that after 6 months from the 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine, protection levels drop to around 40% and with having the booster vaccine, the level of protection increases back up to 90-95%. If you are approaching this 6 month mark, we would strongly recommend that you book your booster vaccine as soon as you are eligible, to help protect you, our residents and your families.

Clearly this new variant will cause some concern and although only a small number of cases are reported within the UK, it is expected this number will increase. The initial symptoms are described as severe fatigue and headache, so not the same previous symptoms of loss of taste or smell, high temperature and persistent cough. Some good news is that early signs indicate that those infected have a milder illness than the previous virus variants; however, we will continue to monitor this situation as more data becomes available.

While local infection rates remain higher than the England average and considering the uncertainty of the Omicron variant, we have enhanced the regular testing for our Co-owners, over and above what the government recommend, so we can identify any positive cases at the earliest stage.

One significant update over the past few weeks was the change to the regulations relating to all Care Home workers and visitors to Care settings. We are pleased to say that we have been well ahead of these changes, introduced on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and this has had minimal impact to the running of all services at Middleton Hall. It is now law for anyone working or entering a Care setting, except visitors to residents, to be fully vaccinated against Covid unless they are medically exempt under these regulations.

Once again, we are in the process of reviewing visiting arrangements and for residents using the Orangery, in the lead up to the Christmas period. Further information will follow, but for now current arrangements remain unchanged. While we hope will be able to ease restrictions, this continues to be dependent on local infection rates, along with government guidance. We are aware of some residents who will be going out with their families over the holiday period, and we will be supportive, whilst at the same time, we need to manage the risks involved.

Like everyone, we hope that the government do not enforce any further restrictions; however, with the new regulations of wearing facemasks from 30<sup>th</sup> November, we would take the opportunity to remind everyone to take personal responsibility when out and about in the community.

We remain determined that Christmas will not be cancelled and the "Switch on" of the Christmas lights will take place outside reception on 3<sup>rd</sup> December around 4.30pm. It would be great to see as many as possible there, to support this event and sing a few Christmas carols.

We expect there may be some further updates from the Government over the next couple of weeks and will continue to keep you updated with any changes.

Thank you once again for your understanding and should you have any further questions about the content of this bulletin, please let me know.

Best wishes



Colin Inglis - Care Director

### **1. Middleton Hall – Independent Residents Bulletin – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

We wish to update you on the most recent information regarding the Omicron variant of Covid-19. Most of the information that has been received on this variant is from the media and there is a lot still unknown particularly in relation to the levels of protection for those vaccinated and how ill people infected may become.

What we do know is that this variant is spreading very quickly, with numbers of positive cases doubling every 2 -3 days. Some of the clinicians have described this variant as a "big wave coming straight at us" and Professor Whitty informs us that there is a reasonable chance "there will be some vaccine escape from this variant". The encouraging news is that the booster may give significant more protection.

Given the seriousness of situation and with further restrictions now in place across the country it is reasonable to expect further tightening within all Care Homes and Care Services, with the prime intention of slowing the spread and protecting the residents and care teams.

You may have seen or read about the increased efforts for everyone over the age of 18 to have a booster vaccine or book a booster vaccine by the end of this month. We are fortunate that all our residents in the Care Services are fully vaccinated and have had their booster vaccine. We are urging everyone to have their booster vaccines

when eligible and we see more vaccine centres being set up. Please remember to let reception know when you have had your booster.

The government have just confirmed that some further restrictions are to be put in place within Care Services from today 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Only 3 nominated visitors will be allowed under government guidance for each resident, for indoor visits.

There have been several other updates announced over the past week summarised below:

- Face coverings to now be worn in most indoor public areas
- People over 30 can pre-book their booster vaccine appointment 2 months after their 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine. Some walk-in vaccination centres are now available and can be found by following the link <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site>
- Fully vaccinated contacts of someone with Covid should take Lateral Flow Tests for 7 days; if you test positive you will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test
- Some indoor venues and event are now asking to see your NHS Covid Pass and have proof of a negative test within the last 48 hours, unless medically exempt

There are additional precautionary measures that we have already implemented across Middleton Hall, including our Co-Owners continuing to complete daily LFT's and everyone receiving refreshers on the importance of wearing PPE effectively and handwashing.

If you have any visitors or visiting professionals in your home, we would also encourage hand washing, wearing of face masks and good ventilation in your property in order to keep everyone safe.

Please be aware that The Orangery will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Thank you for your support and understanding of this current situation and should you have any further questions, please let me know and we will do our best to respond as quickly as possible.

Best wishes to you and your families.



Colin Inglis - Care Director