

Notes from care home online forum – 7 February 2022

Participants: 4 attendees and 3 HWN staff members

Hosted by Derry Nugent (DN)

DN said she is meeting with Adult Social Care in a few weeks and can feed back on an anonymous basis.

Current experiences of care homes

- One attendee said her husband's care home is still in lockdown but she is able to go in as an Essential Care Giver (she got this information from the last forum). She was unable to see her husband over Christmas as he had to isolate. It was difficult to celebrate her birthday without him.
- Another attendee said she got a letter saying her mum's care home was going to open up again for visits. Visitors still need to book in and do a LFT which the care home checks with the NHS. The home prefers visits to be in the resident's room rather than communal areas. This is difficult as mum is usually in the Memory Lane lounge and has poor mobility and it upsets her to move her back to her room for the visit. Attendee doesn't like to bother the care home manager and feels she doesn't yet have a good enough relationship with the senior care manager to raise this.
- DN said we know care homes are under a lot of pressure but there should be individual assessments done rather than a blanket approach.
- Professional attendee was hoping to bring along two people she is working with who have relatives in care homes in North of county. They feel very grateful to the care home staff but say the communication has been poor. They feel like a nuisance asking about things like clothes or whether their loved one has had a drink. She says relatives shouldn't have to apologise, it is better when carers work with the relatives.
- One attendee said her uncle's slippers went missing and his carers were trying to fit his feet into slippers two sizes too small. The care home just needed to ring her and she would've bought some new ones.

Things you wish you'd known

DN led a discussion about information or ideas it would have helped attendees to know when their relative first went to live at a care home

- Socks and underwear disappear – good supply needed!
- Some information about other residents living nearby e.g. which residents is it ok to speak to and which are best left alone.
- How to deal with the 'firsts' – birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas – one relative missed out on the chance to have Christmas dinner with his wife because he didn't realise he could.
- Laminated copies of photos so originals don't get damaged.
- Could take in Christmas cards to show loved one.

- The need for a support network, for example other family members to talk to when upset after visiting.

Final comments

- Professional attendee is going to continue working with relatives after loved one has moved into a care home for as long as support is needed.
- Attendees agreed that once the initial feeling of guilt passes you realise that the care home is the best place for the relative. More quality time can be spent together without the pressure of living at home.