

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION –
THIS IS NOT A CIRCULAR**



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For ways to contact us go to
optivo.org.uk/ContactUs

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Dear resident

Your scheme manager service

I'm writing to let you know about arrangements at Bentham House during the Coronavirus outbreak. We'll do all we can to support you and other residents. We're following Government and NHS advice. One important change is we'll be avoiding face to face contact and relying more on the phone to keep in touch with you. Please phone your scheme manager if you need help or would like a regular phone call – you'll find the number on the scheme office door.

Staff cover at your scheme

Our staff team – including the Concierge service - will be stretched over the next few months. Some staff are in 'at risk' groups and will work from home. Staff with children may be off work while schools are closed. Others are already unwell or will be unwell in the coming weeks. This means office staff may not be at the scheme as much as usual. And of course we'll continue to do our best to maintain the 24/7 Concierge service but there may be times this isn't possible. If this is the case pull cord alarms will still be answered. We'll carry out fire alarm tests and other essential health & safety checks – but maybe not on their usual day.

To protect residents we've asked staff to observe 'social distancing' rules and avoid any unnecessary face-to-face contact. This means Concierges may be on duty in the office rather than at the front desk.

Please don't visit the scheme office or the Concierge desk if you need to speak to a staff member – phone on their mobile number or use your pull cord to speak to the Concierge team

Security and scams

Sadly, there are conmen who are taking advantage of the crisis. Please don't admit anyone to the scheme unless they are visiting you personally. Please be aware of the security of the scheme, especially because staff may not always be onsite.

What to do if you're unwell or need to self-isolate

Follow the NHS advice. Stay in your flat and phone or use your pull cord to let us know. We'll contact you regularly until you're feeling better.

If you're very unwell use your pendant or pullcord or phone 999.

Events in the scheme

We're cancelling meetings, events and activities until further notice. This is because most residents of the scheme are over-70's or in 'at risk' groups for Coronavirus. The Government has advised people in these groups to avoid large gatherings, gatherings in smaller public spaces and gatherings with friends and family.

The Government advice also says: "You should contact your regular social visitors such as friends and family to let them know that you are reducing social contacts and that they should not visit you during this time unless they are providing essential care for you."

So we're also cancelling bookings of the guest rooms – even ones we've already accepted and confirmed. We won't accept new bookings.

I know some people may think we're over-reacting and activities should carry on as usual. But we all need to follow the official guidance. Please think of your neighbours who may be put at risk if you pass the virus on to them.

Staying fit and positive

We don't want anyone to become lonely or isolated. Current Government advice is it's fine to go for a walk outdoors if you stay more than 2 metres from others. Other ideas they suggest are:

- look for ideas of exercises you can do at home. If you're online, the NHS website has great advice
- spend time doing things you enjoy – this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to the radio or watching TV programmes
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs
- keep your windows open to let in fresh air, get some natural sunlight if you can, or get outside into the scheme garden

Please keep up-to-date with the Government and NHS guidance which may change. Follow news reports on the TV or radio. You'll also find all the official guidance online on the gov.uk website.

Help with shopping

Please let us know if you're running out of food or medication. We'll put you in touch with local services that can help. Some supermarkets are opening at certain times or assigning delivery slots to over-70s.

Post and parcels

The postperson and delivery people can still deliver to your flat. We're asking them to come straight in and out of the scheme without stopping to chat.

Cleaning and hand-washing

Our cleaners will pay attention to surfaces that are frequently touched. But their service may be affected by staff shortages. We're currently unable to provide hand sanitiser. But the Government advise the best thing we can all do to avoid the virus spreading is to wash our hands well and often with soap and water.

Repairs

Please let us know if you have an emergency repair by phoning 0800 121 60 60.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I know how worrying the threat of Coronavirus is. We're doing everything we can to support you and keep 'business as usual' in these unusual times. Please let your scheme manager know if you have any suggestions or questions. In the meantime, stay safe and well, look out for your neighbours - and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Deane
Head of independent living