

20th May 2020

'New Provision Consultation'

Dear Service User,

I trust that you are all safe and well. This continues to be a particularly challenging time for all of us.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10th May and the further advice on Monday 11th May, I felt it was important to update everyone with our Group's present position regarding the current Coronavirus pandemic.

In line with many other organisations, we are currently exploring the benefits of basing all of our future plans on objective evidence. It is really important for us at this time to share our thinking and to receive your feedback on any strategy that we put in place.

I would like to make it clear that in-line with government guidelines, we are not working towards any specific timeline, but are 'working towards a phased return for you', whilst ensuring that **we maintain and secure the health and safety of every service user and member of staff**, which has been our overarching priority since closing Horizons back in March. Ultimately the legal responsibility for the opening of Horizons and the type of provision that you access, sits with our Board of Directors. This will be determined following the completion of a rigorous, site specific and person centred risk assessment and through our consultation process with you, families and key partners.

The areas being considered by the Group at present are:

Test 1 to carefully track the numbers of Covid-19 cases in Oldham and Tameside (and other areas that may be applicable). We also need to evaluate the "R level" to ensure it is within or around 0.5-0.7.

Test 2 to be convinced that testing is available to any member of staff, where it is applicable. We also need to be assured that we have an appropriate number of suitability qualified and experienced staff members to support you. We will promote the initial roll out of the track and trace application for mobile phones.

Test 3 to ensure that all of our organisations consult upon and instigate a clear strategy and have an implementation plan relating to social distancing. Our premises must be fit-for-purpose and we must be able to provide necessary services.

Test 4 to audit all PPE and be assured of its present and future availability. Where appropriate, staff will have access to relevant training relating to the use of PPE. All staff, and yourselves will have training and support on applicable health and hygiene techniques (ie hand washing, covering mouth when coughing etc).

Test 5 to continue safeguarding and monitoring to protect “vulnerable” staff and yourselves. Our full commitment is to keep you all and staff safe.



Our Senior Executive Team will collect the above information for all of our organisations, which will then be published on all of our social media platforms and via our websites for you to review. Recommendations will then be made to the Directors, so that they can make informed decisions, and can consider risk by using a simple scaling system.

After an initial assessment of the 5 tests above we are planning our next steps with extreme caution. We are particularly concerned about both the high rate of infection in our local areas and the relatively high “R” rate.

What We Know

1. The risk of transmission and contracting COVID-19 remains particularly high in Oldham and Tameside (and some other GM regions).
2. The number of deaths and confirmed cases still remains high.
3. The need for clinically vulnerable people to stay at home remains.

4. The need for everyone to socially distance remains the case.
5. Some social restrictions to see your friends and family remain in place.

Pressure on Families

I am well aware that many families are experiencing particular challenges. The last thing we want to do is place families under more pressure. We've got to keep you and staff safe.

If you believe that you or anyone in your household is classified as extremely clinically vulnerable, you should have/ask for a shielding letter from your GP/Consultant to share to enable you to stay at home to shield that person from contracting COVID-19.

So, what's next?

We'd really welcome your views on everything that we have done so far with regards to the process outlined in this document. We would like to hear your thoughts regarding a return to Horizons. It would be great if you were able to contribute. Co-production has never been as important.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=M0yAmYaEhkiwRLDxLHOct2AbFM0MgsVPtgJplYjUpYdURjNHQVZKVUZYUINCNkc5QktCRE5VR0RWSiQIQCN0PWcu>

We would ask that you complete this survey by Friday 22nd May 2020. Following the initial consultation with you, your families and key partners, we will send an update to you on our progress and future plans by Friday 29th May. You may be contacted by our staff teams before this time to support us with our personalised risk assessment process.

Kind regards,

Graham Quinn
CEO New Bridge Group