

# GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 209376

## **Gospel Standard Bethesda Homes: Guidelines and response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic**

Last updated: 22/05/2020

### **Restricting access to the Bethesda Homes**

In view of the next 12 weeks being seen as a critical period in the spread of COVID-19, then the Bethesda trustees in consultation with the General Manager and Home Managers have taken the decision to close all three Bethesda homes to non-essential personnel (including visitors) 9.00 am Monday, 23 March 2020.

The purpose of this, in the fear of the Lord, is to shield and protect the residents from the increasing spread of COVID-19. The decision to restrict access to the homes was not taken lightly, yet we believe it is a right one in view of the circumstances.

The only personnel who will be allowed into the Bethesda Homes are:

- staff
- health professionals
- emergency contractors
- visitors in the case of end-of-life situations
- new residential admissions – subject to risk assessment
- respite care admissions – subject to risk assessment

The current stringent precautions relating to all individuals being fit to come into the homes (including taking temperatures) and the hygiene and bio security measures in the homes will continue to be rigorously enforced. (See Annex 1 for further details.)

### **Well-being of residents**

The Bethesda trustees, management and staff are conscious of the need and importance of always ensuring the physical and mental well-being of the residents in their care. This has been heightened, due to the current COVID-19 epidemic and the restrictions being imposed through social distancing and social isolation.

As identified, well-being comprises both physical and mental dimensions.

Physical well-being: in general, older persons are not physiologically as strong as those who are younger and may have underlying health issues (particularly respiratory/pulmonary and heart/cardiac related). As the residents at Bethesda are over 80 years of age then they are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 hence the need to have in place guidelines to shield and protect the residents.

Mental well-being: for Bethesda the mental well-being of its residents is both spiritual and social (interacting with others both within and outside of the homes).

Bethesda is conscious of the need to find ways of continuing to support residents through external contact currently.

### **Staying in touch with family, relatives, friends, pastors, ministers and deacons**

The limitations placed on visitors accessing the Homes does provide challenges however these can be overcome, to some extent, through the following means:

- telephoning - either through the resident's landline, mobile telephone and smartphone (this latter option does allow the use of communication applications (apps))
- video calls - these are possible through computers, iPads/tablets and smartphones. Bethesda is producing guidelines so that, if needed, video calls can be made to residents using Bethesda IT equipment within the Homes.
- written correspondence (emails and letters) - although written correspondence may not be as prevalent as it was, there is something lasting about having a letter and/or letter card to reread as well as going back to an email.

In addition, Bethesda is also investigating ways of digitally keeping in touch with those interested in Bethesda to keep them up-to-date with what is happening within the homes.

### **Morning and evening readings**

Morning and evening readings are an integral part of the ethos of Bethesda and helped to contribute to the spiritual well-being of the residents.

Contingencies are in place, for each of the homes, for morning and evening readings to continue either being conducted remotely or by residents able to do so in the Homes.

Further details, in due course, will be made available as to how this is operating.

### **Sunday services**

These will continue to be relayed from the chapels at Brighton, Chippenham, and Luton to the respective homes.

### **Other aspects**

All Management are fully aware of the need to ensure that the residents, as far as possible, are physically fit and they are exploring ways of undertaking this with due regard to the need for social distancing.

Other activities are being considered, such as listening to hymns being sung, that will help to occupy residents time in a profitable way.

Notes:

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, the desire of the Bethesda trustees and management team is to acknowledge the Hand of God and to seek wisdom to act prudently - so that none of our actions are dishonouring to His Name and the residents are not placed in danger of the risk of infection.

The Bethesda General Manager will be responsible for ensuring, on behalf of the trustees, that these guidelines are implemented across the homes and that the home management teams are engaged fully in the process.

These guidelines are based on the best available information at the time. They also encompass the current COVID-19: guidance impacting on care homes, safety and wellbeing of residents and staff, and the public in general.

The guidelines will be reviewed considering announcements and guidance from Her Majesty's Government

Issued on behalf of the Bethesda trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ridout". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

M Ridout  
Chairman of the GSBF

Annex 1

**Minimising the risk of transmission and infection of COVID-19 within the Bethesda Homes**

Bethesda is keeping abreast with current government advice and information as to managing COVID – 19 and this information forms the basis of the actions that it is taking in shielding the homes, residents and staff from infection.

Central to this is the guidance on hand washing and respiratory hygiene that should be followed to help prevent the spread of airway and chest infections caused by respiratory viruses including:

- wash your hands more often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser. Do this after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and after you eat or handle food
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home

Bethesda will seek to achieve the shielding and safeguarding of its residents and staff through having in place guidelines and procedures to ensure that anyone entering the homes for a necessary purpose will be:

- fit to enter
- prepared to comply with Bethesda's infection control procedures
- follow the guidelines for specific visit/activities

**Fit to enter**

In order to enter Bethesda home for a necessary approved purpose, the following criteria will apply:

- anyone who has either a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature (above 37.8) should not visit a Bethesda home(s). In addition, anyone who has travelled from a Coronavirus category 1 country in the past 14 days should not enter Bethesda.
- anyone who is feeling unwell, for whatever reason, should not enter Bethesda
- Anyone approved to enter Bethesda will be asked to confirm that they are fit to visit

**Prepared to comply with Bethesda’s infection control procedures**

This will require those entering Bethesda for an approved purpose to:

- Be prepared to have their temperature taken on entering the Home
- Read Bethesda’s general guidance note (attached) that applies at all times regarding keeping the homes infection free.
- Remember to wash their hands as set out in the guidance note for at least 20 seconds under running water and to take the added precaution of avoiding touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow the guidance and instructions on the posters/notices displayed in the homes or given by staff.
- Observe the no hand shaking/no contact rule within the homes for the present time.

Anyone who is not prepared to follow these guidelines will be unable to visit Bethesda.

**Follow the guidelines for specific visit/activities**

The table below sets out the guidelines for specific approved visits/activities:

Type of visit/activity	Comment/guidelines
Managers, staff and volunteers	<p>During the current phase of the Covid-19 epidemic, Bethesda will ensure that all managers, staff and essential volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow the guidelines to confirm they are <b>fit to enter</b> the Home</li> <li>➤ Comply with Bethesda’s <b>infection control</b> procedures (including frequently disinfecting surfaces that are regularly touched).</li> <li>➤ Take all necessary precautions to <b>avoid any cross contamination</b> in the homes</li> <li>➤ Observe the need to <b>ensure the physical and mental well-being of the residents</b> and report any</li> </ul>

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	<p>concerns to the manager or member of staff in charge and that these are recorded in the residents' care plans</p>
<p>Visiting health professionals and social workers</p> <p>(Visiting health professionals are necessary for the well-being of the residents. During the Covid-19 epidemic, Bethesda management needs to ensure that any visiting health professional is "fit to enter" - this will include ascertaining where they have previously been and whether they have been exposed to the Covid-19 virus)</p>	<p>During the current phase of the Covid-19 epidemic, Bethesda would ask visiting health professionals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Contact</b> the Home prior to the visit to ensure they are "fit to enter"</li> <li>➤ Comply with Bethesda's <b>infection control</b> procedures</li> <li>➤ <b>Avoid</b>, where possible, being in close proximity to the residents</li> <li>➤ <b>Avoid</b> unnecessary visits to the residents' rooms.</li> </ul>
<p>Contractors</p> <p>(The use of contractors during the Covid-19 epidemic will be limited to those that are essential to the operation and safety of the homes.)</p>	<p>During the current phase of the Covid-19 epidemic, Bethesda would ask contractors to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Contact</b> the Home prior to the visit to ensure they are "fit to visit"</li> <li>➤ Comply with Bethesda's <b>infection control</b> procedures</li> <li>➤ <b>Avoid</b>, where possible, being in close proximity to the residents</li> <li>➤ If contractors need to visit resident's rooms, the <b>resident will vacate</b> the room prior to the visit, and hard surfaces, door handles and light switches cleaned before the resident goes back in.</li> </ul>
<p>Attendance at hospital appointment/surgery visits</p>	<p>Discretion will be needed, during the current Covid-19 epidemic, as to the</p>

<p>(During the current phase of the Covid-19 epidemic, it may be necessary to limit this type of off-site visits unless an emergency and/or absolutely necessary.)</p>	<p>attendance at hospital appointment/surgery visits.</p> <p>The <b>Home Managers</b> will be responsible for determining, in discussion with the residents and/or their representative and the hospital/surgery as to whether it is <b>appropriate to proceed</b> with the appointment/visit. If this is the case, then to be assured that all necessary infection control processes and procedures are in place.</p>
<p>End-of-life situations (Natural causes)</p> <p>(Special dispensations will be considered for those who may be required to visit a love one and/or member of the congregation in an end of life situation - Bethesda will endeavour to handle these matters in a sensitive manner yet taking consideration the need to shield and protect other residents in the Homes)</p> <p>[In the case of a resident facing the end of life through COVID-19 then prevailing Public Health England guidelines/regulations will be followed.]</p>	<p>During the current phase of the COVID-19 epidemic, Bethesda would ask all those essential visitors to attend a resident at the end of their life through natural causes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow the guidelines to confirm they are <b>fit to enter</b> the Home</li> <li>➤ Comply with Bethesda's infection control procedures</li> <li>➤ <b>Follow</b> all instructions</li> <li>➤ <b>Avoid</b> visiting the rooms of other residents</li> </ul>
<p>Emergency situations</p> <p>(Special dispensations will be considered for those who may be required to visit a resident, in an emergency, resulting from their physical, medical or mental condition/state. An assessment of the situation by the Home Manager, in consultation with appropriate professionals, to determine whether external intervention is needed to prevent harm to the resident and/or others in the Home will be undertaken and recorded.</p>	<p>During the current phase of the COVID-19 epidemic, Bethesda would ask all those visitor(s) who attend a resident in an emergency situation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow the guidelines to confirm they are <b>fit to enter</b> the Home</li> <li>➤ <b>Comply</b> with Bethesda's infection control procedures</li> <li>➤ <b>Follow</b> all instructions</li> <li>➤ <b>Avoid</b> visiting the rooms of other residents</li> </ul>

<p>Bethesda will endeavour to handle these matters in a sensitive manner yet taking due consideration for the need to safeguard and protect other residents and staff in the Homes)</p>	
<p>Respite care and/or new entrants</p> <p>[Note: New entrants will only be admitted, during the current COVID-19 outbreak, in exceptional circumstances. New entrants will only be admitted following assessment and if the homes have capacity and capability to do so safely and with due regard to shielding and protecting other residents.</p> <p>Those seeking respite care will be considered on a case-by-case basis.]</p>	<p>During the current phase of the COVID-19 epidemic, the following will apply to the admission of respite care/new entrants into Bethesda (see note opposite):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow the guidelines to confirm they are <b>fit to enter</b> the Home (subject to satisfactory assessment).</li> <li>➤ <b>Comply</b> with Bethesda's infection control procedures</li> <li>➤ <b>Follow</b> all instructions and arrangements in place to ensure the safe transition into Bethesda and integration with existing residents.</li> </ul>



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### Help us to keep Bethesda infection free: Visitor information

To help safeguard the health of Bethesda's residents, staff and other visitors; it is important that standard infection prevention & control procedures are closely adhered to. YOU can help reduce the spread of infection by following a few simple guidelines when visiting Bethesda. These are:

- ✓ **Refrain from visiting**, if you have any (viral or related) illnesses such as vomiting and/or diarrhoea, coughs, colds or flu-like symptoms and any infectious conditions e.g. chicken pox, mumps etc. Or if you have been in touch with anybody who has had any of those illnesses or symptoms in the past 3 days. (If in doubt, contact the Home beforehand)
- ✓ **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer provided. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Even if hands look clean, they can still carry harmful germs. Cleaning your hands properly helps to prevent the spread of infection. (See diagram opposite)
- ✓ Do not touch residents' wounds, dressings or tubes, as this can spread infection
- ✓ Do not sit or lie on residents' beds and use the chairs provided for visitors.
- ✓ If you are visiting more than one resident, clean your hands in between them, ask staff which to visit first. Avoid unnecessary contact.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in the bin straightaway.
- ✓ Children should be discouraged from crawling on the floor and must be supervised at all times.

### How to wash your hands – for at least 20 seconds

