

GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 209376

Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund: rules and guidelines on the use of the 'visitor rooms'.

Introduction

A visitors facility has been provided at the three Homes so that visitors may visit their loved ones whilst restrictions due to the COVID-19 remain in force. Of necessity limitations will be placed on visitors and these arrangements will proceed on a cautious and limited basis so the risk of any infection can be minimised. Inevitably, this will mean doing things differently and your co-operation with this is appreciated.

Acknowledging both that the Lord has been very good in watching over the Homes in the past few months, and that our futures are in His hands, these rules and guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The safety of the residents and staff is paramount, and it is vital that the Homes are kept separate from any likely source of COVID-19 infection.
- Any arrangement to allow visiting to the Bethesda Homes must not place residents staff and visitors at risk of COVID-19 infection.

Consequently, the safety protocols in place for the use of the 'visitor room' must be adhered to at all times to ensure these principles are maintained and the Homes protected from infection.

Initially, visiting will be limited to those who have responsibility for the residents, and this will be opened up as the system is reviewed. Visiting will be appointment only.

The use of the 'visitor room' implies agreement with the rules and guidelines set out.

These rules and guidelines will be kept under review and modified to meet any changes in government guidelines and/or circumstances.

We hope this provision will be enjoyed by as many as these restrictions currently allow and will be for the wellbeing of our dear residents.

These rules and guidelines are underpinned by a risk assessment "Easing of restrictions on families and friends visiting the Bethesda Homes" and is available through the following website link: <https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Visits-Booking-Page>

Rules and guidelines

Ensure you are fit to visit Bethesda and are free from symptoms of COVID-19.

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high or raised temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature – although it is better if you do)

- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you have any of these symptoms or have recently been traced as being near somebody who is COVID-19 positive, then you must not visit the Home. Please inform the Home to let them know your situation.

On arrival you will be asked to complete a declaration form confirming your fitness to enter and confirming your contact details which may be used by Public Health as part of the 'Test and Protect' strategy, should there be a necessity following your visit to the care home.

Those using the 'visitor room' will be required to have their temperature taken before entering the facility.

Timeslots will need to be booked prior to visiting and Bethesda will endeavour to ensure there is one timeslot per week per resident/couple. A maximum of two visitors from the same household will be allowed and visits are limited to 45 minutes.

All visits are subject to the agreement of the resident being visited.

Cleaning products will be available in the 'visitor room' and visitors will be required to make sure they clean, before and after the visit, all handles/chairs/equipment together with any surfaces that have been touched.

Please follow the instructions regarding the use of the equipment provided to allow visitors to talk to the residents. Note: a member of staff may be present during the visit to support the resident if required.

Please restrict your visit to the designated area as all other areas are out of bounds. Remember to maintain social distancing rules whilst on Bethesda's property

No toilet facilities, at the present time, will be available for visitor use so that we can maintain the infection prevention and control within the Homes.

Please follow all instructions provided by Bethesda staff.

Visits may be cancelled if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 within the Home you are visiting.

Please note: As each visitor is responsible for cleaning the 'visitor room' surfaces on leaving, we cannot guarantee that it is 'COVID-19 free' and those wishing to use the facility, do so at their own risk. Please leave it as clean as you would like to find it.

Seeing your loved one once more may be an emotional and anxious time. Annex 1 "Preparing to visit Bethesda to see a loved one" has been prepared to help relatives and friends through this process.

On online booking system is place and can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Visits-Booking-Page>

Adrian J.H Topping
General Manager

For those unable to access the website please call the office as follows:

Brighton: 01273 735735

Harpenden: 01582 761359

Studley: 01249 816666

Due to limited availability visitors are asked to book no more than one slot per week and Bethesda reserves the right to decline booking requests.

Approved by GSBF trustees 3rd July 2020
(Updated 15th August 2020)

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Annex 1

Preparing to visit Bethesda to see a loved one

Meeting a loved one, whether a relative or friend, after a long time and in the strange surroundings of a 'visitor room' may well be a trying time for you each.

The following notes were prepared by the Scottish Government to support care home residents to see their families in person again. Like Bethesda, the main focus is on minimising the risk of infection amongst residents, because of their age and/or other medical conditions, and the staff. At the same time, the importance of seeing loved ones and the benefits of this are recognised.

The following questions may help you prepare for the visit (although the situation in Scotland is more restrictive than the approach being taken by Bethesda e.g. limiting visits to a designated visitor). Bethesda is also aware that whatever is planned is "if the Lord will" and for Christians, prayer and laying matters before the Lord is a vital part of all that they do.

The following questions have largely been unedited and where this is the case, it is to put the response into the context of Bethesda

Will my relative still remember me after all this time?

For many people the worry of a relative no longer recognising you can be overwhelming. But it is important to stress that despite the time spent apart many people, living with dementia will remember their relatives. However, some people may struggle at first.

If your relative doesn't recognise you straight away, try not to worry and give them time to remember. It may take more than the initial meeting for those memories to be reconnected. Also, you might need to:

- Re-introduce yourself and remind them of the relationship between the two of you.
- Consider taking with you an object that you can give to your relative with dementia which will remind them of the connection the two of you have. This would need to be something that could be easily sanitised by staff e.g. a meaningful photograph could be laminated or placed into a wipe-able container.

Talk about the distant past first rather than the recent months. By doing this you are more likely to make your relative feel at ease because they may find it easier to recall long term memories.

If, despite all of your attempts your relative doesn't recognise you, remember that their emotions still remain. They will still benefit from seeing you, hearing your voice and enjoying your company even if they are not sure who you are.

If your relative cannot remember your connection, try not to convince them or correct them about your relationship. For example, if you are their daughter but they call you mum try not to contradict this. Remember despite the difference in the words they still often have the same feelings connected to them i.e. love, trust and friendship.

What if my family member's health has deteriorated since I last saw them?

It is possible that your relative's health may have changed. All of us have been affected by the lockdown and this is equally true of residents living in a care home.

Nevertheless, for some people, there will have been a cognitive decline. Try and not feel guilty about this; there is nothing that you could have done to prevent this. These changes in a person's brain, are part of their health journey which continue despite the change and extraordinary times we are all going through.

If your relative's dementia has worsened, you may need to adopt different approaches and communication techniques. Your relative may need longer to respond or need more help to do things. But maintaining that relationship is just as important now as it was before the pandemic.

What if I don't feel able to visit my relative?

Feeling nervous or anxious about seeing your relative face to face again is a normal response to recent events. Only visit your relative when you feel able to do so and when they agree, as they may also be worried about you coming into the home for your own health.

Staff at the home will continue to care for your relative and they will not judge your decision not to visit in person. Alternatives include use of video calls, recorded messages and telephone calls.

Consider if it is the thought of going back into the care home which is the cause for your anxieties? It is perfectly normal to feel anxious about returning to a place that may have been through such difficult times. The care home itself may have changed significantly since your last visit. Seeing staff in PPE may be a clear reminder of the difficulties the home has gone through. The staff, residents and their families may have lost someone to COVID-19. It is likely that over the time you have visited your relative you have become close to other residents. If these residents have died then it is likely to have an emotional impact on you.

Will my visit be too upsetting for my relative?

When you see your relative again it will most likely be a very emotive time for both of you.

Try not to be too upset if your relative doesn't seem really happy to see you. Your relative may not be aware that they have not seen you for such a long time.

Dementia affects a person's perception of time, so in their reality they might have only seen you this morning. Consider taking a photo of the visit so that this can be shown to your loved one to remind them.

Try and ensure that you have someone you can talk to after your visit. Don't be surprised if

you feel down afterwards. This is an understandable response to the situation.

What happens when I leave?

This will be a difficult moment for both you and your relative. Start preparing 10 minutes before you actually have to leave.

Remember to keep in touch with your loved one through writing, telephoning or video calls. Let them know as soon as possible when you will be visiting next.

At all times our staff are here to help you and our residents; please do not be afraid to speak to staff about your loved one or things that are worrying you. They will continue to support your relative after the visit ends.