



Chilton Croft has reported no cases of Covid-19, thanks to the preventative measures taken by staff

Picture: GREGG BROWN

How this Suffolk care home is keeping staff and residents safe at this time

With our lives now so greatly changed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to forget that government guidelines on coronavirus have only officially been in place for a matter of weeks. But before the British government introduced its first measures to combat the virus, care homes such as Sudbury's Chilton Croft were closely monitoring the developments around the world, taking note of the alarming rates of infection in other European countries such as Italy and Spain. In the absence of official government guidelines at that time, the management team at Chilton Croft began to implement their own preventative measures in early March. The team faced an initial hurdle when they requested masks, gowns and other PPE equipment for staff and

Thanks to the protective measures put in place by its management team, Sudbury's Chilton Croft Care Home has registered no cases of Coronavirus during this ongoing outbreak

visitors, only to be told that they were currently unavailable.

As a result of the fast-evolving situation, an urgent management meeting was called at the home on March 10, with the team discussing government and local authority strategies. The team decided that they would also implement their own strategies at Chilton Croft to protect its vulnerable residents and its staff. A difficult decision was made to stop all visitors from entering the home from March 12, along with installing a safety double front

door to restrict services from entering the property. The home's management team went about sourcing and purchasing PPE equipment to protect its staff and residents. At present, Chilton Croft is spending around £2000 per week from its own budget on PPE equipment, as its needs exceed the supplies currently distributed by local authorities.

The management team also worked closely with its members of staff – including 35 carers, 5 nurses, ancillary and kitchen workers – to work out who might

possibly be at risk due to their movements outside of work, coming to an agreement that those who might be at risk would change their social habits or refrain from coming into work. An order of non-invasive thermometers was placed and all staff started to have their temperature taken when entering the home.

It was a difficult decision to ask that relatives stay away, as it can cause distress to residents, some of whom do not have the capacity to understand the reasoning behind this decision. But the management team ultimately decided that this was the right course of action to take, and in a short time, it soon became clear that other care facilities would be following suit.

The government guidelines changed on March 30, advising

care homes to stop people from entering the buildings. In the 18 days between shutting the Chilton Croft doors to visitors and the implementation of the new government guidelines, the care home team managed to buy some valuable time to stop the virus from entering the building.

Chilton Croft has always been progressive and has been continuously updating its methods of care. Care needs are always personalised, and not only involve the carers, but also the families of the people that they are responsible for. At this time, relatives are encouraged to contact the home at any time to enquire of how their loved ones are.

For more information on Chilton Croft Care Home, please phone 01787 374146, or visit www.chiltoncroft.co.uk