



🏠 **Registered Office**
4th Floor
Highland House,
165 The Broadway,
London SW19 1NE

☎ 020 8246 5200
🌐 www.unitedresponse.org.uk
✉ info@unitedresponse.org.uk
📘 www.facebook.com/unitedresponse
🐦 www.twitter.com/unitedresponse

May 2020

Hello,

I am writing, following my earlier letter to update you on how we are managing the Covid19 pandemic here at United Response. Please excuse this general letter, as always the team supporting your family member will be happy to respond to specific suggestions or concerns that you have about the care and support of your family member.

While this continues to be a very worrying time for everyone, we are working hard to respond to the new way of life we all face. I am very proud of all of my colleagues at United Response and the way in which they have responded to the challenges that the pandemic has brought. Our overriding priority is to keep people safe, we are working hard to reduce the risks both to your family members and our colleagues supporting them.

Early on we established a central project team led by our Director of Quality & Practice, Sarah Battershall. This multi-disciplinary team are co-ordinating our response to the pandemic ensuring that our colleagues across United Response staff have fully up-to-date guidance on all aspects of managing Covid19. My Director colleagues & I are meeting daily to review the position & take the necessary decisions.

As you will know from the news, there is great pressure on the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), I do want to reassure you that we do have supplies of masks, aprons, gloves and eyewear available as they are needed. We have had some supplies from the Government but have also made strenuous efforts ourselves to purchase PPE from commercial suppliers both in the UK and abroad. We are continuing to source new suppliers to maintain stock. We are following Government guidance on how PPE is used and are carefully balancing the need to have PPE when required while maintaining supplies across all parts of United Response for on-going use as long as the pandemic lasts.

We have introduced new arrangements to cover pay for staff who are required to self-isolate because they or family members are showing symptoms or are shielding, supporting them to stay home while they recover.

The government has extended arrangements for testing of people who are displaying symptoms of Covid19, demand for these tests is outstripping supply at the moment, but we are making arrangements for staff to be tested as best we are able. We expect increased numbers of staff to be tested over coming days and weeks.

In common with other residential and supported living providers we have had to put a 'no visit' policy in place. I realise that this is very frustrating, but you will understand that this helps to keep people safe, in line with Government guidance we will be maintaining this policy for the immediate future. I know that people have been using technology to communicate with families and friends, this is certainly something colleagues are supporting wherever possible. You may have seen from our web site that we



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have joined in the national 2.6 Challenge and are raising funds to buy more technology to support communication for people we support.

In certain circumstances it may be possible for you to meet 1:1 with your family member in a public open space, observing the 2m social distancing, but this will need to be subject to individual circumstances, please discuss with staff members in the service if you are interested to explore this further.

It has been great to see the creative way in which everyone has responded to the impact of restrictions on movement. There have been some really fantastic examples of different kinds of activities that people are doing to keep active, arts and crafts, interactive sessions over video links and lots going on in the garden too.

The Government has announced that it is moving gradually to a phased easing of restrictions and we are starting to plan for how we may be able to phase a return to greater freedom of movement but we will only do this gradually and we are likely to be in this different way of life some time yet.

Do please raise any questions or concerns that you may have and we will do our best to respond to these. You can do this either directly with the team supporting your family member or if it is a more general matter via the 'contact us' button on the front page of our web site: www.unitedresponse.org.uk

We would like to keep in touch with you over coming weeks and keep you informed of any changes and developments, as all of our offices are closed sending out letters by post is not very easy and so we will be sending future communications by email, it would be very helpful if you could let us have the best email address to contact you on, this could be a family member if you do not yourself have one. It would also be very helpful to have a mobile phone number on which we can contact you directly or indirectly. We will always post copies of general communications to families on our website on our news pages: <https://www.unitedresponse.org.uk/news/coronavirus>

Thank you for your support during these very unusual times. Keep safe and well.

All best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cooper', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tim Cooper

Chief Executive.