


Baroness Altmann: Jewish care homes 'acted quickly and decisively' amid virus

The community responded 'enormously generously' to a joint appeal for emergency funding by three of the largest providers in the community, she said

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Baroness Ros Altmann

Jewish care homes have been praised for acting “quickly and decisively” to counter the threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic to elderly residents and tenants.

Former pensions minister Baroness Altmann hailed providers for being “quick to recognise the need to order significant supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and some have even sourced supplies of oxygen.”

oxygen.



The advertisement features a red passport cover with the Royal Coat of Arms and the text 'EUROPEAN UNION UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND PASSPORT'. Next to it is a blue and pink visa with a photo of a woman and the name 'S. Sample'. A green stamp with the word 'APPROVED' in red letters is placed over the visa. In the top right corner is the logo for 'UK MIGRATION LAWYERS' with a play button icon.

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She told *Jewish News* on Monday: “Our community is also fortunate that the infrastructure of our care sector has allowed staff to be transferred from the usually open day-care centres, which have now been closed, into the care home settings, which can cover staff who may be absent due to illness and also provide extra resources at this challenging time.

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“Other care homes may not have this kind of spare staff resource to redeploy.”

The Office for National Statistics reported on Tuesday 1,662 coronavirus related deaths in England and Wales registered up to 10 April outside hospitals. Of these, 1,043 were in care homes.

Baroness Altmann said: “Of course there are wonderful examples of care homes around the country who have coped well, but there are too many instances of elderly residents being put at risk, or homes without protection and testing, and if the care company operating the home is financially insecure then the spare funding to buy in PPE, especially after

dramatic increases in costs, may not exist.

She said the community had responded “enormously generously” to a joint appeal for emergency funding by three of the largest providers in the community – Jewish Care, Nightingale Hammerson and the Fed in Manchester, with the National Association of Jewish Homes (NAJH).

In addition to the emergency appeal, NAJH members are updating each other on WhatsApp and Zoom “to stay well equipped and resourced given the challenges they are facing”, according to Helen Simmons, chief executive of Nightingale Hammerson.

Senior management across care home providers are sharing ideas and even “providing each other with support and advice as we stand on what feels like an emotional knife edge”, said Mark Cunningham, chief executive of the Fed and chair of NAJH.

An email sent on Tuesday to Jewish Care volunteers and staff by the charity’s CEO, Daniel Carmel-Brown, revealed that a total of 23 care home residents and independent living tenants have died after contracting the virus.

Ten of the deaths were at Anita Dorfman House, four were at Vi and John Rubens House, and three were at Lady Sarah Cohen House. Three deaths were recorded at Otto Schiff Dementia Care Home, two at Sidney Corob House and one at the Kun Mor and George Kiss Home.

Another 14 people based in the community died after testing positive. The number of fatalities accounts for less than four percent of all 630 residents and tenants, Carmel-Brown wrote. “I say this to give some context as no doubt you will have read about some care providers across the UK, where the percentage of those passing away have been as high as 30 percent,” he said in the letter, seen by *Jewish News*.

He added: “I continue to personally speak to families who have lost a loved one where they tested positive for the virus and I can tell you that in every

one where they tested positive for the virus and I can tell you that in every call I make, I am moved by the feedback relatives have about how our staff and volunteers cared for residents and clients, sometimes for years, sometimes for weeks.”

On the subject of PPE, Carmel-Brown struck a positive note as he revealed Jewish Care has spent £300,000 in purchasing equipment to complement items already provided by the government.

“Like everyone else we have faced the same challenge. However, I am pleased to report we have stock of everything and that we continue to purchase as much as we can, not just for now but, of course, because we must be prepared for a further outbreak later in the year too,” he wrote.