

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Care Home Visiting Policy V14

CCSL are closely monitoring the relevant local infection and growth rates and will make decisions based on the information provided, for the health and safety of residents and staff. Visits to the Homes may be postponed, restricted and/or cancelled at short notice should the risk of infection be felt to be beyond a safe level.

When standard visiting is suspended, the following may be exceptions to the rule:

1. Essential visits, such as those from Healthcare Professionals will continue. During such visits, prior to entering the home they will be asked observe hand washing and social distancing policies and to follow our infection prevention and control procedures.
2. Exceptional circumstances, such as next-of-kin visits at end of life. During such visits those entering the home will be asked to observe hand washing and social distancing policies and to follow our infection prevention and control procedures.

All visitors to the Home will be required to take a rapid LFD test, have their temperature checked and will be asked to answer the following health questions (signed and dated), prior to gaining entry into the Home:

1. Do you currently have any signs/symptoms of a respiratory infection such as fever, loss of taste or smell, cough, shortness of breath, body aches or sore throat?
2. Have you had any symptoms of respiratory illness (cough, nasal congestion) in the past 14 days?
3. Have you come into close contact with someone who has symptoms as described in Q1 & 2, in the past 14 days? (eg family member)
4. Have you travelled within the last 14 days to countries with substantial community transmission, or have you been in a location where crowds are restricted to a common location (e.g. cruise ship / airplane)?

Following Governments guidance in the document 'Visiting Arrangements in Care' April 2021 and the most recent document 'Visits out of care homes' 21 June 2021, CCSL will:

- endeavour to facilitate face-to-face visits, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so,
- continue to prioritise end of life and mental deterioration cases,
- continue to prioritise the maintaining of a covid secure environment within the Homes,
- facilitate visits out of the care home, on an individual basis, where deemed safe and appropriate to do so, following thorough planning and risk assessment.

Visits Out of a Care Home

The latest government guidance states that residents may leave care homes, that are free of any Covid outbreak, to visit a friend or family member's garden, or go on walks in places such as parks, public gardens and beaches. However, they also state that the care home must balance this against a consideration of the risks to others in the home, in the event that the resident becomes infected on their visit, and the ability of the home to isolate the resident on return.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arrangements-for-visiting-out-of-the-care-home/visits-out-of-care-homes>

To ensure that we maintain the health and safety of all those in our care and employment, the following safeguards must be applied prior to any external visit taking place:

- Any visit outside of the care home MUST be discussed, planned, booked and agreed in advance with the Home Manager.
- A risk assessment MUST be completed and agreed in advance, as a part of the planning process.
- If the visit is agreed in principle, a negative test result, from both the resident and the family member will be required prior to the event going ahead.
- Trips, other than for medical purposes, will be limited to external venues such as parks, beaches and gardens.
- Only trips deemed as low-risk - to places such as gardens or parks - are exempt from the isolation rule on return to the home.
- The individual resident MUST be accompanied by a member of staff or a nominated visitor and must follow social distancing at all times.
- The trip should be made on foot, but if transport is required, a vehicle belonging to the nominated person may be considered. However, government guidance regarding social distancing and infection control (ie face coverings, windows open and wiped down handles/touched surfaces) must be followed. The use of public transport will not be allowed.
- The visit cannot involve meeting in groups or meeting indoors - apart from to use toilets.
- Overnight trips are not allowed, and residents will have to self-isolate after attending medical appointments.

All visits remain at the discretion of the Home Manager

Visiting at the care home

When family visits are possible, the following additional measures are in place to ensure the visits take place safely, for both residents and families:

- May take place
 - In a designated internal space, or
 - Through a window, or

- In a sheltered outdoor space
- The internal visits will be restricted to **two** family members per resident at any one time. **A maximum of 4 visitors can be in the home at the same time ie two internal family visit at a time.**
- In the event of an outbreak in the home, or evidence of a community hotspot or outbreak, we may have to **cancel the meeting with immediate effect**, to protect our residents, staff and visitors.
- We ask that you avoid using public transport, as your mode of attending the meeting.
- Visits may be limited to 30 minutes duration.
- If you are entering the Home, you will be required to **take a Lateral Flow Test (or show official notification of a negative test result on day of visit)** and wear **FULL PPE for the duration of your visit.**
- You will be asked some health screening questions at the start of your visit. You will also be asked to use the sanitising gel provided and will have your temperature taken. ***If you are showing any symptoms which could indicate coronavirus, please do not travel to the care home as we will need to refuse entry.*** As you will be aware, these symptoms include a raised temperature, a new and persistent cough, a loss of taste or smell and generally feeling lethargic and unwell.
- **Lateral Flow Testing Recording and Test and Trace:** In line with test and trace guidance, and to enable us to record your test result correctly, you will be asked to provide a contact number and/or email address and your date of birth. NB To comply with data protection, this information will be stored for a maximum of 21 days, after which it will be destroyed.
- Social distancing measures will remain in effect. Visitor and resident may now hold hands, but we ask that social distancing is maintained as much as possible to limit the risk of transmission.
- Any indoor space MUST be well ventilated
- Where there is a single access point to the space, the resident and visitor enter the space at different times to ensure that safe distancing and seating arrangements can be maintained effectively.
- In line with Government guidance, visitors will not be able to use facilities such as refreshments or toilets (unless for emergencies).
- **Gifts may now be brought into the Home.**

- The visits will be cancelled immediately, if there is a positive case of COVID-19 within the home.

All visits remain at the discretion of the Home Manager.

Some residents will have particular needs (for example, those who are unable to leave their rooms or those living with advanced dementia) which will make COVID-secure visits challenging. Where a resident requires individualised visiting arrangements CCSL Home Manager's will work with the resident, and their family/friends to develop a tailored visiting policy within the principles outlined above.

The factors relevant to decisions about particular individuals or groups of residents include the following, as described in the document 'Visiting Arrangements in Care Homes for the period of National Restrictions':

- the benefits to a person's wellbeing by having a particular visitor or visitors
- the extent of the harm that will be experienced by the resident from a lack of visitation or whether the individual is at the end of their life
- whether residents or staff or visitors are in the extremely clinically vulnerable group (see latest government [guidance on shielding](#))
- whether the resident's state of physical health is such that they may be more seriously affected if they develop COVID-19
- the provisions and needs outlined in the person's care plan
- the level and type of care provided by external visitors and the ability of care home staff to replicate this care
- the appropriate duration of any visit for the particular resident
- the appropriate level of staff to enable safer visiting practices
- the extent to which remote contact by telephone and/or video addresses any wellbeing issues above and is available and reduces any distress or other harm caused by the absence of visits. When developing visiting policies, care homes should consider how they will support remote contact (for example, wifi access for all residents).

Family visits will be regularly reviewed, and remain dependent on a number of factors, including the individual Home having no suspected or positive COVID-19 cases, the local rate of infection remaining low and on Government updates. Face to face visits may be closed/cancelled at short notice for the safety of everyone.

Clear guidance on visiting will be circulated to residents and to relatives. Staff will take time to explain the policy to residents and to support them through this difficult period. This should include giving residents support in using devices such as mobile phones, tablets and computers to stay in touch with family.

Other Visitors to the Home

Other Visitors (including CCSL Management, other outside Health and Social Care agencies, etc) to the Home must follow the current Government Guidance and CCSL Infection Control Procedures. This includes taking a LFD test, with a negative result, **and showing proof of double vaccination (or medical exemption)**, prior to entering the building.

Contractors

Contractors on site will be asked to comply with all infection control, including the taking of a LFD test with a negative result, **and showing proof of double vaccination (or medical exemption)**, prior to entering any Home

It is expected that all contractors coming onto site will come with their own infection control & prevention equipment, including hand sanitiser, disposable gloves, apron and facemasks.

Signed:	Stuart Clarkson
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