

Guidance for care homes with regards to allowing visitors into your home during Covid-19.

### **Socially Distanced Visiting for Relatives, Friends and others**

People who are in care homes remain vulnerable and strict precautions need to continue. Our first priority continues to be to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in care homes and prevent future outbreaks. This is to ensure the health and safety of both care workers and residents. It is also recognized, however, that it is incredibly important to maintain the relationships between care home residents and their loved ones. Residents therefore need to have the opportunity to be visited by their family and friends whenever possible to support their health and wellbeing.

The guidance below will assist care homes with the development or amending their visiting policy. Please also read the national guidance at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

### **Compliance**

For many families the measures in this guidance may be frustrating or difficult to remember when visiting, and it is fully recognised that this could result in care home staff having to respond to distressing or stressful situations. The Council want to support care homes at this difficult time, but the safety of residents and care home staff is paramount, and therefore this guidance must be followed.

Where there are concerns the guidance has not been followed, there may be action taken in response to potential breaches in contractual compliance. In situations where there are concerns that there may have been avoidable harm as a result of failures to follow the guidance, there may be responses by Safeguarding Services, or the Care Quality Commission.

### **Prior to Visits Commencing**

Care homes will need to make the following preparations, in order to enable visiting to go ahead:

- Ensure a setting risk assessment has been completed that identifies the risks involved in implementing visits and the mitigating measures the home will have in place to reduce these risks. This risk assessment should be a live document that is re-viewed regularly.
- The setting risk assessment needs to be shared with Knowsley Council.
- Care homes should undertake individualized risk assessments, to assess the rights and needs of individual residents, as well as any specific vulnerabilities which are outlined in the resident's care plan. Not all residents will require this but should include, for example, residents whose needs make them particularly clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 and people with dementia, a learning disability or autistic people. More information to assist with this can be found in the National guidance under the section '*Advice for providers when taking visiting decisions for particular residents or groups of residents*'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

- Fully discuss all visiting plans and precautions with all staff, so that everyone is aware of how to keep both residents and visitors safe
- Ensure the care home is following national guidance and reporting all symptomatic residents/staff. If any residents or staff are symptomatic, then visiting will need to be suspended. NWBH infection prevention and control team must be contacted immediately.
- Ensure the care home is able to swiftly change their approach to visiting in the event of an outbreak and communicate this to residents and visitors. Visiting will be paused, except in exceptional circumstances for example end of life.
- Ensure the Capacity Tracker is completed and submitted daily
- Ensure that the care home visiting policy is made available and/or communicated to residents and families. This includes the screening form that all visitors must complete on arrival, ask visitors to go through this before their visit to ensure they do not contravene anything on this assessment which would mean they would not be allowed to visit. The home's policy and procedures should be posted on websites, sent electronically or by post.
- Ask visitors to contact the home prior to visiting to discuss any questions or if they are concerned or wish to challenge any of the procedures. The risk of visitors not wishing to or being unable to comply with the procedures should be captured in the risk assessment with mitigating actions the home will take to minimise this risk.
- Care homes will be required to keep a record (date and time of visit, name, address and phone number) of all visitors. This record must note who the visitor interacts with for example if a person visits their family member and the chaplain visits also. This should be stored securely and be kept for 21 days in case required for track and trace purposes. After 21 days records should be safely destroyed.
- Care homes will be required to implement rapid testing for both the resident and their visitor (when this becomes available). The protocol for this is currently being developed and Knowsley Council will work with homes to establish this.

### **Preparation for Individual Visits**

- Even where direct visits are permitted, alternatives should still be facilitated and encouraged for examples telephones and videos, window visiting or drive by to maximise safe contacts and minimise face to face contact.
- Care home managers must ensure that a staff member is available to oversee all visits
- Explain that there should only be one consistent visitor for each resident wherever possible, to reduce the number of potential contacts in the home. This means the same family member visiting each time to limit the number of different individuals coming into contact with vulnerable residents and in order to limit the overall number of visitors to your care home
- Where this is not possible, there should be an absolute maximum of 2 constant visitors per resident.
- Children under the age of 12 years should be discouraged from visiting due to the difficulties in maintaining social distancing, unless there can be assurances that they are able to strictly follow the guidance
- Family members should be advised that they need to call and book a visit prior to attending the home to ensure that there is adequate space available to accommodate the visit. Ad hoc visits will not be allowed. Visits should be limited to 30 minutes once a week for each resident
- Care home managers must ensure that visitors have no contact with other residents and minimal contact with staff members (less than 15 minutes at 2 metre distance). If an in-depth conversation is required, this should be done by telephone

- Visitors should be reminded and provided with facilities to wash their hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the care home and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and clean their hands and dispose of tissues
- Visitors should wear a face mask during the visit and should wash hands before and after putting it on and taking it off. There may be some instances when a visitor will need to wear PPE (beyond a mask) appropriate to the need of their visit (for example compassionate visits/end of life/resident has symptoms/covid positive). The care home will need to provide the PPE for visitors
- Visitors must wear a protective face mask at all times whilst on the premises, whilst on the care home grounds and, in the building
- Visitors should be encouraged to walk to the care home or use their own transport and not use public transport
- Explain to visitors what to expect during the visit (see section below), for example adhering to social distancing, not to hug relative, there will be no refreshments, protocol for bringing gifts etc. any violation of the protocol will result in the visit being terminated.
- Ensure the visitor has read the screening form on the day of the visit prior to attending the home and does not answer yes to any of the questions, if they do they call the home to discuss to ensure that they are ok to visit. Home will need to regularly check which foreign countries are under quarantine rules.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>
- Please consider how visiting can take place outdoors rather than indoors using a communal garden or outdoor area, a gazebo or summer house, which can be accessed without anyone going through the shared building. We do appreciate that this may not be appropriate during the winter.
- When visiting is undertaken indoors then a number of things need to be considered as part of the mitigating actions in the risk assessment.
  - Visiting spaces must be used by only one resident and visiting party at a time, and between visits there must be appropriate cleaning and an appropriate time interval
  - Visiting pods (temporary enclosed outdoor structures) may be used
  - Where these are not available, a dedicated visiting room such as a conservatory should be used. It is preferable if this room can be entered directly from outside by the visitor (so that the visitor and the resident enter the room via different entrances)
  - Where there is a single access point to the space, the resident and the visitor should enter the space at different times to ensure that safe distancing can be maintained at all times
  - There must be good ventilation for spaces used, keep doors and windows open where it is safe to do so, ensure any rooms used are well ventilated before and after the visit.
  - The visiting space must be sufficient in size and marked to enable easy social distancing of 2 metres between the visitor and the resident,
  - There should be a substantial (e.g. floor to ceiling) plastic or glass screen or barrier between residents and visitors
  - If it is not feasible to have a physical barrier between the resident and their visitor, then this must be highlighted and mitigated for in the risk assessment, examples could be markings on the floor, arranging the room in a covid safe manner.

- Ensure any other areas that are used by visitors are decontaminated several times throughout the day and avoid clutter
- If in a residents room then visitors should go directly to the room on arrival and leave immediately after (for example for compassionate visits)

### During the Visit

- Check the screening form, if visitor does not bring it with them they must complete it on arrival. (Appendix One). An assessment must be made by care home staff on the visitor's ability to remain 2m from the resident and others. These forms are to be kept readily available in reception areas of each home. Completed forms are to be retained for information. A new form is required to be completed for each visit.
- The risk assessment asks;
  - If the visitor or any member of their immediate family members have symptoms or have had a positive test within the past 14 days
  - If the visitor has been identified as a CONTACT of a positive case and must self-isolate for 14 days
  - If the visitor has been in contact with any person experiencing flu like symptoms in the past 14 days.
  - If the visitor has been out of the country within the last 14 days. You will need to identify which countries are exempt.
  - If the visitor has experienced any symptoms they think could be Covid related
- If the visitor answers **YES** to any of these questions, the senior person on duty needs to explain that the visit should **NOT go ahead** for the wellbeing of your residents, staff and visitor.
- A safe 2m distance will need to be maintained at all times
- Refreshments are not to be offered to visitors and visitors should be advised that they should not share food or drink they bring with them with their relative, any violation of the protocol will result in the visit being terminated
- If visitors bring toiletries or a gift for their relative this should be something that is easy to clean – these should be left in a plastic bag for staff to collect and disinfect before taking to the residents room. If visitors bring food this should be sealed and unopened.
- Visitors may not use the toilet facilities within the home
- Any breaches to this guidance by a visitor must be documented

### Off site visits

- If residents, who have capacity, request to go off site to visit family, this should be discussed with the care home manager, the resident and their family
- Residents will need to understand that they will be required to isolate for 14 days after the offsite visit, in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of other residents and staff in the home

### Appendix 1 – Screening form for visitors

Please note - once visitor testing is underway the screening form (appendix one) will be amended to record the date and time of test and result

### Appendix 2 – Guidance for visitors

## Appendix 1

### Screening Form for all Visitors, regardless if visit is outdoor or indoor

– please ensure visitors review this and complete on the day of their visit before they attend the home.

Please note: Each individual visitor will need to complete this form on every visit

#### Dear Sir / Madam

To prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our home and reduce the risk of exposure, we request that you complete a risk assessment. We thank you for your support in our endeavour to maintain as much as possible, the safety and wellbeing of our residents and colleagues

Visitor information		
Name:	Relationship to resident:	
Contact number:	Contact Number (Mobile)	
Name of resident being visited:	Date and time of visit	
Declaration by visitor (all questions mandatory)		
Have you been in close proximity within the last 14 days with any person who has tested positive for COVID 19?	YES	NO
Have you been in close proximity to any person experiencing flu like symptoms within the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Have you tested Positive for COVID 19 within the last 7 days or have you experienced flu like symptoms with the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Have you been told to stay at home and self-isolate by the Test and Trace team?	YES	NO
Are you experiencing any of the symptoms relating to COVID 19? a. new continuous cough and/or b. high temperature and/or c. loss of, or change to, sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
Are you experiencing any other symptoms which may or may not be related to COVID 19? For example, are you unwell in any way with diarrhoea, vomiting, rash or other new symptoms in the last 48 hour's	YES	NO
<b>If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, visiting would not be appropriate as you are putting the person you are visiting and others at risk. If you have had a recent negative test for COVID-19, please let the staff member know</b>		
Have you been told to stay at home, self-isolate or shield for health reasons	YES	NO
Have you visited a foreign country with the last 14 days?	YES	NO
<b>If YES please <u>do not set off</u> to visit the home, please contact the home manager who will discuss with you if it is permissible for to visit.</b>		
Protocols to be maintained throughout the visit		
We ask that you sign and declare that you agree to abide by the following protocols throughout the duration of the visit		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I agree to maintain social distancing rules of 2m and not to have any physical contact with the person that I am visiting</li><li>• I agree to not directly or indirectly give to the person I am visiting any items I have brought in with me</li><li>• I agree to only visit for a thirty-minute period and will not vacate the area where the visit is to take place without permission being gained from a staff member</li><li>• I understand that the visit is at the full discretion of the home manager and any violation of the protocols will result in the visit being terminated</li></ul>		
Print Name	Date	
Signed:		
Name	Temperature	Taken by
Visitor		
Resident		

### Guidance for visitors to care homes during Covid-19 - July 2020

This Guidance has been written for visitors of Knowsley Councils' care homes. It is based on national guidance. It outlines the safety measures that we are putting in place to ensure that all residents and their visitors can continue to meet each other in a meaningful and safe way.

It outlines

- Measures to facilitate social distance visits
- What we ask of visitors to support us
- What you can expect from us before and during your visit

#### **Socially Distanced Visiting for Relatives, Friends and Others**

People who are extremely vulnerable and residing in long-term care facilities remain at risk and strict precautions need to continue. You may be aware that allowing visitors into care homes is subject to a number of things, for example the care homes risk assessment, whether there are any residents who are symptomatic and we need to take into account the presence of Covid-19 outbreaks in the community. For these reasons visiting practices are subject to change, sometimes at very short notice.

To support us to ensure all visits can be facilitated safely, all visits must be pre-booked. Ad-hoc visiting will not be allowed. Visits will be time limited and can be weekly. On arrival you will be asked to complete a risk assessment, by completing a short form. You may also be asked for permission to check your temperature prior to the visit.

In line with national guidance there should be a single consistent visitor for each resident, wherever possible, to reduce the number of potential contacts in the home. This means the same family member visiting each time to limit the number of different individuals coming into contact with your loved one.

Visitors should have no contact with other residents and minimal contact with staff members (less than 15 minutes at 2 metre distance). If an in-depth conversation is required you are asked to do this by telephone please.

To help keep our residents safe we ask:

- That on arrival you will wash your hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the care home and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and clean their hands and dispose of tissues.
- That you wear a mask at all times whilst on the premises (on the care home grounds and in the building) and wash your hands before and after putting it on and taking it off. There may be some instances when a visitor will need to wear additional PPE. Wearing a face covering may make communication difficult so it is important to speak loudly and clearly, keeping eye contact with your loved one. Do not wear a hat or anything else that may conceal your face and it may help if you wear your hair in a way that a resident would be more likely to recognise
- Whenever possible please walk to the care home or use your own transport and avoid using public transport
- Adhere at all times to 2 metres social distancing and not to have contact with your loved one (no hugging/touching)
- If visitors bring toiletries or a gift for their relative this should be something that is easy to clean – these should be left in a plastic bag for staff to collect and disinfect before taking to the resident's room

Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer refreshments to visitors and ask that you do not share any food or drink that you bring in with you, with your loved one. The toilet facilities will also be unavailable for visitors.

The visit is at the full discretion of the home manager and any violation of the protocols will result in the visit being terminated.

If you are unable to physically visit your relative but would like to explore other options for example window visiting, drive by visiting or the use of technology please contact the care home to discuss. We will be happy to discuss any other suggestions with you and support your needs.

**Government guidance remains in place:**

We ask that you do not visit if:

- You have been told to stay at home, self-isolate or shield for health reasons
- You or any of your immediate family members have symptoms or have had a positive test within the past 14 days
- You have been identified as a CONTACT of a positive case and must self-isolate for 14 days
- You have been in contact with any person experiencing flu like symptoms in the past 14 days
- If you have been out of the country within the last 14 days
- Have experienced any symptoms you think could be Covid-19 related in the past 14 days

We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:

- Stay at home as much as possible
- Work from home if you can
- Limit contact with other people
- Keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible)
- Wash your hands / sanitise regularly
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms

Please talk to the Home manager or a member of their team if you require clarity in relation to any of this guidance.