



## Covid-19 Residential Care Home Visiting Policy and Protocols

9<sup>th</sup> July 2020; Reviewed 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020; Reviewed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### **Policy Statement:**

Over the past few months the residential care teams have been working incredibly hard to reduce the impact of the coronavirus in our homes and we have closely monitored and adhered to the Guidance that applies to local communities and to care homes specifically. COVID-19 is extremely infectious – The infection can be passed very easily from person to person and the use of public spaces (especially indoors) and close contact increase that risk and we will apply strict infection control measures when visits take place.

Because the risks of COVID-19 are significantly higher for care home residents a differential of restrictions between the general population and people living in our care homes may at times be necessary as we progress through the pandemic.

In order to protect those at highest risk, social routines including visiting are managed with extreme care and our first priority remains the safety of residents and colleagues in our homes and we wish to continue to do all we can to minimise the risk of transmission. It is with this purpose that we introduced a staged approach to the care home visits on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2020, with stage one being applied during the peak of transmission and stage 4 when transmission is at its lowest rate.

We continue to pay very careful attention to the scientific advice and Government Guidance and we will keep stakeholders informed of each change as it occurs and how it impacts on our residents and family members.

	<b>Stage 1</b> (prior to relaxation)	<b>Stage 2</b> (Subject to Scientific Advice/Guidance)	<b>Stage 3</b> (Subject to Scientific Advice/Guidance)	<b>Stage 4</b> (Subject to Scientific Advice/Guidance)
Visiting	Essential Visits (End of Life/stress/distress behaviours)	Essential visits Garden Visits Max two visitors (from the same household) No small children	Essential Visits Garden visits (with max. 4 visitors from the same household) No small children Indoor Visit by one designated person.	Controlled programme of garden and Indoor visits. Children at manager's discretion
Required	Risk assessment and Resident consent Once weekly (Monday-Sunday) scheduled visits Visitors must maintain 2 metres physical distancing Staff must wear PPE Face coverings and gloves are required when visiting indoors A deep clean to take place of the visitor area after each visit			
Settings	Homes with no outbreak Homes free of outbreak for more than 28 days ( <i>twice the incubation period</i> )			

## COVID-19 Visitor Protocol:

Visits will only be accommodated in those homes that have been free from infection for more than 28 days. Testing will continue and if anyone living or working at the home is tested COVID-19 positive visits will be suspended until the home has been free from infection for 28 days.

Friends or relatives who are required to self-isolate, including those identified as a contact of a positive case under the Test, Trace and Protect Strategy, those who are self-isolating outside of the test, trace and protect requirements e.g. quarantine following foreign travel or those with other infections will not be able to visit until after the 14 day isolation period.

The types of visit that will initially be offered are:

- A window visit in which the visitor can talk to their relative/friend through an open window on the ground floor of the home. A two-metre distance from the window will need to be maintained.
- An outdoor visit in which two-metre social distancing is maintained.

The type of visit most appropriate will be determined by means of risk assessment and will take into consideration the current needs of the resident and their ability to comply with social distancing measures.

A risk/benefit analysis will be undertaken for each resident. It is not safe to make an assumption that visiting is always beneficial for the resident – the main goal of this visiting is to enhance the wellbeing of the resident. If visits prove to cause distress the risk/benefit analysis will be reconsidered with the input of key visitors and the resident but the wellbeing of the resident will be at the centre of all the decision making.

Planned visits may be postponed if staffing levels are insufficient to support safe visiting arrangements.

To ensure everyone's safety, a number of additional measures will be put in place to ensure the visits take place safely:

- A risk assessment will be prepared for each resident and for each type of visit which will take into consideration the resident's decision-making capacity (as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005).
- Visits will need to be pre-booked by contacting the home.
- Weekly booking period runs from Monday to Sunday
- The external area of the home will be organised to assist in facilitating safe visits (i.e. zoned areas with clear two-meter social distancing, coverings such as gazebos and garden umbrellas to protect people from weather conditions).
- Visits will be limited to 20 minutes once weekly for each resident to enable us to manage safety as well as support additional cleaning between visits
- Privacy will be respected but a staff member will be in the vicinity throughout the visit if deemed necessary
- Visitors will be required to agree to a screening process which includes providing responses to a health questionnaire and signing a for receipt of the protocol.
- Allocated visiting times can only be changed with agreement of the manager and not at short notice
- If visitors arrive late the visiting time cannot be extended
- The number of people permitted to visit will be in accordance with the staged approach
- Small children are not able to visit until stage 4, and only at the Care Home Manager's discretion
- Visitors will not be able to enter the building until stage 3 and then only after they have had their temperature taken.
- If visitors are showing any symptoms which could indicate coronavirus, they will be refused entry (a raised temperature, a new and persistent cough, a loss of taste or smell and a generally feeling of being lethargic and unwell).
- When visits are outdoors and social distancing is maintained Face coverings are not required to be worn by visitors
- Face coverings and gloves are required when visiting indoors and can be provided on request.
- A waste container for safe disposal of face coverings and gloves will be available to visitors

- Social distancing measures will remain necessary, which means a 'no touch approach' during visits. This extends to hugging, hand-holding or kissing.
- Visitors will not be able to use toilet facilities
- No refreshments will be provided during visits
- Visitors are discouraged from bringing gifts. Any gift has to be in sealed packaging which can be wiped down and does not need refrigeration. Where it is deemed necessary, gifts will be quarantined in an outside area for 72 hours.

### **Stage One – Lockdown procedures**

Thank you for your support in not visiting during this period unless essential, we know this is very difficult but a critical ask of you and your cooperation is very much appreciated.

## **Stage Two - Outdoor Visiting Protocol**

As we begin to support controlled and time-limited visiting to the care home, your continued support in protecting not only our residents and staff, but also you as visitors and the wider community, is equally as important. Visits can only be made at pre-arranged times and these will be jointly agreed between you, our residents and the care home. This arrangement is in place to ensure we reduce the number of people visiting the home, especially in the garden area, at any one time, to protect our residents and our staff.

Visits will take place through an open designated window or in the garden area. This reduces the risk of someone who is asymptomatic inadvertently bringing the virus into the care home. This is a critical safety measure to protect residents and our staff.

Visits will initially be for a period of no more than 20 minutes. We would ask for your co-operation in following this limit as this allows us time to implement infection prevention and control processes to clean the visitor area between visits thereby enabling other visitors to visit their loved ones safely.

### **Action to be taken by visitors**

- 1) You will be asked, to clean/rub your hands with alcohol-based gel, which will be provided.
- 2) You will be asked to read this visiting protocol and complete the health pro-forma.
- 3) If you are supplied with a mask/gloves they are single use items and must be disposed of in the bin provided. In some instances you may be asked to put on other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Staff will be on hand to show you how to put any PPE on and more importantly how to take them off safely, thereby reducing any infection risk. You must dispose of the PPE in the bin provided and perform hand hygiene immediately on removal.
- 4) You are asked to maintain a two-metre distance between you and your loved one. We understand this is difficult for both you and your loved one. However, it is a critical protective factor for you both, our staff and the wider community.
- 5) You are asked not to bring in gifts such as food parcels, flowers, helium balloons and the like. This approach is to reduce the opportunity for the virus to be carried into the care home and being passed unknowingly to your loved one.
- 6) As you leave the visitor area, please use the alcohol-based gel provided to clean your hands.

### **Things to consider**

While many of you will have used technology to keep in touch with your loved one, they haven't seen you face to face for a number of weeks and you will may want to touch or hug each other. It may take time for them, and you, to adjust to the new requirements e.g. keeping a two-metre distance. Please encourage and support your loved one to maintain social distancing.

You or your loved one may have changed physically and mentally and it may take time for you both to adjust. Please feel free to discuss any concerns about this with staff. We are here to support you.

### **Future Focus**

At all times we will follow Welsh Government guidelines related to visiting. Initially the guidelines permit each resident to have two designated visitors per week, in the outside area of the care home. This is a precautionary approach with the principle of protecting your loved one at its core.

Should these guidelines change we will implement them. This could include:

- 1) Cessation of visiting if there is a spike in the virus or an outbreak in community or the care home.
- 2) Extending number of visitors or length of time, if we continue to see a reduction in the virus across the region.

We will keep you informed of each change as it occurs and how it impacts on our residents and on you as a family member.

## Stage Three - Indoor Visiting Protocol

At this point we will introduce controlled and time-limited visiting inside the care home. Your continued support in protecting not only our residents and staff, but also you as visitors and the wider community, is equally as important.

It is critical during this stage that visits only take place by a designated visitor or deputy and at pre-arranged times. These will be jointly agreed between you, our residents and the care home. This arrangement is in place to ensure we reduce the number of people inside the care home at any one time, to protect residents and staff.

Visits will take place in a designated area in the care home. This reduces risk of someone who is asymptomatic inadvertently taking the virus deeper into the facility. This is a critical safety measure to protect your loved one, the other residents and our staff.

Visits will initially be for a period of no more than 20 minutes. We would ask for your co-operation in following this time-limit as this allows us time to implement rigorous infection prevention and control processes to clean the visitor area thereby enabling other visitors to visit their loved ones safely.

### Action to be taken by visitors

- 1) You will be asked on entering the home to wash your hands with soap and water in a designated washroom facility. Hand-washing should take a minimum of 20 seconds. Please follow the hand-washing guide on the wall in the facility.
- 2) You will be asked to read this visiting protocol and complete the health pro-forma.
- 3) You will be asked to clean your hands with the alcohol-based gel on entry.
- 4) You will be asked to bring a face covering with you. If you don't have a face covering, a mask will be supplied. If you are supplied with a mask/gloves these are all single-use items and must be disposed of in the bin provided. If necessary you may be asked to put on other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Staff will be on hand to show you how to put any PPE on and more importantly how to take them off safely, thereby reducing any infection risk.
- 5) You are asked to maintain a two-metre distance between you and your loved one. We understand this is difficult for both you and your loved one, however it is a critical protective factor for you both, our staff and the wider community.
- 6) You are asked not to bring in food parcels, flowers, helium balloons and the like. This approach is to reduce the opportunity for the virus to be carried into the care home and being passed unknowingly to your loved one.
- 7) Staff will show you how to remove PPE safely. PPE should be removed in a specific order: gloves, apron and finally mask. You must dispose of the PPE in the bin provided and perform hand hygiene immediately on removal.
- 8) As you leave the building, please use the alcohol-based gel provided to rub your hands as an added protection.

## **Future Focus**

At all times we will follow Welsh Government guidelines related to visiting. Initially the guidelines permit each resident to have one designated visitor per week (indoor), this is a precautionary approach with the principle of protecting your loved one at its core.

Should these guidelines change we will implement them. This could include:

- 1) Cessation of visiting if there is a spike in the virus or an outbreak in the community or the care home.
- 2) Extending number of visitors or length of time, if we continue to see a reduction in the virus.

We will keep you informed of each change as it occurs and how it impacts on our residents and on you as a family member.

## Visitor Health Questionnaire

Visits will take place in a designated visitors lounge. This reduces the risk of someone who is asymptomatic inadvertently taking the virus deeper into the care home. This is a critical safety measure to protect your loved one, the other residents and our staff.

You are asked to read the information below and agree to the necessary actions that are being asked of you. Please answer each question and sign the document at the bottom.

- 1) Have you felt unwell recently – especially with a cough, breathlessness, tiredness, a temperature or vomiting or diarrhoea? Yes / No
- 2) Have you been in contact with someone, in the past 14 days, who is suspected of having or is confirmed as having COVID-19? Yes / No
- 3) Have you been told by your GP or other NHS professional that you should not be visiting a care home? Yes / No
- 4) Have you travelled from and local 'lockdown area'? Yes / No

Please note that if you respond 'Yes' to any of the above questions, you will have to postpone your visit until the lockdown has been lifted and you have been symptom free for 14 days.

Please supply your contact details: these may be used by Public Health as part of the 'Test and Protect' strategy, should there be a necessity following your visit to the care home.

Home or Mobile Number.....

Address.....

By signing this you agree that you will follow the Infection Prevention and Control procedures that we have in place.

Thank you for your support.

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Visiting:**

## **PPE for Visitors (Stage three)**

Visitors will be encouraged to arrive at the home wearing a face covering. If further PPE is required this will be supplied by the care home.

Putting on and removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

### **Putting on PPE**

PPE should be put on before entering the room.

1. Keep hands away from face and PPE being worn.
2. Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated.
3. The order for putting on is apron, surgical mask, eye protection (where required).

The order given above is a practical one; the order for putting on is less critical than the order of removal given below.

### **Removal of PPE**

PPE should be removed in an order that minimises the potential for cross contamination.

Gloves

1. Grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand; peel off.
2. Hold the removed glove in gloved hand.
3. Slide the fingers of the un-gloved hand under the remaining glove at the wrist.
4. Peel the glove off and discard appropriately.

Gown

1. Unfasten or break ties.
2. Pull gown away from the neck and shoulders, touching the inside of the gown only.
3. Turn the gown inside out, fold or roll into a bundle and discard.

## Eye Protection

1. To remove, handle by headband or earpieces and discard appropriately.
2. Fluid Resistant Surgical facemask.
3. Remove after leaving care area.
4. Untie or break bottom ties, followed by top ties or elastic and remove by handling the ties only and discard as clinical waste.

To minimise cross-contamination, the order outlined above should be applied even if not all items of PPE have been used.

Perform hand hygiene immediately after removing all PPE.