



COVID VISITING POLICY

Types of visits

Visitors should kindly note that visiting arrangements place huge demands on care home staffing, with time required to clean and ventilate areas between visits. Whilst we will make every effort to facilitate visits, the number of available visits, and their duration will be limited, to ensure that all residents are able to visit their loved ones.

1. Indoor Visits
2. Outdoor visits
3. End of life visiting and exceptional circumstances
4. Virtual visits
5. Visits out of the care home

Testing

All indoor visits and 'end-of-life/exceptional circumstances visits', will require a negative lateral flow test result.

Outdoor visits will require a lateral flow test, but will be required to remain two metres apart with no physical contact.

Where a visitor accompanies a resident out of the care home, they too will be required to provide proof of a negative lateral flow test result.

It is important to note that rapid testing does not completely remove the risk of infection. Therefore, all the other screening measures, use of PPE, strict social distancing (other than between visiting parties), respiratory and hand hygiene, remain very important.

There are two options for lateral flow tests:

1. **Tested at the Care Home** - We can perform a lateral flow test at the care home. You would be required to wait 30 minutes for the test result. Visitors should remain in their car, or outdoors, and phone the care home or ring our doorbell to announce their arrival at their designated time. Testing will take place outdoors and visitors will be required to remain in their car until the test result is ready.
2. **Testing before you arrive** – You would be required to do a lateral flow test using a self-test kit, or at a lateral flow test, on the day of the visit. We can provide a set of 7 test kits, or you can obtain these at locations such as a pharmacy. We require proof of a negative lateral flow test (email from NHS, or date-stamped photo of test cartridge)

It is a legal duty to ensure that all tests are reported to our unique organisation number (UON)

Positive test result

If we perform the lateral flow test at the care home, visitors must immediately leave the premises to go home and self-isolate, avoiding public transport if possible, and follow government guidance.

If having taken the lateral flow test at home, the visitor tests positive, they must not visit the care home and should register their result and follow the guidance given.

Close contact with someone who is COVID positive

From 16th August 2021, the government guidance changed, so that those who have been fully vaccinated will no longer need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID 19. HOWEVER, the guidance for care homes remains as follows:

- Please do not visit if you are identified as a close contact. If it is absolutely necessary that you visit, this will be at the discretion of the manager, and you will be required to provide proof of both a negative PCR test and a negative lateral flow test.
- Residents should not receive visitors who are clinically extremely vulnerable for 10 days after they have been in contact with a COVID positive case

1. Indoor Visits

- Indoor visits will need to be pre-booked and pre-screened by telephone. Ad hoc or unannounced visits will not be possible.
- Great care should be taken not to visit if the visitor is experiencing symptoms of COVID 19
- On arrival, visitors will be screened again, take a rapid test, or provide proof of having taken a test earlier in the day, and if negative, have their temperature taken.
- There is **no limit to the number of visitors** per resident
- **Only 2 adult visitors at a time**, over the course of one day will be allowed.
- Visits will be limited to up to 60 minutes. The time is dependent on the resident and their preferences.
- If testing is carried out at the home this will be part of the 60 minute visit time
- Visits will take place in a well-ventilated, designated room, or the resident's bedroom, which will only be used by one resident and their visitor(s) at a time, and may be accompanied by a staff member when deemed necessary
- The visiting area will be subject to regular enhanced cleaning and ventilation between visits and will be clutter-free to facilitate this
- UV-C Air purifiers will remain on, before, during and after the visit
- Visitors will be required to wear PPE (Type IIR medical mask) and maintain good respiratory and hand hygiene
- Visitors should be careful to observe strict social distancing from other residents, visitors, and staff at all times
- Visitors will always be escorted to and from the visiting areas to reduce risk of cross contamination.
- No refreshments or facilities will be available to visitors during visits.

How much physical contact is allowed?

- Visitors should keep physical contact to a minimum. Visitors and residents may wish to hold hands but should keep in mind that this increases the risk of transmission.
- Close physical contact such as hugging increases the risk of transmission but is safer between two people who have been vaccinated and if there is brief contact only.

Visits involving children, applicable to all visits 1-3 above

Our advice is that visitors are aged over 18. However, it is possible for visitors to be aged under 18 but it is important that we have a discussion with you, in advance of children visiting, so that the visit can be planned properly.

Children should follow all infection control protocols, including social distancing, using PPE (although we advise children under 3 not to wear face coverings) and minimising physical contact, and be able to follow instructions or advice, we might provide. If the child is not vaccinated, we advise against close physical contact.

2. Outdoor visits

We also want to provide opportunities for each resident to see more than just two visitors if they so wish. We will aim to facilitate these visits in 'covid safe' ways.

- Visits will need to be pre-booked and pre-screened by telephone. Ad hoc or unannounced visits will not be possible
- Great care should be taken not to visit if the visitor is experiencing symptoms of COVID 19
- On arrival, visitors will be screened again, take a rapid test, or provide proof of having taken a test earlier in the day, and if negative, have their temperature taken.
- Outdoor visiting spaces must only be used by one resident and visiting party at a time
- All outdoor visits will be limited to five people.
- If deemed necessary, visits will be accompanied by a staff member
- Visits will be limited to approximately 60 minutes.
- The visiting area will be subject to regular enhanced cleaning between visits and will be clutter-free to facilitate this
- Visitors should be careful to observe strict social distancing from residents, visitors and staff at all times

How much physical contact is allowed?

The visitor and resident must remain at least 2 metres apart at all times. **There should be no physical contact.**

3. End of life visiting & exceptional circumstances

Visiting in exceptional circumstances such as end of life, will always be supported and enabled, in a respectful and dignified manner that embodies our beliefs and our commitment to our Loving Care ethos.

Where it is possible to determine, we will support end of life visits in good time, and not just the final days or hours.

We will guide visitors throughout the visit and provide all the necessary information to facilitate end of life visits.

- As far as possible, End of life visits will need to be pre-arranged and pre-screened by telephone. We just ask that you provide us with at least 30 minutes notice of your arrival. Unannounced visits may not be possible.
- Great care should be taken not to visit if the visitor is experiencing symptoms of COVID 19
- On arrival, visitors will be screened again, take a rapid test, or provide proof of having taken a test earlier in the day, and if negative, have their temperature taken.
- Visits will be limited to 2 visitors at any one time.
- Visits will not be time limited. However, we advise that longer visits increase the risk of transmission.
- Visits will take place in the resident's bedroom, which we will try to keep well-ventilated.
- The end-of-life visits may be accompanied by a staff member when deemed necessary
- The resident's bedroom will have enhanced cleaning and ventilation between visits where possible.
- UV-C Air purifiers will remain on, before, during and after the visit
- Visitors will be required to wear PPE (including provided Type IIR medical mask) and maintain good respiratory and hand hygiene
- Visitors should be careful to observe strict social distancing from other residents, visitors and staff at all times.
- Visitors will always be escorted when outside of their relatives' room to reduce risk of cross contamination and infection to the staff or residents.

How much physical contact is allowed?

We will not enforce social distancing or contact (such as holding hands) between the visitor and resident who is at the end of life. However, it is important to understand that all close contact increases risk of transmission.

4. Virtual Visiting

Virtual visiting will continue to be available through various platforms including WhatsApp Video Call, Skype, FaceTime etc.

Virtual visits are not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue moving forward.

Our staff will help facilitate the visit to ensure that residents can hear and see the caller and to have an enjoyable experience.

5. Visits out of the care home

We recognise how important it is for residents' health and wellbeing, for them to remain at the heart of family and social networks.

However, spending time with others outside the home will increase the risk of exposure to COVID 19 for the resident and consequently, for other residents and staff on their return.

In line with government guidance, we will risk assess each visit to minimize the risk of infection and to determine whether a resident will need to self-isolate for 14 days on their return or LFD Test everyday for 10 days (where the day of return, is day zero).

Higher risk visits that will require 14 days isolation

Some visits are deemed to be higher risk, such as:

- Overnight stays in hospital that are unplanned (an emergency admission to hospital is considered higher risk than an elective procedure)
- Visits assessed to be high-risk following an individual risk assessment (below)
- Travel to a red list country

For planned hospital overnight stays (such as elective admissions), residents do not need to isolate upon return provided they meet the following criteria. Residents should:

- Be fully vaccinated
- Receive a negative PCR test following their return to the care home (and isolate until the result is received)
- Complete daily lateral flow tests for 10 days following their return
- Avoid contact with other highly vulnerable residents in the care home

If there is a nosocomial outbreak in the part of the hospital where the resident stayed, they should self-isolate for 14 days on their return regardless of whether their overnight hospital stay was planned (elective) or unplanned.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment will include details of:

- The vaccination status (including 2nd vaccine) of residents, visitors and staff
- Any testing of those accompanying the resident or who they intend to meet on their visit out
- Levels of infection in the community
- Variants of concern in the community
- The support needs that the resident may have, including whether they will need to be accompanied
- How the resident will be supported to follow good infection control practice, including social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings
- Transport for the visits to avoid use of public transport
- Measures that may be required to protect our care homes due to visits out of the home, to higher risk settings.
- Where the resident will be visiting and what activities they will take part in during the visit

It is important that we involve the family and resident in our discussions and if the risk is deemed to be too high, we will clearly communicate the reasons why.

Anyone accompanying a resident, they will be required to have a lateral flow test on the day of the visit.

Ways to mitigate risks for residents visiting out of care the care home

The following measures will be considered for visits out of the care home to minimize the risk of infection to residents:

- Residents could be accompanied by a member of staff or, one or more of their visitors.
- If accompanied by a staff member, the staff member must take and wear the appropriate PPE
- Maintaining social distance from anyone that is not a 'regular visitor', or a member of staff, and avoiding close physical contact with those who are supporting the visit
- Wearing a mask where possible
- Maintaining dialogue with us to discuss the nature of the visit in advance
- Avoiding crowded places and indoor spaces
- Avoiding public transport
- For anyone involved in the visit to take a lateral flow test and to be fully vaccinated
- If the resident is meeting someone indoors, that person should take a lateral flow test and the result of that test reported to the unique organisation number (UON)

Advice on making visits more meaningful

- Speak loudly and clearly and keep eye contact
- Don't wear hats or anything else that might conceal the face further
- Wear clothing or hair in a way that a resident would more likely recognise
- Visitors should try to prepare themselves in the event that residents with dementia might struggle at first to remember or recognise them. Our staff will try to prepare the resident for a visit, perhaps by looking at photographs of the visitor and talking to them about their relationship.

NHS Test and Trace

We will keep a temporary record of all visitors' names, addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of the NHS Test and Trace system.

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General Notes to Reduce Risk

- ***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 may include one or more of the following: a raised temperature, a new and persistent cough, a loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, diarrhoea, lethargy or general feeling unwell.
- If possible, avoid public transport, as this increases the risk of coming into contact with COVID 19. If you do need to use public transport or a taxi, then we advise that you wear a face covering and touch as few surfaces as possible.
- Every visit will be individually risk assessed before arrival to reduce the risks involved with the specific people involved in that visit

- Visitors must follow any guidance, procedures or protocols put in place
- Pets will not be allowed
- Please minimise the number of personal belongings such as coat, handbag etc.
- Whilst visitors can bring non-perishable gifts, these should be named and given to a member of staff and will either be sanitised and/or isolated for 72 hours. Please ensure that gifts can be easily cleaned with wipes.
- Supervision of visits may be necessary to assist both the visitor and resident
- Visitors should sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the visiting area
- Visitors will be supported to ensure that the appropriate PPE is always worn and used correctly, and they follow good hand hygiene
- Kindly avoid touching surfaces as much as possible
- Visitors should have no contact with other residents and minimal contact with care home staff, and maintain a 2-metre distance. If needed, conversations should take place over the phone either before or following a visit
- Visitors will not be able to use facilities such as toilets (with the exception of end-of-life visits)
- Unfortunately, we will be unable to provide refreshments, and due to the short duration of the visit, we politely ask that you do not bring your own
- Visits may be stopped at any time for a variety of reasons, which may include:
 - Positive COVID 19 case or outbreak at the Home
 - Government guidance or a perceived increased risk due to a rise of cases, at either a local or national level
- Latest government advice on visitation is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

Any variation to this policy will be at the discretion of the care manager and in accordance with government guidance.