

Visits out of Care Homes Policy & Guide

(Pandemic Version)

It is important that care home residents are able to choose and to arrange visits out of their home even just for a few hours during this latest stage of the pandemic. However, even as vaccine coverage increases, there are still risks involved in visits outside of their home including the possibility of coming into contact with new variants of Covid-19. It is important therefore that our care homes, residents, family and friends take steps to manage and mitigate these risks, following Government guidance.

We understand that time with others outside the care home will increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19, and in particular this risk is likely to increase significantly now that all restrictions have been lifted.

Whereas it is possible to mitigate and manage infection risks within the controlled environment of the care home which includes testing anyone coming into the homes, it is simply not possible to manage the environment outside of the care home in the same way.

This means that there is still the need for some measures to manage the safety and risk of residents returning from visits bringing infection into the care home environment.

The following government guidance, regarding mitigation of risk, applies from the 19th July 2021 and takes into account the government's roadmap to remove all restrictions.

Whilst it is not a condition of visiting in or out of the care home, it is strongly recommended that all visitors consider the benefits, and take up the opportunity, to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so through the national vaccine programme.

The government has provided guidance which states that, where risks are high and the visit cannot be avoided ie an overnight stay in a hospital, this will mean the resident making the visit out of the care home will need to isolate for 14 days on their return. However there are some types of activity where the government feels the risks are inherently lower and these should ordinarily be supported **without the need to self isolate**. Please see guidance below for more details.

IMPORTANT

Please **do not make an appointment** to offer and take residents for a visit out of the care home if you have been feeling unwell recently or any of the following symptoms:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature (37.8°C or greater)
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- Had recent contact (in the last 14 days) with anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, or someone who has been confirmed COVID-19 positive
- Have returned from an overseas visit recently and are still in the quarantined period

Visits out of Care Home Guidance

1. All care home residents will be supported to leave the home, subject to carefully considered risk assessments, for the following activities **without being advised to self-isolate for 14 days on their return:**

- for medical appointments such as GP appointments, excluding overnight stays in hospital
- to take part in other activities necessary to maintain an individual's health and wellbeing (for example, going to a day centre or to a place of worship)

All precautions relating to COVID-19 (including social distancing and those set out below) should be followed while out of the care home.

2. No visit out of a care home during a pandemic is without risk, however, there are steps that can be taken to reduce those risks. To support safe visits out of the care home and to minimise the risk of transmission of infection, the following measures must be considered for all visits out of care homes:

- residents may be (but are not required to be) accompanied by:
 - a. a member of care home staff, if this has been prearranged and agreed
 - b. one or more of their named visitors, and/or
 - c. their essential care provider (where applicable)
- residents may meet other people however, should maintain social distance from anyone who is not one of their named visitors, essential care providers, or care staff and, wherever possible, should avoid close physical contact with those who are supporting their visit to minimise the risk of infection
- care homes should discuss arrangements with residents, residents' named visitors, or their essential care provider, in advance
- crowded places should be avoided
- visits to indoor spaces should normally be avoided (except, for example, for the use of toilet facilities), unless they are for, medical appointments or where an individual assessment has determined the activity is necessary to maintaining an individual's health and wellbeing
- visits should not involve the use of public transport

3. Where visits out are accompanied by a named visitor, a lateral flow test must be undertaken on the day of the visit, and a negative test result received. If any visitor or any member of the visitor's household has [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or has tested positive, they will not be able to proceed with the visit.

4. In the event of an outbreak all outward visits will stop for at least 14 days after the last positive case has been confirmed in the care home

5. We ask if you could read and agree to the following risk mitigation prior to taking your loved one out on a visit away from the home.

No	Risk Mitigation
1	<p>All residents making a visit outside the care home must isolate for 14 days on their return, with the day of return being day zero, unless they are for the following, when isolation will not be required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medical appointments such as GP appointments, excluding overnight stays in hospital • to take part in other activities necessary to maintain an individual's health and wellbeing (for example, going to a day centre or to a place of worship)
2	<p>While on the visit out of the home, residents must also follow all advice and guidance regarding wearing of masks and social distancing to safeguard themselves and others back in the home.</p>
3	<p>The number of people the resident has contact with should be kept to a minimum.</p>
4	<p>If a visit out does take place, all members of the household involved in the visit should have had a negative result from a Lateral Flow COVID test taken immediately preceding the visit out. (They should also be free of any COVID symptoms, and if they have previously tested positive, have completed the necessary isolation period.) NOTE: the Lateral Flow Test will be provided by the care home 30 mins prior to the resident leaving or a self-test provided on the day by the visitor</p>
5	<p>If a member of the household involved in the visit, or the resident tests positive, the visit cannot go ahead. The individual with the positive test should immediately self-isolate and complete a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test which will be provided by the care home</p>
6	<p>During the course of the visit the resident and those visiting are advised to maintain social distancing , wash hands regularly, let plenty of fresh air into rooms by opening windows and doors and consider wearing a face covering.</p>
7	<p>Others involved in the visit should take steps leading up to the visit to minimise the risk to the care home resident and others living and working in the care home, recognising that introducing Covid-19 to a care home puts all those who live and work there at risk. For example , they should minimise their exposure to Covid-19 by limiting the number of people they meet for 2 weeks prior to the visit out.</p>
8	<p>In the event of an outbreak of Covid-19 in the care home, the home will immediately stop outward visiting.</p>
9	<p>The vaccination status of the residents and the likely vaccination status of those in the setting they are visiting should be discussed prior to the visit, with 2 doses of the vaccine being strongly advised by the government.</p>
10	<p>Ahead of each residents visit a plan will be developed in which the following will be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The nature of the visit and intended activities b. The support needs the resident may have during the visit.

	<p>c. How the resident will be supported to follow good infection control practice, including social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings, including whether the residents needs are likely to impact their ability to do so.</p> <p>d. Transport for the visit, which should avoid exposing the resident to those outside their household eg travelling in a family car or a taxi</p>
<p>Name of person taking the resident out:</p>	
<p>Signed statement: I have read and understood the 'Visits out of Care Homes' guidance and will comply with these requirements.</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

Thank you for reading and agreeing to this guidance - visits out of care homes.