

# COVID-19 VISITORS POLICY

## Aims and Objectives

To ensure the safety of our staff and residents during the extraordinary circumstances by limiting the number of people entering the home.

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## Introduction

This visitors policy sets out how we manage visits safely within the care home. The guidance is designed to try to keep all our residents safe bearing in mind the significant impact a care home outbreak can have.

We are required to be mindful of the local, dynamic, risk assessment of the Director of Public Health who is responsible for deciding at a local level whether visits in care homes can take place and the national tier within which the Isle of Wight sits.

Our policy has been written with reference to the Government's guidance on care home visits. We have developed a risk assessment for visits at each site, which is available on request from your manager.

In the event of a local outbreak in the care home and/or local community we may rapidly impose visiting restrictions to protect vulnerable residents, staff and visitors. In this situation we will continue to ensure communication as per 'Ensuring Continued Communication' below.

**Individualised Risk Assessments have been/will be undertaken for each resident, setting out their rights and needs with regard to visiting.**

**All aspects of this policy are at the discretion of Registered Manager's (RM) or person in charge at the time of the visit.**

**Island Healthcare retains the right to end any visit, or prevent people from visiting, if they are not adhering to the below policy.**

## Visitors Policy

There will be an absolute maximum of 2 continuous visitors.

Visitors should walk or use their own transport to get to the home wherever possible.

Social distancing must be adhered to. This is not just to protect your loved one but all the people living at the home.

If a visitor wishes to bring a gift this must first be discussed with the Registered Manager when making the appointment. All items must be easily disinfected (i.e. flowers would not be allowed but a box of chocolates would be fine) and will be kept aside for 5 days before being given to the resident.

To support NHS Track and Trace the names and contact details of all visitors will be maintained.

All visits must be booked in advance, we cannot allow ad hoc visiting at this time.

Visitors will have no contact with other residents and minimal contact with care home staff i.e. less than 15 minutes and maintaining the 2m social distancing. Conversations with staff can be arranged over the phone following an in-person visit.

All visitors must follow good hand hygiene practices, using hand washing facilities (washing hands for at least 20 seconds) or alcohol gel when entering and leaving the home.

Visitors must wear a type 2-R facemask when on the care home grounds, inside or outside, which will be provided (and should ensure they wash/disinfect hands before and after putting it on and taking it off).

As with our employees, visitors should wear PPE appropriate to the need of their visit. If a visitor is making close personal contact (within 2m) they are required to wear gloves and aprons, which can also be provided by Island Healthcare.

All visitors will be screened on entry and any visitor who is currently experiencing, or first experienced coronavirus symptoms in the last 10 days will be refused entry. As will anyone who has, or is in the same household as someone who has, had symptoms in the last 14 days or been advised by NHS Track and Trace to self-isolate.

We will ask the following screening questions on entry:

1. Have you been feeling unwell recently?
2. Have you had recent onset of a new continuous cough?
3. Current temperature
4. Have you noticed a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell?
5. Have you had recent contact (in the last 14 days) with anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or someone with confirmed COVID-19 – if yes, should you be self-isolating as a family member or as a contact advised to do so by NHS Test and Trace?

### **Test Based Visiting**

The Government are distributing rapid (lateral flow) tests to care homes to be used for visitors. **There will be no change to our visiting policy until the tests have been received.**

Once lateral flow testing is available families will be asked to decide on 2 continuous visitors, **all visits will continue to be at the discretion of the registered manager and are to be made in advance. There will continue to be an absolute limit on the number of visits per day, set by the registered manager.**

Testing does not completely remove the risk of infection in relation to visiting. It is essential the infection control measures outlined above must be adhered to, social distancing but continue to be observed in general when in the care home and good hand hygiene.

However, If a visitor has a negative test, is wearing appropriate PPE, and following other infection control measures then it may be possible for visitors to have physical contact with their loved one, such as providing personal care, holding hands and a hug, although contact should be limited to reduce the risk of transmission which will generally be increased by very close contact.

Tests may have to undertaken outside the home and with visitors required to wait for their results outside.

A visitor who tests positive following a lateral flow test will be required to immediately self-isolate and complete a confirmatory PCR test which we will provide.

### **Outdoor & Screened Visits**

These visits can take place with visitors who have not been tested.

Outside or screened visits can still only take place with the 2 designated visitors. Window visits can take place with people not on that list.

All visits, including outdoor, screened or window visits are by appointment only, PPE to be worn on care home grounds and social distancing is to be maintained.

### **Individualised Risk Assessment Policy**

Residents will be assessed as to their particular needs in terms of receiving visitors. This risk assessment is based on the government guidance and is available from your registered manager.

## **End of Life**

This is a particularly difficult situation, but we will ensure the right visiting arrangements are in place for each resident, facilitating visiting as much as possible and appropriate with an individual's situation, but made as safely as possible including the appropriate infection prevention control measures.

## Ensuring Continued Communication

Although we are now allowing in-person visits we will continue to encourage and facilitate alternatives, such as the use of telephone or video visits. This will remain important for people not identified as the 2 continuous visitors and in the event we are required to locally lock down.

All homes have active WiFi, although bandwidth can be limited at busy times.

