

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.

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 five continuous visitors but can only have a maximum of two visitors at a time or over the course of a day. This does **not** include babies and preschool aged children. Visits can continue with other relatives and friends outdoors or in designated visiting 'pods'.

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

The named visitors will be tested on entry with a lateral flow test, or must be able to produce a lateral flow test undertaken prior to, but on the day of, their arrival.

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.

Social distancing must be adhered to. This is not just to protect your loved one but all the people living at the home. Although physical contact should be kept to a minimum, visitors and individuals may wish to hold hands.

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 three 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.

As well as lateral flow tests, 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?

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.

Visiting with children

People aged under 18 can be included in the five continuous visitors, if agreed with the person and family.

It is very important that any children visiting are able to follow IPC measures carefully. This will include social distancing, PPE use (where appropriate), and advice on minimising physical contact – as well as being able to follow any other instructions or advice the care home staff might provide.

Any children visiting (apart from babies and preschool-aged children) should also be counted towards the maximum number allowed for the visit.

Visits Out

Spending time out of the care home has always been an important part of life for people at Island Healthcare Homes, these often include trips out for exercise, to visit family and friends or just to spend time in a different environment. It is VITAL peoples' health and wellbeing, their ability to remain at the heart of family and social networks, and, in some cases, to deliver the objectives of their care plan.

However, spending time with others outside the care home will increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and this is the case even as we see community infection rates dropping and vaccine coverage increasing.

The types of activity where the risks are inherently lower and should ordinarily be supported without the need for self-isolation on return are:

- Spending time outdoors
- Taking part in outdoor exercise not involving close contact with others

All care home residents should 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, PPE and good hand hygiene) should be followed while out of the care home.

A specific risk assessment taking into account full vaccination status, levels of infection in the community, variants of concern in the community, and/or additional measures which may be required to protect care homes from infection through visits out to higher risk settings, should be carried out for all residents before any visit out takes place.

People who make a visit out other than in the above circumstances should self-isolate for 14 days on return.

The following measures should be applied for all visits out of care homes:

- residents should be accompanied by either:
 - a member of care home staff
 - one or more of their named visitors, and/or
 - their essential care provider (where applicable)
- residents may meet other people but should maintain social distance from anyone who is not one of their named visitors or care staff and, wherever possible, should avoid close physical contact with those who are supporting their visit to minimise the risk of infection
- All visits out where it is not being arranged by the care home **must** be discussed with and approved by the Registered Manager or deputy 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

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 five 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.

