

COVID-19 VISITING POLICY

Policy Statement

This guidance applies for the period beginning 31st January 2022.

Receiving visitors is an important part of care home life. Maintaining some opportunities for visiting to take place is critical for supporting the health and wellbeing of residents and their relationships with friends and family.

Our protocol sets out measures that we have put in place to provide COVID-secure opportunities for families to meet. We are working together with Wiltshire Council, Public Health England and Department of Health and Social Care to find the right balance between the benefits of visiting on wellbeing and quality of life, and the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to our staff and vulnerable residents.

The individual resident's view, needs and wellbeing are the focus for making decisions around visiting. These decisions will be reached through consulting with the resident, their family, friends, our team, and other relevant professionals such as social workers where appropriate.

All decisions are taken considering general legal obligations, such as those under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998, as applicable.

We recognise how important visiting is as residents approach the end of their lives. As has been the case throughout the pandemic response, visits in exceptional circumstances such as end of life will continue in all circumstances.

General visiting policy

Our first priority is making sure those in our home receive the care and support they need. That includes making sure that residents are not put at avoidable risk of contracting COVID-19.

Visitors should make arrangements with care homes in advance of the visit, so that care providers can manage the number of people attending at any one time to ensure safe visiting practices can be maintained.

Please continue to book all visits before arriving at the home.

All visitors should be tested using Rapid Lateral Flow tests on the day of each visit, either at ANH or at their own home, and produce their negative test result evidence (either text or email from NHS test and trace or date stamped photo of negative test cartridge itself) upon arrival at ANH.

Testing is one way of reducing the risk of visiting, but it does not mean there is no longer any risk. The visitor should also wear appropriate PPE and follow all infection prevention and control measures. Visitors are advised to keep contact to a minimum.

You can order Lateral Flow Tests from www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests.

To reduce the risk of infection, residents can have no more than 2 visitors at a time or over the course of one day (essential care givers are exempt from – and so not included in – this daily limit)

Dynamic Risk Assessments

These will include an individualised risk assessment of the rights and needs of individual residents as well as any specific vulnerabilities outlined in their care plan and the role that visiting can play in this. In making these decisions, we will actively involve the resident, their relatives or friends, any advocates, and appropriate members of the multi-disciplinary team.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when completing all risk assessments.

- Visitor's Rapid Flow Test result at the time of the visit
- Results from routine testing of staff and monthly testing of residents. See ANH Testing programme.
- Evidence of outbreaks and recovery from outbreaks (a recovered outbreak is defined as 28 days or more since the last suspected or confirmed case reported)
- Our readiness to respond quickly if there is a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 outbreak within the home, to immediately return to essential visits only (for example, end of life), with no exceptions.
- The ability to put in place practical measures to mitigate any risks arising from visits.
- A balance of the benefits to the residents, against the risk of visitors introducing infection into the care home or spreading infection from the care home to the community.
- The health and wellbeing risks arising from the needs of the cohort of residents – including whether the residents' needs make them particularly clinically or mentally vulnerable to COVID-19. The resident's needs would be assessed as to whether visits are particularly important (for example, people with dementia may be permitted visitors when restrictions could cause them to be distressed or contribute to the deterioration in their overall health and wellbeing).
- Advice from the PHE local HPT (in the event of an outbreak) and the local DPH and Infection Prevention and Control Lead from the responsible CCG
- The precautions that will be taken to prevent infection during visits (including PPE use and hand washing and enhanced deep cleaning regime).

- The likely practical effectiveness of social distancing measures between the visitor and the residents, having regard to the cognitive status of the resident and their communication needs.
- Where the healthcare needs of the individual cannot be met by socially distant visits, whether there are sufficient infection-control measures in place to protect the residents, staff, and visitors, to allow the visit to take place.

In light of our obligations to residents' rights and wellbeing, it may be appropriate or necessary for providers to apply different rules for different residents or categories of resident, based on an assessment of risk of contracting COVID-19 in relation to such residents, as well as the potential benefits of visits to them.

Essential care giver

Because they will have closer physical contact with the resident these visitors will need to follow the following testing arrangements:

- Take a weekly PCR test and share the result with the home. Care homes should use their existing PCR stocks to test essential care givers and these should be registered as 'staff' tests using the care home unique organisation number UON **10159366** and be returned via courier with other staff tests.
- Take a minimum of 3 lateral flow tests a week: one lateral flow test on the same day as a PCR test, one lateral flow test 2 to 3 days later, and then again after another 2 to 3 days. These rapid lateral flow tests can be done onsite, at an asymptomatic testing site (ATS) or at home. These tests should be reported as 'visitor' using the care home UON **10159366**.
- In line with care home staff, be subject to additional testing should the care home be engaged in rapid response daily testing or outbreak testing. If this includes lateral flow tests, these can be done at home. This testing must be conducted in accordance with the guidance for care home staff on PCR testing.

The arrangements for the visit itself at Aldbourne Nursing Home

- **Masks must be worn for ALL indoor visits.**
- **Masks must be worn for outdoor visits if closer than 1.5 meters.**
- Visitors must complete a Rapid Lateral Flow Test prior to each visit.
- Maximum of two visitors may visit together indoors
- **Visitors to book in advance for a specific day and allocated time slot for all types of visits.**
- Ad hoc visits should not be enabled.
- Visiting space will be cleaned in between each visit.
- Visits will happen in the open air wherever possible.
- Visitors should not enter the care home if they are feeling unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 and are fully vaccinated and have received their booster.

Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to care home residents as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest other transmissible viruses and infections, such as cough, high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid the care home until at least 5 days after they feel better

- Visitors who are not legally required to self-isolate are advised against visiting the care home (for 10 days) if they have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, unless absolutely necessary, even if they have been fully vaccinated. Where visits do occur, visitors should have received a negative lateral flow test result earlier in the day of their visit.

Protocol

- **Masks must be worn for ALL indoor visits.**
- **Masks must be worn for outdoor visits if closer than 1.5 meters.**
- **If testing at Aldbourne Nursing Home –**
 - Report to Reception before going to testing area for Rapid Lateral Flow Test (maintaining social distance)
 - Answer and sign relevant Risk Assessment and Declaration (if not already completed)
 - Wait in your car for 30 minutes.
 - Report back to reception
- **If testing at home prior to your visit**
 - Complete your LFT at home on the day of your visit.
 - Register your result at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result using our Unique Organisation Number (UON) **10159366**.
 - Report to reception with your negative test result evidence (either text or email from NHS or date stamped photo of negative test cartridge itself)
- Hand sanitise
- Sign into Visitor's Book
- Hand sanitise
- PPE will be provided by the home. Please do not wear your own masks.
- Follow infection prevention and control measures, including: - a temperature test on request, mandatory hand hygiene, the use of PPE as required and social **distancing of 2 meters**, remaining in the designated visiting area.
- Ensure that any gifts brought to give to the individual they are visiting can be sanitised, in line with relevant infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance.
- Pets on leads at all times
- Any breach of protocol will be addressed.

External visits

This could be for a short walk, to attend a place of worship or for a longer visit including an overnight stay to see family and friends.

All residents (regardless of vaccination status) should not normally need to self-isolate following a visit out, but a risk assessment should be completed with consideration given to:

- The number of people involved in the visit (and whether they are 'usual contacts' of the resident or people they do not usually mix with)
- If the vaccination status of those involved in the visit is known or not
- Whether those involved in the visit have received a recent negative lateral flow test result
- The characteristics of the setting (for example, enclosed settings would be higher risk than open air settings)

Residents should isolate for a maximum of 10 days from other residents following an emergency stay in hospital (as they are higher risk than an elective admission) or other high-risk visit out. During this period of isolation within the care home, residents may continue to undertake visits out of the care home, if:

- A risk assessment by the care provider shows they can avoid other residents
- They are not visiting another social care setting
- Consideration is given to the vulnerability of those they will be visiting

Residents who are able to take lateral flow tests should be able to end isolation as follows. Residents who are:

- Vaccinated (with their primary dose and any eligible booster dose) should take a lateral flow test on day 4, 5 and 6, following their return to the care home (day 0), and, if negative, can end isolation
- Unvaccinated should take a lateral flow test on day 6, 7 and 8, and, if negative, can end isolation

Residents who are unable to test should isolate for 10 days.

Following elective or emergency hospital stays, if there is an outbreak of an infection that originated in hospital in the part of the hospital where the resident stayed, refer to guidance on [admission and care of residents in a care home during COVID-19](#). Separate guidance is available on [planning visits that residents may need to make to a hospital or other healthcare setting](#).

- Where possible, anyone else who the resident meets as part of an indoor visit should undertake a lateral flow test and receive a negative result on the day of the visit. All tests should be reported to the UON (**10159366**) of the care home.

- following wider guidance on ventilation, limiting close contact, good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene should be followed while people are away from the home
- careful consideration of transport arrangements. If the care home is using its own vehicle then cleaning protocols will need to be in place. If comfortable, the vehicle windows should be opened to aid ventilation

Ability to suspend visiting

In the event of any suspected or actual outbreak of COVID-19, or a suspected or known case of COVID-19 within a home, visitor restrictions may need to be immediately implemented which will include exclusion of any non-essential visitors. At all times we will follow Government guidelines related to visiting. These restrictions may continue until such time as it is understood that the outbreak has been brought under control and the care home has recovered – at this point visiting may be restarted but with the usual infection prevention and control measures and any enhancements required due to any risks identified following the recent outbreak.

Should these guidelines change, we will communicate with all involved.

Cessation of visiting could be due to;

- An increase in the number of cases in the county **or** in the local geography to the home
- An outbreak in the care home
- Situations in which our home is unable to implement appropriate protective procedures e.g., insufficient access to PPE, infection prevention control training and support, access to testing.

Related Documents

Covid-19 Visiting during Coronavirus Pandemic. Risk Assessment and Declaration

Covid-19 Visiting for Exceptional Circumstances during Coronavirus Pandemic. Risk Assessment and Declaration

Covid-19 Testing Programme

Date Reviewed: February 2022

Person responsible for updating this policy: Louise Freeman

Next Review Date: August 2022