

## **Information for family and social visits to care homes**

Staying in touch with your relative / friend is important and we want to help you do this as safely as possible. All of the people living in the care home are at a higher risk from COVID-19 because of their age and/or health. This leaflet will help you know what to expect when you visit and how to do this safely.

Wales is operating alert levels and the arrangements for visitors will differ depending on the alert level.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 in the care home, we are limiting the number of visitors, and in accordance with current guidance, we are operating a designated visitor system.

Welsh Government guidance advises that there should be two named (designated) visitors for indoor/inside visits for each resident. With a nominated deputy who can take their place if a designated visitor is ill or not able to visit.

The number of visitors may change, depending on the local and national alert level. Arrangements for visits may also change for some reasons for example, if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in the care home.

We will let you know how many people can visit at one time, the duration of the visit, where the visit will take place, whether you will need to have a COVID test and what else to expect ahead of the visit. Please consider this when planning your visit.

In some circumstances, even if you have arranged a visit in advance it might have to change. For example, if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at the care home, or if we are advised that the infection rate in the community is too high.

The rules for visiting people where there are exceptional circumstances (such as end of life) will be different. Please contact us if you need to talk about this.

Thank you in advance for helping keep the residents safe and for your patience and support.

## Before your visit

- Please contact us to arrange a date and time for your visit, which works for you, the person you are visiting and our staff. Unfortunately, visitors who have not arranged their visit in advance will not be able to enter the care home.
- If you are extremely clinically vulnerable (previously shielding) please let us know.
- We will let you know how many people can visit at one time, the duration of the visit, where the visit will take place and whether you will need to have a COVID test and what else to expect ahead of the visit. Please take this into consideration when planning your visit.
- We know that lots of people will be eager to visit their loved ones as soon as possible, but unfortunately we can only support a limited number of visitors at any one time.
- While we know this is a challenging time but to protect people living and working at the care home, visitors with any of the following **MUST** postpone their visit:
  - you have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19
  - you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 10 days
  - anyone in your household or anyone you have been in close contact with has symptoms of COVID-19
  - you have been advised to self-isolate by a contact tracer from NHS Test, Trace and Protect
  - you have returned from overseas travel in the last 10 days from a non-exempt country and are required to be in quarantine
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include:
  - A high fever
  - A new, continuous cough
  - A loss of taste or smell
- Please be prepared to wear protective equipment. This may include a face covering and gloves.
- We understand that you may wish to bring a gift with you. Please let us know to see if we are able to accommodate this request.

- If you have any concerns or, your circumstances change between booking your visit and the day of your visit you must get in touch with us.
- Please do not visit if you have any transmissible infections/illnesses e.g. flu, norovirus

### **During your visit**

- Care homes have all made their own arrangements to make visits as safe as possible. This means visits will be a bit different to before COVID-19.
- You will be asked to sign in and provide your contact details. This is to check that you are feeling well enough to visit, and so that the care home and Test, Trace and Protect can get in touch if needed.
- As part of keeping people in the care home safe you might be asked to be tested for COVID-19 (called a lateral flow test). This is an extra way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread as it checks whether someone is infectious at the time of the test. The test takes time (approximately 30 minutes) to be processed, and you will be asked to wait outside the care home while the results comes back.
- Unfortunately, if the test is positive you won't be able to visit your relative. Following a positive test, you will need to go straight home and contact the test and trace service to arrange follow up testing. Therefore, we would recommend that you have a contingency plan in place, should you need to return home immediately following a positive result.
- If the test comes back negative, please remember that you still have to follow all of our procedures to keep you and your relative/friend safe
- We will explain our procedure for visitors. This will vary depending on the Alert Level in place at the time of your visit. This will include:
  - Where the visit will take place. This might be outside or in a "pod" so please make sure you wear appropriate clothing
  - Social distancing such as staying 2 metres/ 6 feet apart from others, and although it may be difficult, avoiding physical contact such as hugging
  - Thoroughly washing your hands on arrival and at appropriate times throughout your visit

- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment including a face covering
- Going to the bathroom. Ideally you should not use the toilets at the care home, but if required there will be a specific visitor toilet
- Designated visitor areas will be cleaned before and after your visit. To help us maintain this cleaning regime, please follow any one-way markings that may be present. Please keep to the designated visiting area and avoid contact with other residents.
- We know that trying to talk to your loved one while wearing a face covering can be challenging. To make talking easier, you could try:
  - Maintaining eye contact and speaking clearly and loudly
  - Wearing clothes that your loved one would recognise
  - Taking off hats so more of your face can be seen
  - Using message boards or other technology provided by the care home

### **After your visit**

- We will support you in seeking alternative ways to keep in touch with your loved one, for example, by arranging a future visit, or through video and telephone calls.
- If you become unwell with any of the symptoms of COVID-19 in the 14 days following your visit please stay at home and organise a test. Please let us know as soon as possible that you have developed symptoms and when you receive the result of your test.