

## Visiting People Living in Care Homes – Q&A Session May 2021

Question	Answer
<p>1. What is the guidance for visitors who say they are exempt from wearing a mask during a visit?</p> <p>Is a face visor safe to use but what happens if they refuse a visor also?</p>	<p>If people are exempt from wearing a face covering, it is important good hand hygiene and social distancing are maintained. This should not prevent a visit in a person's bedroom. Where possible and safe to do so, windows should be open to ensure good ventilation.</p> <p>A visor is not an alternative to a face covering. A visor protects against splashes and droplets and should only be used where there is a risk of exposure to splashes from body fluids when providing close personal care or care and contact where people may be exposed to behaviours such as spitting.</p>
<p>2. Previously, the recommended time for length of visit was 20 minutes, is this still the case?</p>	<p>No. The length and frequency of visits is a matter for individual providers based on the capacity of the care homes and their risk assessments.</p> <p>For information - there was a reference in the guidance issued in July 2020 regarding the re-introduction of outdoor visits about providers considering the length of outdoor visits with 30 minutes being suggested as a guide. However this reference was removed when the guidance was re-issued in August last year and has not been re-inserted subsequently. We advise providers to use this link to access the current version of the guidance:</p> <p><a href="https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance-providers">https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance-providers</a></p>
<p>3. Do outside pods need a full ceiling to floor permanent screen?</p>	<p>Not necessarily. A fixed floor to ceiling screen was advised to enable visiting pods to be used when alert level 4 restrictions were in place.</p>

	<p>Screens are intended to reduce the risk of viral transmission. Use of screens, where this is considered appropriate, will be subject to the provider's risk assessment. Where screens are in place social distancing is not required and face coverings can be removed.</p>
<p>4. Why do the 2 designated visitors have to be separate visits and not visit together?</p>	<p>The guidance was updated on 14 May to allow the two designated visitors to visit at the same time.</p> <p>The restriction on designated visitor numbers in Wales was lifted from 24 May and the guidance updated accordingly. The advice is that there are no more than two indoor visitors at the same time.</p>
<p>5. Are there any plans to increase the number of visitors each resident can have?</p> <p>In England this has now been increased to five visitors per resident?</p>	<p>The restriction on designated visitor numbers in Wales was lifted from 24 May and the guidance updated accordingly on 21 May.</p> <p>The current advice is that for routine indoor visits there should be no more than two visitors at a time. There is scope for flexibility on numbers when considering visits from children to a sibling or a parent living in a care home (see section on 'visits from children and young people').</p>
<p>6. In Wales, can visitors now do their LFD tests at home or do the tests still have to be done at the care home?</p>	<p>The test should be done at the care home immediately prior to the visit to ensure it is as up to date as possible.</p>
<p>7. Designated visitors are currently 2 visitors only. If a family who are in the same household, would that family be able to visit indoors?</p>	<p>The current advice is that for routine indoor visits there should be no more than two visitors at a time. In a situation where a visit is from several members of the same household this is permitted as long as the home can accommodate this. Visitor pods or similar structures may particularly be helpful in these circumstances.</p>
<p>8. Can visitors and residents hold hands?</p>	<p>Yes. Version 8 of the guidance, published on 21 May states 'visitors and residents may hold hands. Visitors should wash hands before and after any contact with the</p>

	<p>resident or their environment and cover broken skin with a waterproof dressing or plaster before contact. Gloves are not required unless there are exceptional circumstances’.</p>
<p>9. Can we allow indoor visits with screens not masks when seated?</p>	<p>In terms of face coverings, the guidance states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors should wear face coverings on entry to the home.</li> <li>• Visitors may remove face coverings once seated, if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- they are socially distanced from residents;</li> <li>- visits are in a well ventilated room and that room is either a designated visiting room only being used by one family at a time or the residents own room.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In this context, screens indoors should not be required and unless they are floor to ceiling do not perform the same function.</p>
<p>10. Are there plans to have any PPE free visits to homes?</p>	<p>PPE is not required for visitors other than in exceptional circumstances such as visiting a person at the end of life who has COVID-19 or where there is an ongoing incident or outbreak at the home or other infection/illness.</p> <p>Face coverings are not PPE and these continue to be advised on entry and while moving around the home. They can be removed when seated if social distancing is maintained but should be encouraged if there is close personal contact.</p>
<p>11. Are there plans to allow hugs/close contact as they are in England?</p>	<p>Not at the moment in Wales - Visitors/Residents advised to follow IPC practices especially within close contact/proximity.</p>

<p>12. So how can they keep 2 metres distance when they are allowed to hold hands?</p>	<p>There is a choice of no face covering and maintaining social distance or holding hands wearing a face covering. This guidance is to help promote people's well-being.</p>
<p>13. We have a designated indoor visiting room.....unable to use for people nursed in bed.</p> <p>Can you please confirm that bedroom visits are allowed with a 2 metre social distancing?</p>	<p>Yes. The guidance has been updated to make this clear: <a href="https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance-providers">https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance-providers</a>.</p> <p>This states:</p> <p>'visits may take place in people's rooms, if a designated room is not available. The window should be open, wherever possible, to ensure adequate ventilation'</p>
<p>14. Can we have outside entertainment?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>15. Can I clarify that the 2 visitors visiting one resident in a bedroom in a care home must be from one other household only at this time?</p>	<p>No, not if they are able to socially distance.</p>
<p>16. Where it is impossible for a resident to social distance due to lack of capacity when a relative is visiting in a care home, can the visit go ahead as long as PPE in place and usual hand hygiene etc?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>17. If a visitor continues to breach mask rules by taking them off to talk within 2 metres of their relative what can I do?</p>	<p>It is important to explain the reasons for wearing a face covering, or maintaining social distance, to promote the well-being of their family member / friend and other people living at the home.</p>
<p>18. In a small home without spare indoor space can we use the pod as a lounge type area?</p>	<p>You can do this but it is important to remember that people can have visitors in their bedrooms too.</p>

19. Will there be any changes to allow animals i.e. dogs into a home?	Version 8 of the guidance published on 21 May includes a section on animals.
20. Providers want to follow the rules but today we have heard that the guidance is not set in stone. Who can we write to, to get clarity to any issue?	Each care home is different and the guidance recognises there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach. Individual risk assessments for each care home are important. You can discuss any issues with your local Environmental Health Officer or CIW is happy to assist and seek relevant advice.
21. Environmental health have advised we /staff do not remove mask to even have a drink in residents area.	Staff are covered by advice to protect both themselves as employees at work and the people they care for. Currently the guidance is that staff should wear a mask at all times when working with residents even if not providing close personal care. This is kept under review. Ideally staff should not consume food and beverages in a residents' area.
<b>GOING OUT</b>	
22. Current guidance for outdoor off site visits for residents with their families i.e out with their son/daughter to a cafe.  Do they need to self-isolate when they return?	This is fine, the visiting guidance has a section on 'going out' and the Guidance on risk assessment produced by Public Health Wales addresses this.  Not in the example given but there are some visits our where isolation on return would be advised, this is addressed in the guidance. It is important that all other protective measures such as good hand hygiene and the wearing of face coverings in line with the guidance are followed.
23. What does the guidance say about outside visiting (going for a walk) when social distancing is not possible because the resident is wheelchair bound and needs to be pushed?	The guidance has a section on 'going out'. If social distancing cannot be maintained then the general advice would be to use a face covering, however in the outdoors when pushing a wheelchair this would be a low risk situation.
24. A family member has requested to take resident out for coffee using his car. What is the guidance on sharing a car?	As few people as possible should be in the vehicle, all should wear a face covering and they should keep the windows open to allow ventilation.

<p>25. If a family member is to take a resident out for a long day, the resident has advanced dementia and is unable to maintain 2 metre distance, would they need to isolate on return to the home, as PHW had said that may be the case.</p>	<p>This would depend on how / where they spent the long day and you would need to risk assess on individual basis depending on the specific circumstances.</p>
<p>26. 2 residents from same care home wishing to go for a static caravan park stay in mid June for 3 nights - supported by staff who support them on a daily basis in the care home?</p>	<p>Yes, this is fine as it the same 'bubble' of people living together, just in a different location.</p>
<p>27. What is the position with regard to residents visiting their family home indoors for approx. 2 hours?</p>	<p>In line with restrictions for the general population, indoor visits in people's own homes are not permitted. If this changes, the guidance will be updated to reflect this.</p>
<p>28. What are the current guidelines for individuals going for overnight stays with their family?</p>	<p>The visiting guidance has a section on 'going out'. The 'Coronavirus control plan: Alert levels in Wales for Social Care Services for Adults and Children' has guidance on visits to private homes.</p> <p>As with the general population, this is not currently permitted.</p>
<p><b>PROFESSIONAL VISITS</b></p>	
<p>29. Do different testing requirements apply for family visitors as compared to professional visitors?</p>	<p>Indoor visitors to care homes should have an LFD test (with a negative result) prior to entering the care home. This also applies to professional visitors but if they have workplace testing, then testing at the 'front door' is not necessary. Providers may wish to ask to see the results of the test.</p>

30. Are social workers allowed to visit resident's rooms?	This would depend on the reason for visiting the bedroom but professional visitors can meet with people in their own bedroom to ensure privacy.
31. Are GPs routinely tested via PCR or LFD or do we need to LFD them?	GPs should be routinely testing. They should be asked for confirmation of this before entering the care home and if they are not, be asked to take a test. All healthcare professionals have been advised of this.
32. We have allowed the local chaplain to re connect with residents again - manager will risk assess. Is this okay?	Enabling people to have faith needs met is important for their well-being. Visiting faith leaders would be classed as professional visitors.
33. Can you clarify social worker visits, are they included in the visiting number of 2, or are they exempt and can also be included with 2 visitors?	<p>Social workers are professional visitors. The advice on two people visiting at the same time relates to visits by family and friends and does not apply to professional visitors.</p> <p>If, for example, a review meeting is being held with the person, family members and social worker / nurse this is fine as long as they are meeting in a room where they can all socially distance and it is well ventilated</p>
34. Is it OK to have 2 visitors not from the same household with 2 professional at the same time, if social distancing is possible?	Yes. See above
<b>MOVING INTO THE CARE HOME</b>	
<p>35. I asked about the PCR test and isolation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I meant that once the new admission is in and we can PCR a few days after admission</li> <li>- not the PCR test from hospital?</li> </ul>	If someone has been exposed to the virus it can be several days before the infection develops (the incubation period). This is why we ask people to self-isolate if they have been a contact of someone who has tested positive or if they have been resident in a setting or area where the infection is known to be circulating. Currently hospitals are still identified as high risk for the infection and as a result we still advise that individuals who have been in hospital but have not been treated for COVID-19 are advised to isolate on return or admission.

	Additional testing does not remove the need to isolate as the infection could develop at any time over the next 14 days.
36. Does allowing the resident to access the community freely have an impact upon the 14 day isolation period for someone moving into the home from the community (please note I mean the community and not in from hospital)?	<p>No – people living in care homes should have the same rights as the general public to freely access the community.</p> <p><b>Public Health Wales has revised their guidance to remove the need for people moving in to a care home from the community to isolate for 14 days, subject to them having a negative PCR test and two doses of the vaccine.</b></p>
37. If we can PCR a new admission is that ok and mean that they don't have to isolate if result is negative.	People moving in to the home from the community should have a negative PCR test before moving in. If they are fully vaccinated and they have not had contact with the infection then they do not need to self-isolate.
<p>38. What is the isolation period for those moving into a care home from an open isolation unit considering previous comments?</p> <p>The person was in hospital and has been transferred to an open isolation unit prior to transfer to our home tomorrow.</p>	14 days currently, unless they have recovered from COVID-19 during their hospital stay and more than 20 days has passed or 14 days with a negative PCR or a low positive result.