To: Registered care home providers (adults)
Copied to: Chief Executives NHS Boards and
Local Authorities
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships
Chief Social Work Officers
Directors of Public Health
Nurse and Medical Directors

3rd September 2020

Dear Care Home Managers,

1. **New guidance - Implementing the staged approach to enhancing wellbeing visits and activities in care homes, including communal living**
2. **Update to existing guidance – Visiting Guidance for Adult Care homes in Scotland**

Further to my letter of 8 August, I am writing to advise you that today we have published a staged plan and guidance for the return of health, social care and other visiting services to adult care homes.

This guidance is part of a series that provides advice and support to those working with adults in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Content has been developed by the Scottish Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Chief Nursing Officer Care Homes Clinical and Professional Advisory Group (CPAG), a multidisciplinary group providing clinical and professional advice throughout.

The aim of this new guidance is to support the phased return of the full range of services which contribute to and enhance the wellbeing of your residents. Relaxation of lockdown restrictions should only take place in care homes actively participating in the care home worker testing programme and on approval of updates to existing visiting risk assessments by local Directors of Public Health (or their designated official).
1. New Guidance – implementing the staged approach

1.1 Communal living

Part 1 of the guidance includes advice on facilitating the safe reintroduction of communal living. Care homes should be COVID free / or fully recovered, as agreed with the local health protection team for 28 days, before being able to move to stage 3 of this plan.

Significant progress continues to be made and I am hopeful that we will be able to progress as planned to ensure that your residents are able to fully participate in the vibrant life of your care home again.

1.2 Return of visiting services to care homes

Part 2 of the guidance looks at return of services to care homes, community and social outings and residential respite.

From 7th September, stage 3 enables the resumption of visiting services subject to updated risk assessments and approval by the relevant DPH-delegated group being in place. This stage will see the resumption of face to face care from a wide range of health and social care professionals beyond what has been provided for pressing clinical reasons through the pandemic.

This will include the following Health and Social Care Professionals

- Oral Health and Wellbeing
- Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, Dietetics, Podiatry. Orthotics
- Community optometry eye care
- Foot healthcare clinicians
- Community Mental Health Team members
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians e.g. medication review
- Other visiting specialists/practitioners to support those living with Dementia, Artificial Nutrition Support, Spinal Injury, Continence specialists etc.

The fourth and final stage of the programme will allow volunteer visitors, therapists, entertainers, and social activity organisers to visit care homes, as well as hairdressers, beauticians, and therapists.

1.2 Community and social outings (e.g. visits to family homes)

You may have residents who, before the pandemic, were regularly going out of the care home in order to visit friends and family. During stage 3 care homes for people under 65 should support outings, day and overnight visits following individual assessment of the person’s need and an individual risk assessment. For residents over the age of 65 and where the impact of COVID-19 continues to present greater risks, it is recommended that such activities can return during stage 4.
1.3 Residential respite
The plan includes provision for the return of residential respite support which provides valuable breaks for unpaid carers and those being cared for. During stage 3, care homes for over 65s can admit people for respite where there is an essential and urgent need for respite. Health Protection Scotland (HPS) COVID-19 Information and Guidance for Care Home Settings recommendations for ‘Admissions from a community setting’ should be followed:

- at least one test performed before or on admission
- be isolated on admission for 14 days.
- risk assessment is undertaken prior to admission to ensure that appropriate isolation facilities are available, taking into account requirements for the individual’s care.

COVID-19: Information and Guidance for Social, Community and Residential Care Settings provides high level guidance on residential respite in non-care home settings. Further clarification is being sought for other residential respite in other settings.

Full details of the publication are:

2. Update to Visiting Guidance for Adult Care Homes
This guidance, most recently updated on 8 August 2020, has been updated in two key areas:

- Designated visitor restrictions have been updated to state that ‘Changes to the designated visitor are entirely at the discretion of the care home manager, recognising that a number of factors need to be taken into account.’
- Clarification that visiting can take place in resident’s rooms.


I am grateful to you and your staff for all of the work you are undertaking and appreciate how difficult much of the recent and current period has been for your residents and their families and your staff. I hope this additional step in easing restrictions is helpful.

Kinds regards,

JEANE FREEMAN