



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot
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

08 August 2020

Dear Care Home Manager,

Visiting in Care Homes

I am writing to advise you of the next steps in visiting within care homes.

Before I do that I want first of all to acknowledge the challenges that your care home has had to address throughout this Coronavirus pandemic and I am immensely grateful for the work that you and your staff have undertaken in order to keep your residents and colleagues as safe as possible. I know you will appreciate that we remain cautious in relation to managing and limiting the impact of the pandemic in Scotland, given the fast moving nature of the situation. The news of the last few days in relation to Aberdeen is very sobering and is a reminder to us all that we continue to live with the virus as an ever present threat and in very uncertain times.

It is in this context that I can now set out the next steps in increasing the level of visiting to your residents within your care home. These are as follows:

- 1) In relation to outdoor visiting which has been successfully introduced for one key person in a resident's life, you can from Monday 10 August, extend that to up to three individuals at a time, from no more than two households, with the same frequency as before. The safeguards and conditions that require to be met in order for this to happen remain unchanged from before. The criteria include :
 - being COVID free / or fully recovered as agreed with the local health protection team for 28 days
 - a risk assessment and visiting protocol that has been signed off by the local Health Protection team
 - Care homes must be fully participating in resident and staff testing programmes.
 - Care homes must participate in the use of the Safety Huddle Tool.

Full details are provided in the guidance here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance/>.

Where a resident is not fit to go outside for a visit this can happen through a window. However this will also need to be planned to minimise footfall and to ensure staff are available to support the resident.



2) I want to introduce indoor visiting for residents by a designated visitor. In order to achieve this, you will need to develop a **plan** that must meet certain criteria that will allow this to happen as safely as possible. This will include for instance:

- A need to complete your own risk assessments and make arrangements for the physical space to be ready to allow indoor visiting
- You will need to ensure there is adequate PPE to support safe visiting
- An appropriate cleaning regime, in line with health protection guidance should be in place.
- Your duty rotas must be sufficient ensure that you have staff in place to manage indoor and outdoor visiting simultaneously, all the required cleaning regimes etc.
- You will need to notify families and to help you with this we have created a leaflet for families that you can use to notify them and prepare them for visiting and the necessary arrangements. You'll find it here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance/>

This is not an exhaustive list but you will find all the conditions that require to be met in the updated guidance here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance/>

Once this plan is developed, **it will then require to be signed off by the Health Board's Director of Public Health or their designated lead** who will, in considering your plan, need to take account of the Covid context and prevalence within your area prior to approval.

There will be a lot of work required from you and your staff in order to get to a point where these plans are approved and I would hope that you can achieve this by no later than 24 August. It may be possible that you will be able to complete your plan with all the clear requirements and seek approval from the Director of Public Health (DoPH) before the 24 August. In that instance, assuming you meet the other important criteria of being COVID-19 free for 28 days and are fully participating in the weekly test programme, and provided the DoPH is satisfied with the plan and that the level of virus prevalence in your area remains low, you would be able to move to this stage on receipt of that approval.

3) I also intend to facilitate the re-introduction into your care home, where appropriate and available, a range of health care services beyond what you may have routinely experienced for pressing clinical reasons so far through the pandemic. This is with a view to addressing and enhancing the overall health and wellbeing of your residents.

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
- Foot healthcare clinicians
- Community Mental Health Team members
- Other visiting specialists/practitioners to support those living with Dementia, Artificial Nutrition Support, Spinal Injury, Continence specialists etc.
- Ophthalmology/Opticians and community eye care

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020



This will not happen immediately but I can advise that planning and guidance is well underway and I would hope to be able to announce commencement of these services in the very near future.

4) I am very conscious that you may have some residents who, before the pandemic, were regularly going out of the care home in order to visit friends and family. I can advise that we are working now to re-introduce this type of 'visiting-outward' activity as safely and as quickly as possible. As above, I would hope to be able to make an announcement on this in the very near future.

5) I am also very conscious of the fact that a necessary part of every care home's life is the involvement of residents in communal activity with each other within the care home. Such activity needs to also be re-started, but it needs to be done in a way that takes account of additional transmission risks. To this end, we are working on the development of guidance in order to facilitate this and as above I would hope to be able to make an announcement on this to in the near future.

I appreciate that there is much to do within the framework of this letter as we strive to return to some degree of normality for your residents, their families and staff. As I said at the start of this letter however, caution is required, we are doing everything we can to protect the lives of your residents and staff. I am very confident, that with careful and considered planning, and effective collaborative working by all parties at every level, we will soon be able to ensure that your residents are able to fully participate in the vibrant life of your care home again.

Thank you again.



JEANE FREEMAN