



## **Commencing Outdoor Care Home Visiting on 3 July Frequently Asked Questions**

On 25 June the Scottish Government published guidance and a plan for the phased return to care home visiting, commencing with outdoor visiting on 3 July. The guidance can be found here:

[www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance](http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance)

We have developed some FAQs to support these visits following some questions raised. These FAQs will be reviewed and updated as we move through the visiting pathway.

### **1. Can visiting take place if staff testing is underway?**

Yes as testing is routine as long as the home has been COVID free / or fully recovered as agreed by public health for 28 days from last symptoms of any resident and staff member. This is twice the extreme incubation period for the virus and given the possibility of asymptomatic carriage, is a precautionary interval of time before extended visiting can start.

### **2. If a staff member tests positive can our care home permit outdoor visitors on 3 July?**

A positive individual – staff member or resident - is an indication for an outbreak investigation and a home being closed to all but essential visitors. The care home will need public health sign off before commencing visits.

### **3. Can a care home resident who has received a shielding letter receive a visitor outside?**

Yes they can receive one designated visitor outside. Originally shielded residents were not included in the “Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding - a way forward for Scotland”, around shielded individuals taking exercise. However as the care home guidance confirms that from 3 July we move to a different phase, so shielded individuals can go outside in the grounds like other residents as part of the phase 2 outdoor visiting.

### **4. Can a visitor who is shielding visit someone in a care home?**

Shielded visitors may visit outdoors in Stage 2. Further advice will be provided before we move to stage 3 (indoor visiting).

### **5. Can a resident have a different designated visitor with a week apart or has it to be the same person for the whole of this phase?**

Not at this stage– as this increases the risk of bringing infection in. At next phase it will be multiple outdoor visitors. A designated visitor is a designated visitor.

### **6. If a family member currently works in a hospital, care home or other high risk setting are they allowed to be the designated visitor?**

Any visitor who has been contacted via test and trace as a contact should be in self isolation for 14 days and therefore not visiting the care home.

**7. If a designated visitor becomes ill and cannot visit for some time, can another family member be designated?**

We would expect reasonable adjustments to be made by care homes but it should be discussed with the care home manager in advance. If a visitor becomes unwell after visiting they should inform the care home immediately and avoid visits. Visitors must not attend if they have any of the key COVID symptoms

- fever
- new and persistent cough
- loss or altered sense of taste or smell.

**8. Do outdoor visitors need to wear surgical masks or will face coverings be ok?**

Outside face covering should be worn. Ideally visitors should bring this with them to the care home. Visitors should maintain a physical distance of 2m at all times where possible. Please ensure that you ask all outdoor visitors to use an alcohol-based gel to clean their hands prior to and after their visit.

**9. Why is it that a care home has to be 28 days COVID free and not 14 days?**

This is based on SAGE advice that 28 days is twice the extreme incubation period for the virus and given the possibility of asymptomatic carriage, is the safest estimate for allowing visits.

**10. Our care home has never had an outbreak, do I need sign off from public health before commencing outdoor visits?**

Yes but this can be done relatively quickly.

**11. Someone is being barrier nursed after admission to our care home, can we commence outdoor visiting?**

This should be discussed with local health protection teams as all these points should be. They would make judgement.

**12. Is it ok to use a gazebo in case of bad weather?**

Yes but there should be measures to ensure the factors which make 'outdoors' safer are in place, i.e. there is adequate space within them for people to physically distance (at all times including when it rains), air can flow through and there are minimum surfaces that are regularly cleaned. No marquees either fully or substantially enclosed should be used as they do not provide good ventilation or flow of air.

**13. My care home is for people with learning disabilities – when can we restart home visits for residents who do this as part of their care programme?**

This requires a local risk assessment of individual care homes to determine any risks both to the resident and their family. In doing so it will be important to assess whether the risk of not seeing someone outweighs the risk of infection. If necessary the care home manager should discuss this with the local health protection team.

**14. I'm a care home manager, where should I go for further advice?**

You can find further advice in the care home visiting guidance see:

[www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance](http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance)

If you wish to discuss further please contact your local Health Protection Team as they will be happy to offer advice and support.

We will update these FAQs as required.

Scottish Government  
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