Dear Colleague

Open with Care – Activities and outings away from the care home – additional information published

We would like to thank you and your staff for the work you have done to support the adoption of Open with Care - Supporting Meaningful Contact in Adult Care Homes which was published on 24 February. This guidance recommended a flexible and compassionate approach to supporting meaningful indoor contact in care homes starting with up to two visitors once a week and in time increasing opportunities for further contact. Thanks to your efforts we are seeing considerable progress in care homes supporting people to see their loved ones: as at 10 May 2021 93% of care homes registered on the safety huddle tool are reporting up to two indoor visits per week and some care homes have increased to daily visits and indoor group visits. As outlined in Open with Care, increases to the frequency, duration and number of indoor contacts can continue on the basis of locally assessed safety and are not dependent on further national announcements.

We are writing to you to share details of additional information and advice in supporting activities and outings away from the care home (published here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance/). As you will be aware from recent media coverage, managing the pandemic continues to be a dynamic and fast-moving situation. Local oversight teams will have an important role to play in ensuring your local conditions support safe outings away from the care home and will provide direction at a local level as required. National levels guidance will be updated as required in the coming weeks and months.

On 17 May restrictions will be eased which will permit people to meet up indoors, in private spaces, where they live in Level 0-2 areas. Open with Care guidance, published in February, recommended that care home residents can be supported to leave the care home where safe to do so. The additional information published today provides further guidance around care home residents leaving the care home for social outings, for a few hours or overnight,
for example to meet people outdoors or indoors in public or private spaces (including people’s homes); attending the hairdresser; visiting a café, pub or restaurant; or group events, such as weddings.

Opportunities for people to make personal and social visits out of the care home are important to life’s meaning and purpose. The guidance recommends that these should be supported in line with general population COVID-19 restrictions / permissions, unless there is clear evidence justifying a more restrictive approach. Outings away from the care home will, for many, be a big change and not without concern and whilst huge progress has been made, the pandemic remains far from over. **Care home residents continue to be a vulnerable population and communal living arrangements present additional risks. General principles and actions to prevent COVID-19 infection and spread remain key both inside and outside of the care home and everyone has a crucial part in rigorously sustaining these.** This additional information provides advice on ways that care home staff, residents, family and friends can work together to assess, manage and mitigate any risks during outings away from the care home.

Undertaking advance and proportionate planning of risks (COVID-19 and otherwise) will support decisions and ways to enable outings to take place safely. **The importance of anyone involved in outwards visits, including family / friends, following existing best practice around mitigating the risk of infection is essential. This includes FACTS advice:** Face coverings - Avoid crowds - Clean hands (good hand hygiene) - Two-metres distance - Self-isolate if you have symptoms.

In developing your overall policy for supporting outings from in the care home, you will wish to take account of the needs and vulnerabilities of your residents as well as resources of the care home. Local oversight teams have an important role to play in supporting you, taking account of your care home population and circumstances as well as wider community prevalence.

**Workshops on Open with Care supporting meaningful contact – visiting including outwards visits**

A series of workshops has been organised for care home providers and partners to discuss the advice and raise any questions or concerns. Anyone interested should use the link to join on the day (note - places are on a first come, first served basis) and we would also encourage oversight partners to attend. Everyone is welcome to drop in to any/all sessions to ask questions as the guidance is implemented. Dates:

**Wednesday 19th May 11-12pm** [Click here to join the meeting](#)
**Friday 21st May 2-3pm** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Wednesday 26th May 12:30-1:30pm** [Click here to join the meeting](#)
**Thursday 27th May 9:30-10:30am** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Tuesday 1st June 2-3pm** [Click here to join the meeting](#)
**Tuesday 8th June 2-3pm** [Click here to join the meeting](#)
Information for residents and their family and friends
NHS Inform hosts information and guidance for residents, family and friends on visiting in care homes and this has been updated to include advice on meeting loved ones outside the care home. This is available at: www.nhsinform.scot/openwithcare.

We hope all of this information and the additional information is helpful and that you are assured of our continued support. Your local oversight teams remain an important contact for any support and advice around Open with Care including supporting people to leave the care home.

Thank you once again for your continued efforts and please also pass on our sincere thanks to your staff.

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Chief Nursing Officer

Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer

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Jason Leitch
National Clinical Director