



Open with Care

Supporting meaningful contact in
adult care homes — principles



Contents

01	Overview	02
02	Key principles and expectations	04
	Vision	05
	Visiting overview	07
	Visiting during a COVID-19 outbreak	09
	Current IPC measures in place to support visiting and outings	11
03	Glossary and Review Process	13
	Visiting terms — glossary	14
	Review Process	15



Overview

Overview

SECTION
01

Care home staff have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to adopt Open with Care visiting guidance and maximise opportunities for people living in adult care homes to see and spend time with their loved ones.

The purpose of this document is to:

- update the Open with Care visiting guidance for adult care homes
- set out principles and expectations for continuing to support people living in adult care homes to connect with others
- provide an overview of the measures that currently remain in place to support visiting, signposting to other more detailed guidance where relevant

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following public health and infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance, which provides more details on the measures required to support visits in and out of the care home safely, including during an outbreak:

- COVID-19 IPC guidance can be found within the Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland, [Appendix 22 – Community IPC COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Public Health Scotland (PHS) [COVID-19 - information and guidance for social, community and residential care settings - version 2.3 - COVID-19 - information and guidance for social, community and residential care settings - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)
- visiting guidance for the public can be found on NHS Inform [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for visiting loved ones in an adult care home](#)
- a leaflet for friends and family and an easy read document can be found [here](#)



SECTION
02

Key principles and expectations

Vision

SECTION
02

The overarching vision of Open with Care is that everyone who lives in an adult care home is supported to see and spend time with the people that are important to them and to participate in activities within the care home and in their communities.

This is because meaningful contact with relatives and friends is fundamental to residents' health and wellbeing and forms part of their human rights.

The Scottish Government is clear that we expect care homes to support visiting and outings for all of their residents. The Scottish Government has taken the following steps to promote and support visiting and outings in adult care homes:

- [Scotland's Strategic framework update for tackling COVID-19](#) published on 22 February 2022, sets out an approach to managing COVID-19 effectively but also sustainably for as long as necessary. The framework outlines a vision for care homes:

“People living in care homes, which are essentially their homes, should be supported to enjoy fulfilled, meaningful lives free from restrictions as far as possible... during outbreaks, the care home should support residents to see family, friends... Where protection measures do need to be in place these should be proportionate and only be in place for the shortest possible period.”

- on 31 March 2022 the Scottish Government introduced two [new statutory Health and Social Care Standards](#). The new standards set out the clear expectation that people living in care homes should have the right to see someone who is important to them, even during an outbreak, and be able to name a person or persons who can directly participate in meeting their care needs
- guidance for providers on the new [Health and Social Care Standards for visiting](#) is available from the Care Inspectorate
- the Scottish Government will be introducing ‘Anne’s Law’ to the Scottish Parliament as part of a commitment to bring in legislation to ensure that all those living in adult care homes are able to nominate those important to them to see them

Visiting overview

SECTION
02

The following sets out current guidance for supporting visiting, outings, and activities in adult care homes when there is no outbreak:

- care homes supporting residents to see and spend time with others should be the norm and support should be as per pre pandemic arrangements
- there should not be any restrictions to the frequency or length of visits into or out of the care home, unless there is an active outbreak. This means care homes should not be routinely using booking systems for visits. However, visiting should remain manageable for care home staff and the resident themselves
- visitors may provide care including personal care to the individuals they are visiting during the visit. They should discuss this with the care home to ensure there is an understanding of any risk and mitigations that may need to be in place to enable the visitor to complete the care activity
- PHS guidance advises that in determining the number of visitors for a resident at one time, care homes should consider the built environment of the home, including factors such as ventilation and size of the area where visiting will occur, in addition to the wishes of the residents themselves
- visitors with COVID-19 symptoms (or test positive for COVID-19) should not attend the care home and should follow [‘stay at home’ guidance](#). (exceptions can be made for ‘end-of-life’ visits)
- visitors who live with someone following the [‘stay at home’ guidance](#) are recommended to avoid visiting the care home during this time
- vaccination is encouraged for all visitors

-
- visits by children or babies should be supported unless they are unwell
 - people living in care homes who are well enough and are not COVID-19 positive, can go on outings away from the care home and where support is required, the care home should support this in line with their care plan and support needs
 - people living in care homes should be able to participate in activities outside of the care home and should follow advice for the public when doing so
 - it is vital that care homes routinely support meaningful activities for people, including communal activities, where this meets individual choice and preferences
 - arrangements for supporting visits from pets should be in place
 - For advice on community group visits including in-reach activities, such as school or adult choirs, refer to [COVID-19 - information and guidance for social, community and residential care settings - version 2.3 - COVID-19 - information and guidance for social, community and residential care settings - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

Visiting during a COVID-19 outbreak

SECTION
02

Where there is an outbreak within the home, as advised by the local Health Protection Team (HPT), residents should continue to be supported to stay connected with people important to them by default through their named visitors.

The following outlines the current guidance for visiting, outings, and activities in adult care homes during an outbreak:

- residents can now identify up to three named visitors, and one named visitor can visit the resident in their private room each day
- named visitors may also be able to spend time with a resident who is self-isolating because of being COVID-positive. This should be discussed in advance of the visit with the care home who will take advice from the local health protection team following their risk assessment
- flexibility will need to be applied, for example where support is needed by one named person to visit e.g. an elderly spouse or due to other individual circumstances
- it should be possible to change named visitors to take account of family circumstances
- regardless of outbreak status, essential visiting should continue to be supported. This is in addition to named visitors and is not restricted by numbers, frequency or length of time spent with the resident

- if the resident is well enough, unless they are COVID-19 positive, have COVID-19 symptoms, or symptoms of another infection, they can continue to go on outings from the care home in line with the support needs within their care plan. However, in some circumstances the care home, following advice from their local health protection team, may recommend that residents do not leave the home for a short period of time, while the outbreak is ongoing
- during an outbreak, visits from clinical and social care professionals will be prioritised due to the essential nature of support for resident health and wellbeing. Advice will be provided by the HPT

Current IPC measures in place to support visiting and outings

When visiting a care home, the guidance on face coverings for [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in social care settings including care homes](#) should be followed. The key points are:

- visitors do not need to wear a face mask or a face covering including in communal areas. However, they may choose to wear one and this should be supported.
- visitors should continue to follow requests by the care home in relation to IPC precautions and mask wearing in particular situations
- if a resident is self-isolating as a COVID-19 case and during an outbreak, visitors should wear a Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask (FRMS), provided by the Care Home, and follow the Care Home's processes according to the guidance in the [Appendix 22 – Community IPC COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- care homes can offer visitors transparent face masks, where these are available when residents have communication challenges. Transparent face masks have been made available through usual supply routes, and should these fail, from Social Care PPE hubs
- after outings away from the care home, routine lateral flow device (LFD) testing of residents is no longer recommended. ARHAI Scotland guidance refers to the [respiratory symptom assessment questions](#) to inform a risk assessment on return from visits and to be vigilant of any new symptoms amongst residents. If a resident

has inadvertently been in contact with a case whilst on an outing, this information should be shared with the care home as soon as it is known, so that the risk in the care home after that visit can be fully assessed

SECTION
02

In addition to the measures noted above visitors to care homes should continue to be symptom vigilant and follow any requests to test as requested by the care home, in line with national guidance.



Glossary and Review Process

Visiting terms — glossary

SECTION
03

Routine visiting

Routine visiting means where there are no recommended limits around the number, frequency or length of visits.

Named visitors during COVID outbreak or resident isolation

During a COVID outbreak in the home, residents can choose three named visitors to spend time with them in their room or outdoors in a garden area – one person each day. This does not replace essential visiting arrangements which are always supported during outbreaks.

Essential visiting (always supported)

Essential visits are facilitated where it is imperative that a resident and their friends or relatives see each other for example due to stress/distress of either resident or relative, or end of life care situations. They should continue to be supported and not limited to one person, frequency or time period.

Review Process

SECTION
03

This guidance reflects current COVID-19 guidance and health and safety advice for adult care homes. It will be kept under review in line with any changes in Public Health Scotland and ARHAI Scotland guidance, and feedback from Health and Social Care partnerships, providers, representative groups and people using services will be sought prior to any change.

Independent advice should be sought by parties where they feel it necessary. It is important that any bodies who provide or manage any types of care home referred to in this guidance continue to check and comply with all legal obligations on them to be sure the care home is a safe place to visit and with any health and safety or other obligations in respect of it being a safe workplace. This guidance does not supersede or provide any advice on those matters.

We regularly review our guidance. If you have any questions about this document please contact your sector representatives or contact us directly. We will update this guide to provide more information as necessary.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot