



Overview

This leaflet provides advice for family and friends of loved ones in care homes. It is based on:

Open with Care visiting guidance for care homes: www.gov.scot/publications/open-with-care-supporting-meaningful-contact-in-adult-care-homes-principles/

NHS Inform Guidance for visiting loved ones in an adult care home www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/care/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-visiting-loved-ones-in-an-adult-care-home/

Having meaningful contact with your friend or relative who is resident in a care home is fundamental to their health and well-being.

Ordinarily there should be no restrictions to the frequency or length of visits or outings, unless there is a COVID-19 or other infectious outbreak within the home or any other issue.

During outbreaks, the local Health Protection team may advise on the need for a pause on routine visiting but people living in care homes should still be able to see their named visitors. Essential visits for circumstances such as end-of-life or distress for the resident or relative should always be supported.

As a relative/friend of a care home resident, when there is no outbreak in the care home, you can:

- visit with other people although numbers may be limited by room size
- visit your loved one without the need for either of you to wear a face covering or physically distance
- hug and kiss the person you are visiting, recognising that there are still some risks of spreading coronavirus
- help with personal care tasks. Please discuss this with the care home first who will advise on infection prevention and control measures
- organise day trips and outings or have your loved one to stay over
- bring children or babies to the care home
- organise with the care home to bring pets

Supporting visiting safely

People living in care homes are typically more vulnerable to severe consequences and illness as a result of COVID-19 and other infections.

Therefore as a friend or relative please:

- + stay at home if you have COVID-19 symptoms or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, before a period of self-isolation has ended or with any other symptom of infectious illness (www.nhsinform.scot/covid19)
- + postpone your visit if you are aware of having had close contact with someone with COVID-19
- + follow the care home testing guidance and check with the home about their arrangements
- + consider being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (and other infectious diseases) given the higher risks from infections to many people living in care homes
- + follow recommendations and advice from the care home on infection prevention and control measures including hand hygiene and if necessary face coverings / masks and additional PPE, for example where a resident has COVID-19 or other infectious disease

Visiting during a care home COVID-19 (and other organism) outbreak

During a COVID-19 or other outbreak in the home, some temporary restrictions may be put in place. However, you will usually be able to:

- + spend time with your loved one in their room if you are one of their named visitors (one named visitor per day)
- + spend time outdoors in the grounds of the home or organise an outing from the care home with your loved one if they do not have an infectious disease, in line with an individual's care plan
- + embrace your loved one, although you should refrain from close physical contact where they have COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 or other infection
- + communicate through other means such as telephone calls/video calls, letters, emails, cards or photographs

During public health outbreaks, visiting arrangements will be reviewed following a risk assessment by the local public health team as part of their required duties. This will involve the care home.

Essential visiting

This is to enable you to spend time with your loved one to alleviate situations of distress or upset for the resident or relative or in end of life situations. It is available, even during COVID-19 and other outbreaks and is not restricted or limited to named visitors, but may be limited in duration. Children can also be essential visitors in end of life situations.

Health and Social Care Standards

The Scottish Government has introduced two new statutory Health and Social Care Standards: www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/

The standards set out the clear expectation that people living in care homes should have the right to see someone who is dear to them, even during an outbreak, and be able to name a person or persons who can directly participate in meeting their care needs. Legislation, 'Anne's Law', will shortly be introduced to the Scottish Parliament to ensure that all those living in adult care homes are able to nominate those important to them to see them.

Further information and support

The latest visiting guidance for friends and families can be found on [NHS Inform](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcarevisiting/).

Please speak to the care home staff or manager if you are unhappy with current visiting arrangements. The Care Inspectorate are also there to help you if you have any further concerns.

They can be contacted in the following ways:

- + filling in their online form: www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/online-complaint-form
- + calling 0345 600 9527 between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday
- + emailing concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot
- + More information here: www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/complaints

It is important this guidance is read in conjunction with any laws which impose lockdown restrictions (and any guidance made under or about those matters), as these laws will regularly change and be updated.

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