

Policy and Procedure on Visiting during Covid 19 Pandemic

Policy

The first priority must remain in preventing infections in our care homes and this means that our visiting policy should still be restricted with alternatives sought wherever possible. However, as the rate of community transmission has increased, we have developed a policy for limited visits following the advice set out by the government, CQC, public health and the local council. This takes into account the significant vulnerability of residents in our care home.

We understand that our policy and procedure need to balance the benefits to individuals living with us against the risk of visitors introducing infection into the care home.

Our policy is for an individualised approach based on the needs of each individual. However, we also need to consider our staff and the care home, as a whole, including family and friends, as well as the external Covid 19 situation. This includes the prevalence and incident of infections in the local community and/or outbreaks which may increase risk of infection in the home.

In the event of an outbreak in the community or local lockdown, we will rapidly impose a strict no visiting policy to protect residents, staff and visitors. We will follow the advice from public health, local infection-control lead and the local council.

As well as a general risk assessment for the care home we will complete individual risk assessments for each person living with us. We will create a visiting plan for each person that takes into account individual risk and vulnerability.

We will continue to be transparent with all relevant stakeholders and ensure full and effective communication with people living with us, staff and family/friends. This will involve consultation and sharing relevant documents.

The manager and staff will respect individual families' decisions if their view is that visits to the individual is not safe, either for the person in question or for the family member.

This policy will be made available to all relevant parties including residents and families.

Procedure

Each individual living with us will have a risk assessment and visitors plan. This will be in full consultation with the individual where possible and their significant family/friends where relevant.

This document will consider the risk factors for each individual and their particular health and circumstances.

Based on this information a visiting plan will be written.

Staff must follow this plan and visitors are asked not to ask staff to deviate from the plan without consultation with the manager.

The options will be:-

Telephone contact between family and friends/staff only

This will be if the risks have been assessed as too high for any face to face contact and if the individual is not able to have direct telephone/video link contact.

Direct telephone contact between individual and family/friends

This is assessed as a safe alternative to face-to-face visits and is ideal if the person is able to use and hold a conversation by telephone with staff support.

Video link contact

This is also assessed as a safe alternative to visits and is ideal if the person is able to use and hold a conversation, with staff support, using this method.

Window visits

This is a visiting method where the family/friends would like to see the person as reassurance for a brief visit. Family/friends need to bear in mind that this may be confusing and disorientating for the person dependent on their circumstances.

Garden visits

This may be possible if the individual understands the need for social distancing and use of PPE. It may also be possible if the individual may not have a good understanding, but due to mobility difficulties would not be able to go against the 2 m rule.

Our garden has been equipped with tables, chairs and parasols to accommodate visits comfortably.

In room visits

This visiting method has been assessed as relatively high risk and therefore will only be offered for essential/end of life visits to ensure that the person can die with dignity and comfort, taking into account their physical, emotional, and spiritual support needs. The visitor will not be allowed to access the main part of the care home and will need to follow staff instructions carefully in relation to access to the room and strict use of full PPE. Visitors must consider their own health in relation to this option.

Number of Visitors

The present government guidance is that for any type of face-to-face contact visitors should be limited to a single constant visitor per individual living with us. This means the same family member visiting each time to limit the number of different visitors coming into contact with the individual and staff and therefore reducing the risk of infection. Families will need to make a decision as to who will be the link visitor. We accept that this may be a difficult decision. If family believe there are exceptional circumstances, family members can speak with the manager about this. This will be kept under review.

NHS Test and Trace

We will keep a record including address and telephone number of each visitor should NHS test and trace be needed.

Procedures Visitors Must Follow

Visit Appointments

The designated visitor for the family/friends group of the individual will be named on the person's visitors plan. This person must only visit when an appointment has been made by telephone. They will be given a date and time slot. They should contact the home a day prior to the visit to check that circumstances have not changed. If the visitor is late, this may reduce the length of time the visitor can stay, dependent on other pressures at the home, including other planned visits.

Temperature checks

Each visitor will have their temperature taken and this will be recorded. Each visitor at each visit will be asked to complete a Safe to Visit form in relation to Covid 19.

Visitors will receive a 'Responsible Visitors Code'

Face masks

Visitors must use available hand sanitiser and wear a face covering at all times during the visit.

Anyone deemed as exempt from wearing a face covering will unfortunately not be able to have face-to-face contact with anyone living with us.

Visitors are expected to wear the face covering immediately before entering and keep it on until they leave.

Visitors must use hand sanitiser before putting on the facemask.

The face covering should cover nose and mouth, whilst allowing the visitor to breathe comfortably.

Visitors must avoid touching their face covering when wearing.

Only remove the face covering after leaving the care home. Use of hand sanitiser before and after removing is advised.

Dispose of face covering safely.

Environment

Where seats for visitors have been made available, they will be thoroughly disinfected by staff before arrival and after departure.

Contact

Under no circumstances should visitors have skin to skin contact with the person they are visiting. This is seen as high risk. This includes a hug, kiss, holding or shaking hands. Staff fully understand how difficult this may be, however it is for the safety of everyone.

If the visitor is having difficulty keeping a 2m distance e.g. if the individual does not understand and attempts to have close contact, this should be reported immediately to a staff member and the visit should be ended with a review of the visiting plan.

Length of visit

With the new procedures in place, this will place more pressure upon staff and their time. Also, we need to limit the number of visits taking place. Therefore, all visits will be for a maximum of 1 hour

.

Termination of visit

A staff member should report any concerns they have about a visit.

The manager or senior staff member has the right to terminate a visit at any time. This could be for a number of reasons including-

- The visitor is not following the agreed procedure and guidance provided.
- The individual living with us is unable to understand or keep to the social distancing rule.
- The individual living with us is showing signs of distress during the visit.
- The visitor or individual living with us is showing signs of ill-health.

If a visit is terminated the individuals visiting plan will be reviewed and alternatives to the original plan may be considered.

Any family member can contact the manager if they have any concerns about planned visits, visits that have taken place or the individuals visiting plan.

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every month.

Jhoana Manalus

Home Manager

14/09/2020