

05 March 2021

Dear Care Home Manager

Update on care home visiting March 2021

We would like to start by again thanking you and your staff for tirelessly working through these very challenging times. Whilst we see some light at the end of the tunnel, as vaccine roll out moves at pace, the care sector in particular is still facing vast challenges and demands. It is through the dedication and commitment of staff on the frontline that people requiring care continue to do so at high standard and quality.

I am sure you will be well aware of the recent announcement by Government that non-essential visiting in care homes can re-commence from 08 March 2021, within certain parameters.

The statement made by Government on 20 February 2021, which set out the key principles can be viewed here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/care-home-residents-to-be-allowed-one-visitor-as-part-of-cautious-easing-of-lockdown> and further updated guidance can be viewed here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>.

You will gather from the statement, that the main message is that each resident can have one named visitor for indoor visiting. This visitor must remain consistent and unchanged, undertake lateral flow testing before the visit and adhere to all infection prevention measures including PPE.

In the event of single or multiple cases within the setting, we advise that indoor or face-to-face visiting is suspended until further advice is provided from the local infection and prevention service.

Whilst the easement to visiting will be welcome by residents and their loved ones, it is equally important to remain cognisant of the current rates of infection and outbreaks in the care sector. Nationally we have seen a welcome reduction in the rate of infection, this has been mirrored in Wolverhampton in terms of wider community. However, we continue to see pockets of outbreak activity persisting in care homes and therefore any easement of visiting needs to be very carefully managed to avoid further severe illness and spread of Covid.

The position of City of Wolverhampton Council is to wherever possible continue to offer virtual visiting. If this is not appropriate, outdoor visiting should be the next option before considering indoor visiting. We are conscious that in some circumstances residents and their loved ones will prefer an indoor visit. If this is consented by you as the care home manager, it is crucial to remain aware and comply with the national guidance. A brief checklist has been produced to help guide you with enabling safe visiting, which should be utilised alongside the national guidance and your comprehensive Covid-19 Secure risk assessment.

We ask care home managers to carefully consider the updated guidance before making arrangements for visiting.

As well as keeping care home residents and staff as safe as possible during visiting, it is equally important that visitors are also treated with the same rigour. Visitors should be furnished with information that will enable them to make an informed decision before attending for a visit. To facilitate this decision-making process before visiting, it is recommended that visitors are informed of:

1. Level of routine testing amongst staff
2. Level of vaccine uptake in staff and residents

As the vaccination programme continues to roll out in Care Homes across the city, we are continuing to ask for your support with our drive to vaccinate our care home residents and staff. Please note at this stage having residents and staff vaccinated does not change the requirement to adhere to Government guidance.

To assist your planning with safe visiting, please find attached a flowchart process to consider before agreeing to indoor visiting, along with the checklist to complete before visiting takes place.

Thank-you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,



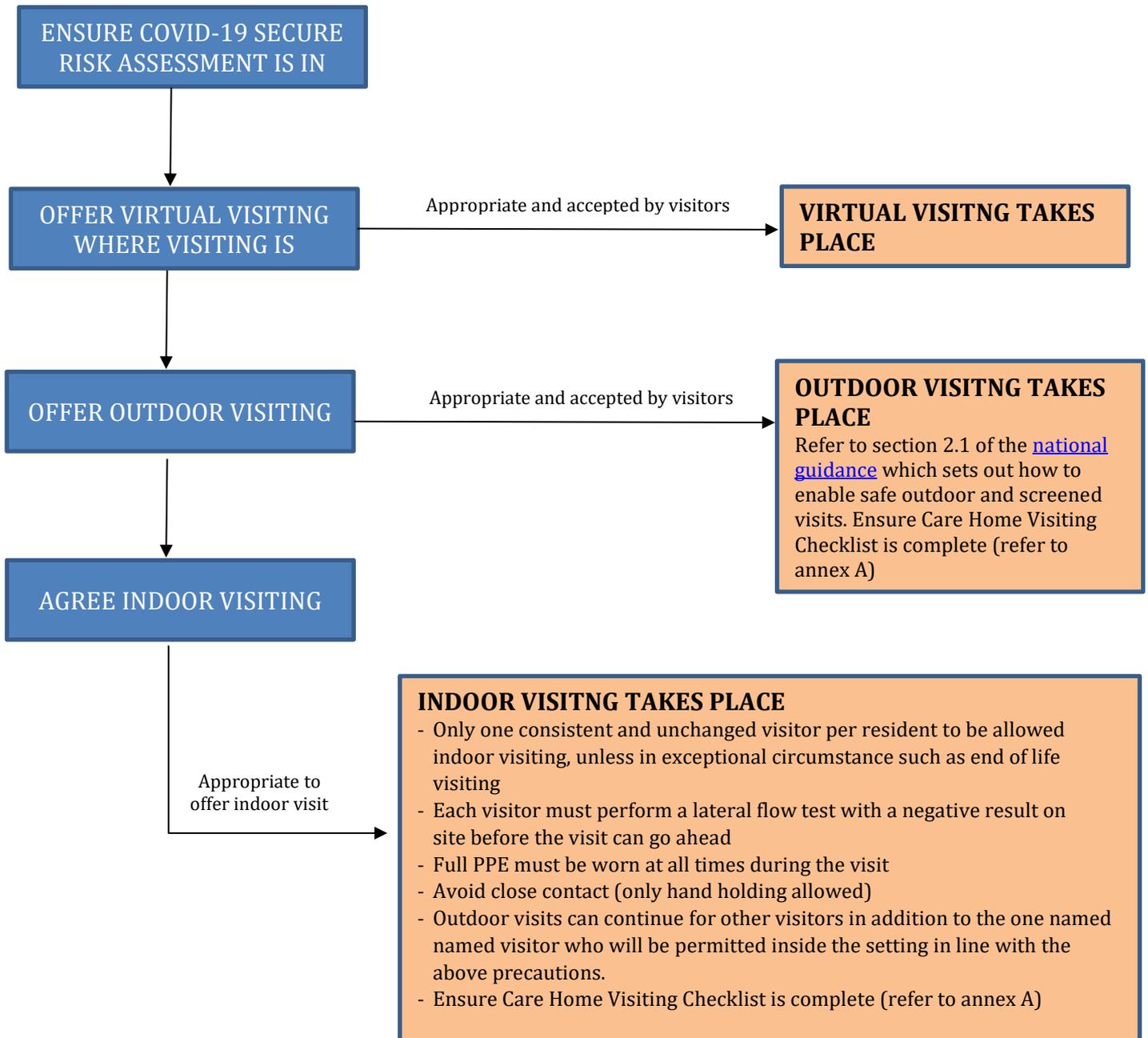
John Denley
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City of Wolverhampton Council



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CARE HOME VISITING GUIDANCE APPLICABLE FROM 08 MARCH 2021

The information contained within this document is based on the [Government announcement made on 20 February 2021](#) that indoor care home visiting can recommence, within parameters, from 08 March 2021.



ALL INDOOR AND FACE-TO-FACE VISITING MUST BE SUSPENDED WHERE ANY CASES OF COVID ARE IDENTIFIED IN THE HOME

ANNEX A

Getting Prepared for Care Home Visits

Check List for Care Homes – Information completed by Care Homes

City of Wolverhampton Council continue to advise where possible virtual visiting is used as the principal way of keeping relatives and friends in touch with their loved ones in care settings.

Care Providers should produce:

Item	Complete	Evidence
Care setting visitor plan		
Short individual visiting plan for each resident		
Regulate and minimise number of visitors and only one single named visitor for indoor visiting		
Maintain a lateral flow register where results and decisions taken are recorded		
Operate fully in line with the latest infection prevention and control guidance		
Visits will need to be booked in advance for a specific day, time and length of visit		
Providers should create a Responsible Visitor Code*		
Where possible visitors should be encouraged to avoid public transport		
All appropriate guidance is followed		
Adopt a pre-visit screening questionnaire to be completed when visitors arrive, to ensure visitors are not unwell		

***Responsible visitor code expectations (this can be provided to family/friends of residents prior to them visiting):**

- Book visits in advance for a specific day, time and length of visit
- Check in with the care provider on the day prior to their visit and the day of the visit, to ensure the situation in the service has not changed
- Be free of any COVID-19 symptoms on the day of your visit and not be unwell on the day of the visit. If you are unwell do not attend for your visit. If you have Covid-19 symptoms, please arrange a test. Further information on how to get a test in Wolverhampton can be found [here](#) if your test result is positive please only rebook your visit once your self-isolation period is complete and you are well.

- If your visit is indoors ensure you comply with requirement to take the lateral flow test. If result is positive immediately follow guidance and self-isolate at home. If result is negative, visit can go ahead in conjunction with all infection prevention measures being in place such as PPE, social distancing, hand hygiene.
- If your visit is outdoors and you are unsure if you have been exposed to, or have come in to contact with someone with Covid-19, you should ensure you arrange a lateral flow test by visiting one of the lateral flow testing community sites, further information on these sites can be accessed [here](#).
- Ensure that any gifts brought to give to the individual they are visiting can be sanitised, in line with relevant infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance

Visits may occur in a **number of ways**:

Visit type	Description
Window Visits	This will need safe ground floor window access for both residents and their visitors, and the relevant social distancing and PPE measures will need to be observed.
Garden Visits	Relevant PPE measures and social distancing will apply. Independent access to the garden will be needed to avoid visitors moving through the care setting to the garden. Providers will need to consider how to facilitate garden visits in different weather conditions, how to ensure cleaning of areas and any items used between visits and keep everyone safe, whatever the weather.
Drive Through Visits	These are facilitated visits in the car parks of homes. Again, any relevant PPE measures and social distancing will apply.
Designated areas within a care setting where settings allow for this	Depending on the physical layout of the care setting, it may be possible to enable visits to an identified location inside the care home reserved for this purpose, that facilitates good ventilation, social distancing, ease of access by residents, and limits visitor journeys through the residential areas. An example might include the use of a conservatory as a designated visiting area.
In room visits	These visits may continue to be facilitated as appropriate, in line with national guidance in relation to essential / end of life visits to ensure the person can die with dignity and comfort, taking into account their physical, emotional, social and spiritual support needs. Further to this a single named visitor for non-essential visits indoors will be permitted with control measures from 08 March 2021.