

September 2020

Dear Family/Friend

Thank you for the sacrifices you have all made to help keep your loved ones safe. We must continue to take action, and minimise the spread of Covid.

Sarah Scott (Director of Public Health for Gloucestershire), supported by the C19 Tactical Response Group, has reviewed the latest care home visiting guidance (22 September), assessed the risk from Covid circulating in the community and has agreed that care home visiting can continue. The decision will be regularly reviewed, and is dependent on all adhering to the guidelines put in place to keep people safe.

Whilst the advice remains unchanged for the family and friends of our residents, with cases of Covid rising in the county, we will be restricting non-essential visiting in all homes. This includes hairdressers and other external visitors.

In addition, if you are travelling from an area where the number of cases of Covid is high, we would urge you to consider whether it is safe to visit the home. 'Virtual visiting' remains the safest way to stay in contact with your family and friends at this time. Contact your home to see if this is available.

If you do visit a care home, nursing home or supported living setting, it is more crucial than ever that you continue to follow the guidance. This will help to minimise the risk of infection to your loved ones:

1. **Do not visit if you are feeling unwell.** At this time, any infectious illness could put your loved one at risk. If in any doubt, don't go.
2. **Do not visit if you or anyone in your household has any one of the Covid-19 symptoms.** These include a new and continuous cough, fever or a noticeable loss or change in your sense of smell or taste. If in doubt, ask the home for advice. Stopping COVID-19 from getting into care homes will save lives
3. **Do not visit if you should be self isolating.** Or if you have had contact with anyone who thinks that they have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days. People in residential homes are at much greater risk of becoming very seriously ill and dying from COVID-19 if they get it

4. **Follow the additional guidance set out by the home.** This includes wearing a face mask or a face covering and staying two metres away. Two metre distance remains much safer than one metre. It is much easier to stop the virus getting into a home than it is to stop it spreading when it does get in.
- To maintain social distancing throughout the home it may be necessary for the home to arrange specific visiting times and limit the number of visitors who can be at the visit.
 - Where possible care homes will encourage outdoor visits (eg. in gardens). Being outdoors and staying two metres (six feet) away from the people you visit reduces the risk of passing the virus on.
5. **Wash your hands.** This still remains the most effective way of preventing the spread of infection. If you do make a visit to the care home wash your hands or use hand sanitiser carefully on arrival. You may feel you're not infected. But it's possible that you or another visitor could be infected without knowing it, or indeed have your hands contaminated by the virus on arrival to visit

We understand that this continues to be a difficult time for everyone, but these measures are important in protecting the people in the home you're visiting.

Together we can stop this virus. Together we can protect our loves ones.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Scott
Director of Public Health



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Kim Forey
Director of Integration