

November 2020

Dear relatives of Care Home residents,

RE: Visiting in care homes

You are no doubt aware that the government has recently updated it's guidance about visitors to residents in care homes during the current lockdown restrictions in England.

You can view this new guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

We recognise how important it is for you and your relative to see each other and how distressing it must have been when the national COVID- 19 guidance prevented this.

We are sure that you have appreciated being able to see your relative more recently and we wish to reassure you that Portsmouth City Council and Portsmouth CCG are committed to supporting care homes in Portsmouth to make appropriate arrangements to enable you to continue to visit your relative during the lockdown.

We recognise that each resident in the home has different needs and wishes and we expect homes to risk-assess the arrangements for each resident, involving you and, where possible, your loved one who is a resident in these discussions. This may mean that individual visiting arrangements for each resident in the home may differ.

We are asking homes to implement the following in their visitor policies in line with the national guidance:

- Visitor numbers per resident are limited to a single constant visitor wherever possible, with an absolute maximum of 2 constant visitors
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used by visitors throughout the visit, and around the care home building and grounds
- Social distancing (between visitors and residents, staff, and visitors from other households) must be maintained at all times – during the visit, and around the care home building and grounds. **The visitor and resident must remain at least 2 metres apart at all times**
- The home must have a system for booking visits and ad hoc visits must not be allowed
- Visiting spaces must be used by only one resident and visiting party at a time, and between visits there must be appropriate cleaning and an appropriate gap between visits
- Visits should happen in the open air wherever possible. We are aware some homes have outdoor facilities providing some shelter but this may become less appropriate in the winter. Where visits take place indoors we would expect homes to designate areas for visits where possible and take measures to ensure social distancing is maintained

- Visitors should enter the visiting space from outside wherever possible
- Where there is a single access point to the space, the resident and visitor enter the space at different times to ensure that safe distancing and seating arrangements can be maintained effectively
- There must be good ventilation for spaces used (for example, including keeping doors and windows open where safe to do so and using ventilation systems at high power but only where these circulate fresh air)

We thank you for your understanding as you, and the home at which your loved one lives, adjust to this guidance.

We hope that you are assured that these arrangements will allow the home to support visiting and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Kind regards,



Helen Atkinson FFPH
Director of Public Health
Portsmouth City Council



Innes Richens
Chief Operating Officer
Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group