



Department of Health & Social Care

CARE

On 19 July 2021 most legal restrictions in England, related to coronavirus, were lifted.

The vaccine programme has been highly successful in breaking the link between infection and serious illness. We have come a long way since March 2020, but there are still some outbreaks of coronavirus in care homes, with some residents unfortunately becoming very ill.

We want to make visiting your loved ones as easy and straightforward as possible, while keeping them safe. Nothing can replace the care and love family and friends provide. We know the period of the pandemic has been a particularly difficult and emotional time for care home residents, their loved ones and staff.

Staff will continue to wear PPE and practise strict infection control, just as before 19 July. Residents and staff need you to play your part too. We therefore would appreciate your cooperation with those practices that remain in place, to keep care home residents safe.

It is particularly important that you:

- **Get the vaccine when it is offered to you.** Vaccination is one of our best defences to combat infection. It significantly reduces the transmission of infection, particularly after two doses. It is strongly recommended that residents and visitors receive two doses of vaccine before conducting visits.
- **Take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) on the day of your visit.** Testing supports care homes to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- **Continue to book appointments to visit the care home.** Staff still need to clean between visits, which can take some time. Booking an appointment means there is time to keep the care home clean and keep your loved ones safe.
- **Wear a mask throughout your visit.** This will help prevent transmission of the virus to others. You do not need to wear aprons, gloves or eye protection, unless you are giving direct care. Your care home will advise you if this is necessary.
- **Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water**, for at least 20 seconds, or use the hand sanitiser provided, when you arrive at the care home.
- **Cooperate and communicate with us.** Care homes are best placed to undertake risk assessments for their residents, and every decision is made to keep your loved ones and our staff safe. We encourage you to work with your care home to understand how to effectively manage risks for indoor visits, and when taking your loved one outside of the care home.

If you have any other questions about visiting your loved ones, please contact the care home manager. Thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation. We will continue to do everything we can to keep your loved ones safe and enable you to visit them safely.