



Registered Providers and Responsible
Individuals of Care Home Services in Wales
Directors of Social Services
Chief Executives of Health Boards

23 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Guidance for Visits to Care Home Accommodation

The increasing pace of the transmission of Coronavirus throughout our community has led to this advice about arrangements for visiting care homes.

We need to take more steps to protect everyone, our vulnerable people living in care homes and our dedicated staff working in care homes using the support network of families and friends. The task of protecting the most vulnerable people in Wales who live in our care homes cannot be underestimated and robust protection measures must now be in place at all times to reduce the devastating impact of Coronavirus.

Visits to a care home should now only take place when absolutely essential and not as part of routine visiting previously experienced at the home. Non-essential providers such as hairdressers and entertainers should cease attending the care home along with non-essential contractors or service providers.

We recognise the importance of relationships with family and friends in emotional wellbeing and cannot reinforce strongly enough the crucial role visitors can now take in the physical protection of their family and friends by not visiting, while continuing to support emotional wellbeing in alternative ways.

Any request for a visit for a specific purpose felt to be absolutely essential must be made to the care home manager for a decision. The visit, if agreed, should be one person to see the individual and should not include children. We recognise that sensitive discussion will need to take place around residents receiving end of life care.

Any visit felt to be absolutely essential should be restricted to an agreed time of day and for an agreed period when staff can facilitate safe access to the person they are visiting.

The care home should have a clear notice at all entry points into the premises for any visitors setting out the expectations to gain admission.

Visitors to confirm at each arrival that;

- they are not feeling unwell in anyway;
- they do not have symptoms of Covid-19;
- they are not self-isolating;
- they are not living in a household that is, or should be, isolating;
- they have not had contact with anyone that currently has symptoms or a confirmation of Covid-19;
- they will wash their hands with soap and water for a 20 second duration on entering the care home;
- they will use a tissue or their sleeve for any sneeze or cough, not the hand;
- they will follow the care home control measures;
- they agree the restriction to visit in the room of the person they are visiting.

Visitors should not visit in communal areas of the care home e.g. dining room and lounge. The care home must maintain robust cleaning routines.

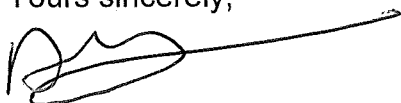
We appreciate that these restrictions may pose significant challenges to you as providers of Care Homes, your staff, your visitors and especially to your residents. However these restrictions are necessary at this time to safeguard the wellbeing of all in the social care sector and our partners in the health service.

It is essential that moving to an essential only level of visiting is supplemented with opportunities for social contact within the care home, particularly where residents spend time in their individual rooms. Regular telephone calls with family and friends should be encouraged and consideration could be given to visual mechanisms such as video calls e.g. Skype or Face Time.

We anticipate that these restrictions will be undertaken in the most sympathetic manner and for the shortest possible period and in ongoing consultation with your residents and their friends and families.

Thank you for continued commitment and flexibility while we navigate through this unprecedented situation to protect our residents.

Yours sincerely,



ALBERT HEANEY

**Dirprwy Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Director General Health and Social Services**