

Visiting arrangements in care homes framework: Surrey, East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove

1. Background

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process for the Directors of Public Health (DsPH) to discharge their responsibilities in line with the guidance published 22nd July 2020¹.

The guidance states that the first priority continues to be to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in care homes and prevent future outbreaks as well as to ensure the health and safety of both care workers and residents. It states that DsPH and care providers follow the guidance to ensure policies for visiting arrangements and decisions are based on a dynamic risk assessment and that this requires consideration of:

- circumstances of the individual care home (staffing levels, resident demographics and conditions and outbreak status)
- local situations (including levels of community transmission of COVID19 and outbreaks and exposure risk relating to different high-risk settings)

As the guidance is updated this protocol will be updated.

2. Responsibilities of care homes / providers

Each care home / provider is responsible for following the guidance by establishing their own visitor policy based on the use of dynamic risk assessment which takes into account the health and wellbeing needs of individuals.

See section 2: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes#section-2>

For resident visits out of care home premises see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>

3. Framework for guiding care home visitor policies

As part of the COVID19 Local Outbreak Control Plans the below table sets out when communication from the Director of Public Health will be made to care homes about allowing visitors, based on the national escalation categories described in the Contain Framework². The communication will provide clear guidance to care homes on applying visiting

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>

restrictions within the care home setting, in the relevant areas affected by an escalation category.

DsPH or their Public Health teams will not be approving individual risk assessments for care homes and residents.

DsPH and public health will for their local area:

- Regularly monitor local test and trace data including numbers of cases and contacts, rates of transmissions, testing, hospital admissions and deaths to provide a single professional interpretation of the local data
- Work closely with Public Health England regarding detection and management of local exceedances of cases and outbreaks

Escalation category (as per Contain Framework)	Communication from DPH	Communication to care homes on actions to take for visiting arrangements	Standards for all care homes
Living with COVID19, outbreak prevention and containment Management of outbreaks Low sustained community transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DPH notifies all care homes within local area that visiting is supported as per guidance, unless PHE advise that visitors must be restricted as part of outbreak management within a setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Care homes must follow the national guidance on visiting by updating their risk assessments and visitor policy to allow safe visiting within the settingEnsure any visits by residents to family/friends outside the home premises have individual documented risk assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Balance health and wellbeing priorities of residents against risk of infectionCare home's visitor policy in placeWhole home and individual risk assessments for all visiting arrangements and care plans updatedVisitor restrictions when there is an outbreakIPC and enhanced cleaning guidance followedTesting results of staff and residents shared with public healthAdequate staffing for supporting and monitoring visitsRapid response to changing escalation categoryGuidance to visitors to keep to physical distancing outside of the home to reduce risk
Area of Concern (Contain Framework) Additional actions needed as a specified area of concern e.g. multiple concurrent outbreaks and/or local sustained transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DPH notifies the care homes within the boundaries of the 'area of concern' that they need to enact more stringent visiting arrangementsDPH notifies the care homes within the boundaries of the 'area of concern' of any change to the escalation category	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Repeat risk assessments for individuals and the whole home, including non-essential visitors e.g. hairdressers, exercise class co-ordinators etcReviewing visiting arrangements to reduce the risk of transmission e.g. outside only visiting, and visits to family/friends outside of home only in exceptional circumstances based on an individual risk assessmentThe home should continue to allow and support necessary inside visits from healthcare and other allied professionals and End of Life family visits	
Area of Enhanced Support (Contain Framework) Increased national support, capacity, oversight and resources where sustained community transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DPH notifies the care homes within the boundaries of the 'area of enhanced support' or 'area of intervention' that they need to close to all visitors apart from exceptional circumstances such as end of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Home closed to visitors and no visits out of the homeConsider visitors for exceptional circumstances such as end of lifeContinue alternative methods adopted to maintain contact e.g. video calls	
Area of Intervention (Contain Framework) Decision making referred to national level where sustained community transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DPH notifies the care homes within the boundaries of the 'area of enhanced support' or 'area of intervention' of any change to the escalation category		