

Policy Overview

This policy outlines the TLC Care approach towards welcoming visitors into our homes. We recognise that visiting is a central part of our resident's daily life. It is crucially important for maintaining health and wellbeing and quality of life for our residents. We recognise that visiting is also vital for family and friends to maintain contact with their loved ones.

At TLC Care we also recognise that welcoming people into our homes inevitably brings an added risk of infection. We will therefore support our resident's families and friends to visit where possible safely and in line with government guidelines and by taking proportionate steps to manage risks.

We will find the right balance between the benefits of visiting on the wellbeing of our residents and the quality of life against the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to our residents and team members.

We will continue to maintain secure premises where only authorised people access the resident's floors and that we are following the appropriate guidance.

1. Visiting arrangements during a pandemic

TLC Care have a duty of care to our residents and are also required to comply with the government's guidance during a time of national or local restrictions.

1.1. 5 named visitors per resident

All residents will have **five named visitors** who will be able to enter the home for regular in room and garden visits. Each resident will be given the choice of who they would like to nominate as their named visitors. Where the resident lacks the capacity to make this decision, the care home will discuss the situation with the resident's family, friends and others who may usually have visited the resident. In this situation, a visitor can only be nominated if this has been determined to be in the resident's best interests in accordance with the empowering framework of the Mental Capacity Act.

To reduce the risk of infection, residents can have a maximum of 2 visitors at any one time or over the course of one day. The 2 visitors will be able to visit together or separately as preferred. These daily limits do not apply to very young children (i.e., babies and pre-school-aged children) or essential care givers.

Any children visiting (apart from babies and preschool-aged children) should also be counted towards the maximum number allowed for the visit.

Visitors will need to follow the current booking system in all our homes to arrange their visit. This is to ensure that we undertake the testing and monitoring effectively to minimise the risk of Covid transmission. Ad hoc or unannounced visits will not be possible.

The five named visitors will be tested using rapid lateral flow tests before every visit and we ask that the visitor arrives 30 minutes before their visiting time to carry out the test and allow time for the

result. Visitors can also self-test at home (see section 9 for further information). All nominated visitors must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow all other infection control measures as advised by the care team during the visit.

Visitors and residents will be encouraged to keep physical contact to a minimum. Visitors and residents may wish to hold hands but should bear in mind that any contact increases the risk of transmission.

Vaccination is not mandatory and will not be a condition of visiting. However, it is strongly recommended that all visitors and residents take up the opportunity to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so, through the national NHS programme.

2. Garden Visits

The home will also be able to offer visits in the garden to other friends and family members to allow residents to see more visitors above their five nominated visitors.

Guidance of Indoor visits will apply with Garden visits. This includes:

- Pre-booked appointments only
- LFD testing of visitor will be required with negative result
- Visitor will be required to wear appropriate PPE
- Visits will be for a maximum of one hour
- The visitor will need to maintain social distancing as much as possible during the visit

3. Visits behind a Screen and Window Visits

Where the home is not under any restriction, the team will continue to offer visits to other friends or family members with arrangements such as protected visiting areas with glass partitions, visiting pods, or window visits.

This means that there is opportunity for residents to see more people, over and above the five regular visitors they nominate for indoor visits.

Testing is not a requirement for such visits. However, the care home must ensure that:

- the visiting space is used by only one resident and visiting party at a time, and is subject to regular enhanced cleaning between each visit
- the visitor enters the 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 is a substantial screen between the resident and visitor, designed to reduce the risk of viral transmission
- there is good ventilation
- consider the use of speakers or assisted hearing devices where these will aid communication. This will also avoid the need to raise voices and therefore increase transmission risk
- if the resident has an essential care giver, they could sit with the resident. This may help them to recognise and chat with their visitors – improving the visiting experience
- appropriate PPE should be used throughout the visit, and around the care home building and grounds

- social distancing (between visitors and residents, team members, and visitors from other households) should be maintained at all times – during the visit, and around the care home building and grounds

high quality IPC practice should be maintained throughout the visit and through the care home environment.

4. Essential Care Givers

Every resident can choose to nominate an essential care giver who may visit the home to attend to essential care needs. The essential care giver should be enabled to visit during periods of isolation (but not during an outbreak or if the essential care giver or resident are COVID-positive). The essential care will be included as one of the 5 named visitors and the exact arrangements will need to be agreed between the care home, resident, and their family (with professional support if helpful). The care home will make an individualised risk assessment for the resident which should include the risk and benefits of proposed visits – and this will be discussed and agreed with the resident's family.

Essential care givers will need to be supported to follow the same testing arrangements, and the same PPE and infection control arrangements, as care home team members i.e.

- LFD testing before every visit – minimum 2 tests a week plus weekly PCR test: one rapid lateral flow test on the same day as the PCR test, and one rapid lateral flow test 3 to 4 days later, except in the circumstances relating to testing following a prior positive PCR, outlined below (section 9). The rapid lateral flow tests can be done onsite, at an asymptomatic testing site (ATS) or at home with tests that come in packs of 7 and should be reported as 'visitor' using the care home UON. ***Refer to section 9 for further details on testing.***
- The care home should use their existing PCR stocks to test the essential care giver, and these should be registered as 'staff' tests using the care home UON and be returned with other team member tests
- Subject to additional testing in line with care home team members should the care home be engaged in rapid response daily testing or outbreak testing.
- [Essential care givers should use the same PPE as care home team members \(including gloves only when providing direct personal care\) and should follow the appropriate guidance for using it](#) after being shown how to put it on and take it off correctly, either by video or by a nominated team member.
- The essential care giver must be observed by an experienced team member as they put on and take off the PPE on the first few visits, to ensure they are doing so correctly.
- The essential care giver must be briefed on IPC measures as per TLC policy, frequency of changing PPE and disposing of PPE and reminded of the importance of remaining at least a 2-metre distance from team members and any other residents they might encounter.

It will be a mandatory requirement that the essential care giver has had both vaccinations, and this should be evidenced and documented.

5. Exceptional Circumstances such as End of Life

Visits in exceptional circumstances such as end of life will always be supported and enabled. Families and residents will be supported to plan end of life visiting carefully. Visits of this nature will be tested using supplied rapid lateral flow tests.

6. Children and young people visiting the home

If children over two are accompanying a visitor, it is imperative that the child is supervised at all times and that prior agreement is sought from the Home Manager. Where possible visits with young children should be encouraged outdoors or within visiting Pods/glass partitions to limit the risk of infection. However, this is again at the discretion of the Home Manager and should be agreed beforehand.

Any children visiting (apart from babies and preschool-aged children) should also be counted towards the maximum number allowed for the visit

7. Outbreaks and exceptional circumstances

Friends and family should be aware that all visiting arrangements are subject to the specific circumstances of the care home. [Please refer to the latest relative communication and visiting status] and are subject to change and stop with immediate effect should a resident or team member test positive (except in exceptional circumstances such as end of life).

If there is a restriction to visitors in place, alternative ways of communicating between residents and their families and friends will be offered. Window and screened visits may be facilitated based on risk assessment, considering specific circumstances of the care home, impact of the outbreak and infection control management. We will also have to follow local policy and outbreak management arrangements. The Care home Management team will continue to provide regular updates to on the status of visiting during outbreaks as well as updates on their loved one's wellbeing and physical health and we will continue to identify any additional ways we can better support, including any cultural or religious needs.

8. Risk Assessment

Our Home Management team will carry out individual risk assessments where necessary. The risk assessments will include the rights and wellbeing of our residents and the layout, facilities, and other issues around the care homes in order to safely facilitate visiting arrangements and will determine where visiting will happen and what precautions will be taken to prevent infection during the visits. This process will be carried out, in conjunction with the advice of the local Director of Public Health (DPH). Our Home management team will be able to share the risk assessments with residents and their families, to help explain the decisions that have been made.

Risk assessments and local area guidance will then determine the visiting arrangements for residents and family members [Please refer to the homes latest relative communication and visiting status].

The DPH may give directions to a specific home about steps they are required to take in order to allow visiting safely.

Conversely the DPH may also provide advice to a specific care home, where they are confident that the IPC measures and other arrangements in that home make it appropriate for it to allow more visiting opportunities than the generic advice set out in this guidance.

9. Booking of Visits

All visiting will be prebooked and managed by the home. Please refer to the homes booking arrangements for further details. Ad hoc visits cannot be enabled, however under special circumstances, such as end of life visiting, the home will make arrangements depending on appropriate risk assessments being completed.

10. What you need to know prior to your visit.

Lateral Flow Testing Kits

Testing is one way of minimising the risk of visiting a care home. If a visitor has a negative test, is wearing appropriate PPE, and following other infection control measures then it may be possible for visitors to have a more meaningful interaction with their relative. However, it is important to understand that all close contact increases the risk of transmission.

Testing onsite at the care home is preferable for assurance purposes. However, recognising that individuals now have access to testing through other routes and visitors may be travelling long distances to visit, care home managers can allow visitors to provide evidence of a recent negative test undertaken through other means, if the test has been taken that same day and ideally prior to the visit. Alternative routes may include:

- assisted testing at another lateral flow site such as an asymptomatic testing site (ATS)
- self-testing at home through test kits provided by the care home if the care homes have access to packs of 7 test kits (which the MHRA has authorised for self-test use).
- self-testing at home using test kits provided by the government such as at a school, workplace, the universal testing offer, or collected from a pharmacy

Self-testing visitors must report their results onto the governments website using the care home's unique organisation number (UON). This will be supplied by the care home.

Visitors who wish to take advantage of self-testing, will need to carry out their first test with supervision from our home manager to ensure they are confident conducting the tests at home and they are being completed and reported satisfactorily. Once this process is done a disclaimer will need to be signed to evidence that this supervision has taken place.

Wherever the test is conducted, it must be done on the day of the visit and prior to the visit, where possible. Once the visitors have reported the test, they will receive confirmation of their result by text message (SMS) and email to show proof of result. Visitors will be required to show proof of a negative test result before every visit which can include:

- an email or text from NHS Test and Trace
- a date-stamped photo of the test cartridge itself



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Where visitors are unable to provide proof of a negative test or have not completed a test, a designated team member will assist them in taking the swab for the Later Flow Device test. The relative must wait in the waiting area or own car for 30 minutes until the test analysis is completed and the designated team member confirms the result.

If the result is negative, the relative will be supported to wear appropriate PPE and will be escorted to the resident's room where they can visit their loved ones safely for a duration of one hour.

Relatives are advised to follow the PPE guidelines as instructed by the home and to maintain social distancing to mitigate the risks further.

Once the visits are completed, the relative will be escorted outside safely by one team member.

Any potential visitor who tests positive will not be permitted into the home or to carry out a visit. They will be required to immediately leave the premises and self-isolate. Your household contacts may also be required to self-isolate in line with government guidance.

Visitors who have recently tested positive for COVID-19 will not be required to be retested within 90 days unless they develop new symptoms or unless specific infection detection and response plans are in place for individuals or in the local area already. These visitors must use the result of their positive PCR result to show that they are currently exempt from testing until the 90-day period is over. Once the 90-day period is over, visitors will then continue to be tested. They should still continue to follow all other relevant IPC measures throughout these 90 days, including social distancing, maintaining good hand hygiene, and wearing PPE.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment [PPE]

Any person visiting our care homes will be required to comply with our PPE guidance. Posters are available when entering the home to guide visitors on the PPE requirements. Our team members are also available to provide guidance.

PPE is made available at the entrance of our care homes and should always be worn.

Ventilation

Visits will take place in a well-ventilated room, for example with windows and doors open where possible and is safe to do so.

Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air

When visiting our care homes, you must comply with the government's guidance, you are required to Wash your hands, wear a face mask, and maintain social distancing with our team members and residents.

Visiting residents whilst wearing PPE

Visitors should be aware that some residents with dementia might struggle at first to remember or recognise the person visiting. Our team members will prepare your relative for the visit, by looking at



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photographs and talking to them about your relationship. Below are some points to consider when visiting in person or carrying out a virtual visit:-

- speaking loudly and clearly
- keeping eye contact
- do not wear hats or anything else that might conceal your face
- wear clothing or your hair in a way that a resident will be able to recognise