



## Visitors Policy [Pandemic Response]

POLICY NO: AF119-1  
ISSUE NO: 8  
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### 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. Named visitors

All residents will have **named visitors** who will be able to enter the home for regular visits. Each resident will be given the choice of who they would like to be their named visitors.

There is no limit to the number of 'named visitors' per resident or the number of times they visit. However, we would ask that the number of visitors is limited to 3 per visit. Where the resident lacks the capacity to make this decision, the care home will continue to discuss the situation with the resident's family, friends and others who may usually have visited the resident.

Visits can be carried in bedrooms, bistro, café and gardens, and visitors are welcome to have tea or coffee. We do however ask that you continue to practise safe methods of contact and social distancing where possible.

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 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 named 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.

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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. Visits behind a Screen and Window Visits

Where the home is placed under restriction, the team will revert to offering visits through the screened and window visits. In such situations, relatives will be informed immediately. If visitors wish to continue to visit using the screen or window visits outside of restriction periods, then this will need to be arranged with the home using the booking system.

### 3. Essential Care Givers

Each resident can allocate a 'Essential Care giver'. The essential care giver role is intended as a way of supporting residents to benefit from companionship and additional care and support. This person is likely to have a unique personal relationship with the resident, perhaps formed over many years. Essential care givers will be allowed to continue to visit during periods of isolation or where there is an outbreak.

The essential care giver arrangements are intended for circumstances where the visitor's presence, or the care they provide, is central to the health and wellbeing of the resident, and their health or wellbeing could deteriorate without it. This will also form part of the resident's care planning process.

The essential care giver is not required to commit to visiting a specific number of times each day or week.

Each resident's circumstances will be different, and arrangements will need to be agreed between the care home, the resident, and family (and other professionals where this is helpful or necessary).

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 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.**

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- 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.
- [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.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. 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.

#### 7. Close Contact with Covid-positive cases



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In the community, people who have been fully vaccinated do not need to self-isolate if they have been identified as having been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Guidance for care homes however varies:

- **Visitors** who have been in close contact with a Covid-positive case are advised against visiting if they are identified as a close contact, unless absolutely necessary. Visitors/essential care givers must contact the home if they test positive for covid-19 or come into close contact with a Covid-19 positive case. Where visits do occur, these are limited to exceptional circumstances and must be approval by the home manager based on risk assessments. Visitors should have received a negative PCR result prior to their visit, and a negative LFD result earlier in the day of their visit. Visitors who have been in close contact with a Covid-positive case in the same household must not visit the home for 10 days following contact with the Covid-19 positive case.
- **Residents** who have been in contact with a Covid-positive case inside the care home should not be required to self-isolate if they have no symptoms, are fully vaccinated and have a negative PCR test. This should be followed by daily LFDs for 10 days (from the point of contact). Residents can continue to receive visitors unless there is an outbreak in the care home. Residents who have been in contact with a Covid-19 positive case outside the home will need to risk assessed and a decision will be made by the home manager on a case-by-case basis.
- **Residents** should avoid receiving visitors who are clinically extremely vulnerable for 10 days after they have been in contact with a COVID-positive case
- **Essential Care Givers** who are fully vaccinated are not required to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with a Covid-positive case. However, due to the vulnerability of care home residents it is recommended that if a fully vaccinated essential care giver is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they do not visit the care home until they have received a negative PCR test, and test negative on a lateral flow test on the day of their visit. If the close contact of the essential care giver is from the **same** household and essential care givers who are **not fully vaccinated** should **not** visit the care home for **10 days** following contact with a COVID-19 positive case.

### 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 have 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 decide 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