

Socially Distanced Visiting

A 'How to' Guide



Phased re-opening

We understand that an important part of wellbeing for residents living in our care homes, is being able to socialise and see their loved ones, and we know that many of you are missing this immensely.

Whilst there is currently no new Government guidance for visiting Care Homes, we have undertaken our own risk review and we will be applying a phased approach that safely enables some of our care homes to facilitate outdoor booked visits.

What does this mean?



If the care home has been free from any outbreak for 28 days or longer, and both you and your relative or friend are well enough to undertake a visit in our garden area, then this can be arranged directly with the Home Manager or Administrator by booking a visiting session.

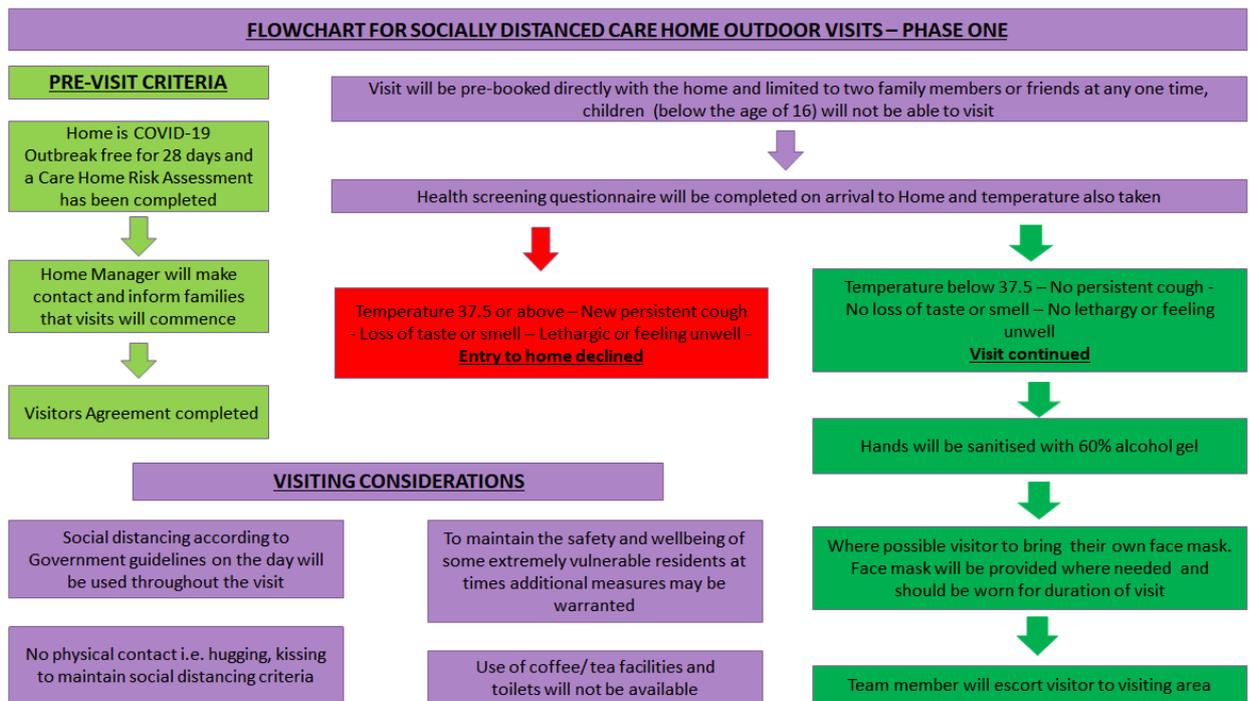
Homes will require that:

- **Visitors Agreement** – You read and sign our socially distanced visitors' agreement (available on our website or at the care home)
- **You book in advance** – so visitors do not all come in at once
- **Infection Control** – you will need to complete a health questionnaire and have your temperature taken on arrival at the home
- **Visits are outdoors** – in the care home garden
- **Current social distancing guidelines** – to be adhered to
- **Visitors are limited** – two family members per visit
Children (under the age of 16) will not be permitted to visit.
- **Booked visiting sessions** – 30 minutes per visit
- **PPE** – all visitors are required to wear a face mask for the duration of the visit

Can visits take place inside the care home?

We recognise that not all residents will be able to undertake visits in the outdoor space and we hope to be able to facilitate visits inside the care home in our next phase, over the coming weeks.

In the meantime, our homes will continue to support you to keep in touch with your loved ones through telephone, video calling and regular social media updates.



Please kindly be aware that if a second wave of COVID-19 occurs visiting restrictions may unfortunately need to be reinstated for the protection of everyone and will be reviewed on-going

Is it safe to visit the care home?

- The health and safety of our residents, visitors and staff is our absolute priority and we will always continue to follow robust infection control measures which are in line with Government and Public Health England advice.
- Care home outdoor visiting will only take place where a home has been outbreak-free for 28 days or more.
- If you are displaying any of the following symptoms, please do not visit:
 - raised temperature
 - new and persistent cough
 - loss of taste or smell
 - general feeling of being lethargic or unwell
- We also do advise that if you have health conditions which make you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus and have been advised to shield, that you should contact your GP for advice before visiting the care home.
- All visitors will complete a health questionnaire which includes a temperature check before any visiting sessions are permitted.

How do I book an outdoor visit?

To book a visit you will need to email the care home. If you do not have access to email, then please call the home to discuss a session with the Home Manager.

Please do not visit unannounced.

The care home will then contact you to:

- Confirm that you have been free of any COVID-19 for at least 14 days.
- Confirm to you that the care home has been outbreak free for at least 28 days.
- Discuss any safety measures needed.
- Agree a time and date to visit your relative or friend.
- Agree who will be visiting.



What might your first visit be like?

- When you visit your relative or friend again, it may look and feel very different than before but try to remain relaxed and remember our staff team are on hand to support you.
- Your reunion may well be emotional. After a long gap and if the person has memory problems, you may need to gently remind them who you are.
- You may need to mention the virus to explain why you couldn't visit. Talking about earlier times you've enjoyed together may be a way of keeping the conversation more cheerful.
- Don't be surprised if the person's dementia has progressed since you last saw them or if they seem low. They may improve with ongoing support, and their feelings for you remain, even if they seem hidden.
- It's natural to want to hold hands or have a hug or cuddle. Unfortunately at this time we need to discourage this due to the vulnerability of other residents in the Home.



How will my relative or friend recognise me when I am wearing a face mask?

When wearing a face mask during your visit, please consider:

- Removing your sunglasses
- To smile with your eyes
- Not to wear a hat or anything else that conceals your face further
- Having your hair in a style that your relative or friend is familiar with
- Wearing clothing that your relative or friend might recognise
- Keeping eye contact
- Speaking louder and clearer
- Your tone of voice and the message it conveys
- Writing information down for your relative or friend to read if they can
- Using gestures or signs to communicate
- To enjoy the visit, reminiscence and laugh together



Hello, Mum.

It is David.

It is lovely to see you.

I am wearing this face mask because there is a nasty bug going around.

This face mask is to try and stop us from becoming ill.

You may also want to create something which explains to your relative why you are wearing a mask, such as the example here.

How will my relative feel about me wearing PPE?

- People living with dementia remember how you make them feel – they may not remember your visit, but they will always feel the happy emotions you leave them with.
- Don't be worried about being emotional when visiting, be yourself and your relative will feel comfortable in no time.

What else do I need to do during my visit?

- You will need to sanitise your hands on arrival and when you leave the home.



- You will be required to wear a face mask and remain at a safe physical distance.



- Where possible, avoid physical contact, this includes hugging and kissing
- Refrain from using the toilet facilities
- Bring a bottle of water with you for your own personal use during the visit, as the home will be unable to offer the normal refreshments
- Ensure to dispose of your face mask when leaving the care home and sanitise your hands

Find out more

- Go to our website for further guidance on our Covid-19 measures; here you will also find a copy of socially distanced visiting agreement phase one that requires you to read and sign
- Go to the care home's Facebook page for regular updates on measures in place including details of whether the home is open to booking outdoor visiting sessions
- Email our COVID-19 helpdesk on covid19helpline@excelcareholdings.com to have the guidance and agreement emailed to you
- Email the care to ask if they are taking bookings for outdoor visiting sessions or to book a session. If you do not have access to email, then please call the home and speak with the Home Manager or Administrator.



This is new to all of us, and we acknowledge that possibly some arrangements may not go fully to plan, but we will do our utmost to learn from this and make any necessary changes to enable these visits to remain in place, as we appreciate the importance of family visits.

Stay safe, and we look forward to your forthcoming visit.

