

Dear Relative,

We are pleased to advise that the Government has released new guidance effective from 17 May 2021, which lifts some limitations on visiting care homes, replacing previous guidance. The measures described in the new guidance relate to visits with friends and family that take place within care home premises.

We understand that visiting is a central part of care home life. It is crucially important for maintaining the health, wellbeing and quality of life for the people we support. Visiting is also vital for family and friends to maintain contact and life-long relationships with their loved ones and continue to be involved in care & support decisions.

With the above in mind, we will be accommodating visits to our care home wherever it is possible to do so safely. Our visits will be supported by this guidance and within an environment that is set up to manage risks. All of our visitors also have an important role to play – helping to keep their loved ones, other residents and our team members' safe by carefully following the guidance put in place by the government, as well as our care home.

Each resident can now nominate up to 5 named visitors who will be able to enter the care home for regular **pre-booked** visits. Residents who are assessed to have higher care needs are also able to nominate an Essential Care Giver, who may visit the home to attend to essential needs.

The 5 named visitors excludes babies and children under the age of 2, who may visit so long as this does not breach national restrictions on indoor gatherings.

To reduce the risk of infection, we are able to welcome no more than 2 visitors at a time (if from the same household) and one at a time if not from same household, or over the course of one day, with Essential Care Givers being included in this limit.

Named visitors are required to:

- be tested using rapid lateral flow (LFD) tests, and produce a negative COVID test prior to their visit
- wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- maintain social distancing and follow all other infection prevention and control measures during visits

We strongly advise residents and their named visitors to keep physical contact to a minimum. Visitors and residents may wish to hold hands, but should bear in mind that any physical contact increases the risk of transmission. For this reason, there should not be close physical contact, such as hugging, at this time.

Named visitors will be required to carry out an LFD test in their own home before every visit to the care home. Prior to visiting, they will need to share their result with the home. To aid in this process we have

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created an online form, which will be shared by a member of our team at the point of any visits being arranged.

Outside of five named visitors and an Essential Care Giver, we will also be continuing to offer visits to other friends or family members through **pre-booked** video calls and socially-distanced visits taking place in other areas of the home.

In the face of new variants of the virus, and a potential upsurge in current prevalent types of COVID-19, we need to remain alert to risks to ensure we protect those most at risk in care homes while ensuring indoor visits can go ahead. Welcoming loved ones into our care home inevitably brings risk of COVID-19 transmission. However, these risks can be mitigated, though not eradicated and we are carefully balancing our guidance against the importance of visiting and the benefits it brings to residents and their families. As we continue to move through the steps of the roadmap out of lockdown, we look forward to being able to welcome more visitors, when the data on prevalence tells us it is safe to do so. The government have stated their aim is that by the summer, care home visiting will feel as relaxed and normal as possible; retaining only infection prevention and control measures that are needed to protect residents from the risk of infection.

In the event of an outbreak, movements in and out of our care home will be minimised as far as possible and limited to exceptional circumstances only, such as to visit a friend or a relative at the end of their life. These restrictions should continue until the outbreak is confirmed as over, which will be at least 14 days.

We truly appreciate your continued support and do hope that you understand that in prioritising the safety of residents, their loved ones, and our team, we are required to follow national guidance set out in law.

Please contact me at the home or by email on agnieszka.buse@visionnorfolk.org.uk if you have any questions concerning the above.

Best wishes

Agnieszka Buse
Home Manager