

SPRINGCARE LTD

Visiting Care Homes: Applicable during COVID 19

Policy reference number:

01/11/2020

Replacing existing policy document reference number:

Version 1

Policy application

Company-wide	Divisions	Department
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Job title of the author: Operations Team

Purpose of the policy: To facilitate safe visiting to the home whilst protecting the safety and wellbeing of people living and working within the care homes during the Corona Virus 19 pandemic

Responsibilities for implementation:

Company-wide Policy	-	Senior Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divisional Policy	-	All Spring Care Nursing and Residential Homes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departmental Policy	-	Home Manager and Team	<input type="checkbox"/>

Policy Review Date:	
Approved by:	
Designation of above:	
Date of Approval:	09/11/2020
Department issuing the document:	Operations Team
Proposed date for audit of the policy:	05/12/2020 Reviewed 8/12/2020. Updated 03/03/2021. Updated 8/4/21 Updated 05/05/2021

	Updated 26/5/2021 Updated 27/6/2021 Updated 18/07/2021 Updated 08/08/2021 Updated 22//08/2021 Updated 25/10/2021
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Policy

1. The objective of this Policy and Procedure is to provide protocols to facilitate and support family visits to residents during periods of National and Local restrictions. It will detail the control measures that must be in place to provide COVID secure conditions to protect the safety and wellbeing of everybody living and working in the care homes.
2. The value and benefits of maintaining contact with family and friends is understood and this policy is adaptable to each of the Spring Care homes in response to the individual homes lay out, COVID status and local community status as determined by Public Health information.
3. This policy is specifically in place in response to Co Vid 19 and will remain in place for as long as it is necessary.
4. The policy will be reviewed and adjusted at times of Government publications or directives
5. The policy will be communicated with residents, relatives, employees and to all external professional agents as requested to do so.
6. Strict confidentiality will be maintained in all proceedings and we will comply with our legal obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the course of processing any data under this policy.

Protocol for visiting Spring Care Homes during COVID 19 restrictions

7. In light of Spring_Care's obligation to residents' rights and well-being, it may be appropriate or necessary to apply different conditions for different residents in each home, depending on an assessment of risk of contracting COVID-19 as well as the potential benefits of visits for them.
8. **Dynamic Risk_Assessment:** Each home must undertake a risk assessment which assesses and balances the risk of local prevalence and the ability of the care home to manage the visit safely.
9. The risk assessment must consider the significant vulnerability of residents, as well as compliance with obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
10. An assessment must be made of the practical lay out of the home environment to provide safe conditions for visiting in any of the designated areas, both internally and externally. It should consider access to the home, protected routes of travel within the home to minimise the risk of transmission to the community of residents within the home.
11. The dynamic risk assessment must formally take into account the advice of the local Director of Public Health.
12. The risk assessment must be reviewed daily by the Home Management team and adjusted in response to any changes, to home infection rate status amongst residents or staff

(infection outbreaks) and/or when advised to do so by external Government agents (Public Health)

13. The home must support the NHS Test and Trace by displaying the bar code at the home entrance and by completion of temporary records including address and phone number) current and previous residents, staff and visitors.
14. The home must ensure clear instructions are communicated to all visitors in advance and at the time of the visit, to include compliance with hand hygiene, PPE and social distancing.
15. **We ask that visitors consider their own vaccination status before visiting their loved one in our care homes. Whilst vaccination status will not prevent visits from taking place, there is a higher risk of transmission of the virus in asymptomatic adults who are not vaccinated (unless medically exempt).**

16. Individual Resident Visiting Plans:

Each resident must have an individual visiting plan. This will be person centred and informed by individually assessed risk and considered choice. It will be held within the main care plan records and communicated to nominated family/friends with the resident's consent.

The plan will inform the most appropriate type of visit.

The plan will be reviewed regularly with the resident at no greater than monthly intervals, or sooner in the event of a change in health condition, local or regional infection rate incidence.

Where a resident is deemed as lacking mental capacity to consent or decide, the visiting plan will be discussed with relevant professional agents, such as Local Authority workers.

17. Types of Visits:

Window Visits:

These should be arranged from a safe ground floor window/door accessed by the resident and visitor. The window/door should remain closed, and technology used to communicate.

Window visits can continue should the home experience an outbreak.

Visiting Pod/Safe space

- There will be a facility situated in the grounds of the home to facilitate outdoor visiting for those residents that can safely and appropriately access it.
- Visits to the pod must be planned and scheduled with home staff and timings must be adhered to
- There will be separate entrances to the pods for residents and visitors; one visitor per resident per visit, alternatively same end pod visits can also be accommodated.
- Visits by children can be agreed with the manager if accompanied by an adult.
- Hand washing facility will be provided.
- Temperature scanning equipment will be provided for use prior to all visits.
- All visitors must wear face covering masks at all times.
- A Perspex screen will separate the resident and visitor space within the pod and contact will be supported by phone or electronic device.
- A member of staff will be present to support each visit whilst respecting privacy as far as possible

- The pod will be cleaned and sanitised between each visit.

Indoor Visits

- Residents are able to nominate as many named visitors as they wish to meet indoors within the home under carefully managed conditions to keep everybody safe.
- Springcare requests that each resident is visited by no more than two adults visiting together or separately on any day.
- The visits will need to be booked with the care home in advance to enable fair and equal opportunity to all residents. The Home Manager can increase this frequency dependent upon the uptake of in house visiting.
- An essential care giver may have more frequent visits – see essential care giver section below.
- The visitor must contact the home prior to the visit to ensure there have been no changes to visiting e.g., infection cases.
- Visitors will be required to complete a Lateral Flow Device Test (for each visit) and register the result before entering the home, as well as a temperature recording and signing of the responsible visitor agreement.
- **We ask that visitors notified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for covid 19 do not visit the care home to protect our vulnerable residents. (See EOL exceptions or if the visit must go ahead admission under these circumstances will be on receipt of a negative PCR prior to the visit and a negative LFD registered on the day of the visit but before the visit takes place.**
- We are unable to provide visitors a box of LFD tests to take away.
- Hand washing and the use of sanitiser must be undertaken.
- The testing procedure can be done within the visiting pod if available at the time of visit
- Visitors will be encouraged to complete this procedure independently, although staff support will be available where required.
- Visitors entering the home will be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment at all times; face mask, gloves and aprons and dispose of the PPE at the end of the visit.

Babies/Young Children Visits

- In accordance with Government guidance, babies and pre-school children can visit a resident within the home.
- This should be planned in advance and be detailed within the individual risk assessment and visiting plan
- The accompanying visitor should gain the consent by the child's parent prior to the visit
- The child must be accompanied and supervised at all times by the nominated visitor who has full responsibility for the child during the visit
- The child must not leave the designated visiting area under any circumstance
- The responsible adult should ensure that the infection control measures in place are upheld with minimal body contact (no hugging, kissing) and hand washing supported.
- Children will not be required to complete an LFD test or to wear PPE

Designated area:

Depending upon the physical layout of the home, it may be possible to facilitate visits in a location within the home. This area would need to be reserved for this purpose only, have good ventilation, direct access from outside, allow for safe social distancing, ease of access for the resident. E.g., a conservatory. The benefit of this would be limiting the travel of visitors throughout the home, whilst the disadvantage would be that it restricts the use of the area/room to the other residents. The area would need to be sanitised between visits.

In room visits:

This type of visit can be in the resident's bedroom and will be of benefit particularly for residents that are unable to leave their room due to limitations or health condition:

- E.g., extremely limited mobility.
- End of life, where the resident is unable to leave their room or where cognitive impairment associated with dementia or other conditions would cause significant unrest to the person.
- The visit would be supported by a member of staff who will accompany the visitor from the point of entry to the home to the room and on departure from the room when the visit ends.
- Social distancing and use of PPE must be encouraged during the visit.
- The room will be sanitised after each visit.
- The room should be ventilated with windows open during the visit to allow fresh air to circulate.

End of Life:

We recognise how important it is for residents to spend time with their families as they approach their end of life. Visits should not be limited to the very end of one's life but planned and facilitated in anticipation of this. Residents and their relatives should be supported and involved in planning for the end-of-life visits and accord with their Future Wishes plan. Discussions should be arranged to prepare and support residents and families where end of life is expected. Visiting should continue in the event of an outbreak or if the visitor has been identified as a close contact, however robust infection control measures upheld and a LFD test completed on the day of the visit.

Essential Care Givers.

Each resident can nominate an essential care giver and their role is intended as a way of supporting residents to benefit from companionship and additional care and support being provided by someone with a unique personal relationship with the resident. The essential care giver should be enabled to visit in all circumstances unless the resident they are caring for is covid positive (residents who are covid positive and at their end of natural life can still be visited by ECG). **From 16th August if the essential care giver or their loved one are not fully vaccinated visits can be restricted during an outbreak or if the ESG is a close contact of someone who is covid positive.**

The manager should implement a risk assessment which sets out the role of the essential care giver for the resident and what the ECG can expect from the home. As the ESG is likely to be in the home more often and for longer than other visitors, they should take a minimum of 2 rapid flow tests a week and one of the LFD to be taken on the same day as a PCR test.

Virtual connections:

Where visits are not possible, staff will continue to support and facilitate contact with families by virtual connections; face time, skype etc.

The range of visits will be discussed with the resident where possible, their designated or named visitors and will be detailed within the individual visiting plan and risk assessment. There may be a combination of visits for each resident to allow for increased contact with their families.

In all cases and in accordance with the Responsible Visitor Code:

- Visitor numbers will be limited to two nominated visitors inside of the home on any visit (babies and pre-school children can be in addition to the one or two visitors)
- Some nominated visitors may choose to use the pod instead of indoor visits and this can be accommodated with the managers agreement.
- Children over the age of pre-school can be included as one of the nominated visitors as long as the child's parent agrees and will be subject to PPE guidelines.
- All visits will be booked in **advance** and detail the date, time, and duration of the visit, we are unable to accommodate ad hoc requests unless the resident is at EOL.
- The duration of each visit may vary for each home, however for special occasions please speak to the Home Manager who will complete a risk assessment for the event.
- The visitor will provide information and complete a health declaration form at time of the visit and must inform the staff if they have had any Covid symptoms or have been in contact with anyone that has tested positive or contacted by NHS track and trace within the last ten days.
- **The registration form will prompt the visitor to confirm their vaccination status, however under the new regulations from November 2021, family and friends of residents visiting the home do not need to be vaccinated or show proof of vaccination status.**
- Hand washing facilities must be available upon arrival to the home and visitors reminded to wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds and to use hand sanitiser available.
- Appropriate PPE must be used throughout the visit and within the grounds of the home.
- Sensible distancing should be adhered to at all times, between visitors and residents, staff, and visitors from different households. Holding of hands is permitted as long as good hand hygiene is followed but hugging should be brief, without face to face contact and risks may be safer if both parties have been double vaccinated.
Visitors must respect the ease of which the virus transmits from person to person, clothing and equipment.
- Robust infection control practice must be maintained throughout the visit and visitors to remain within the designated area for the duration of the visit.

Residents visiting family members externally – Lateral Flow Testing - LFD

Residents may wish to visit family members outside of the home. If the resident has capacity or an MCA and BI form has been completed this will be possible by doing the following.

- Family members should be limited to no more than two people where possible.
- Family members collecting the resident will be required to participate in LFD testing prior to the commencement of the outing and register a negative test result.
- If the test is negative the resident can then go out with their family member.
- If the test is positive, then the visit will not go ahead.

- Residents do not need to isolate on return to the home unless it has been an overnight stay or the type of visit has been classed as high risk (i.e not following the national or local guidance on meeting indoors/ outdoors/ travel to any identified hotspots)
- We encourage visitors to have their vaccination to protect their loved one and themselves against accidental transmission of covid 19.

Resident outings from the Care Home

In response to Government guidance update, residents may leave the Care Home to visit outdoor venues such as parks, gardens, cafes and shops, with the following conditions applied:

- The outing must be booked in advance to ensure that it is effectively planned and managed
- The arrangements for the planned outing should be discussed with a member of staff who should provide guidance on the required measures
- The nominated escort will sign the relevant document agreeing to the conditions of the outing
- The outing should be supported by a formal care worker from the home, one or both of the nominated visitors, or an essential care giver previously identified
- The accompanying escort must complete an LFD prior to the outing and encouraged to self test and register the result prior to arrival at the home
- The resident should not travel on public transport
- The visit should be to outdoor wherever possible or to an indoor area with good ventilation and mindful of social distancing etc
- The exception to this is if the resident wishes to visit a polling station to vote, although postal votes/proxy voting should be encouraged at this time
- Care to be taken in group gathering and limited where possible to the nominated people within the arranged plan.
- The principles of infection control should be upheld; social distancing and minimal body contact to reduce the risk of transmission.
- The resident will not be required to self isolate on return to the care home unless there is a risk identified
- For any resident that does not return to the Care Home on the same day, (overnight stays at a family home or travel and return to red list countries) there will be a required period of isolation as dictated by guidance (usually 14 days)
- Out of the home visits must respect local response to any variants of concern and where travel restrictions are in place, this must be respected by families.

Hospital visits

Unplanned hospital overnight stays are classed as a high risk visit therefore the resident will be required to isolate for 14 days on return to the home.

Residents who have planned hospital treatment which requires an overnight stay will not be required to isolate on return to the home if they have been double vaccinated and a PCR test is taken immediately on return and a negative test is received (isolation will be required until the PCR test result is received). Residents will also need to have a LFD test for the next 10 days and no contact with other residents who are highly vulnerable due to their medical conditions.

Ability to suspend visiting:

Spring Care reserve the right to suspend visiting in response to changing circumstances:

- An outbreak of Co Vid 19 cases within the home; residents or staff (window visits can continue as can visitors to residents who are the end of their natural life).
- By advice or mandate by a Government agent; Public Health specific to the home or by conditions/restrictions imposed in the locality or by national restrictions including hot spots for variants of concern
- Any closure to the home would be communicated in a clear and transparent way to residents and relevant family members

Spring Care will continue to provide updates to this policy and will display on the Company website and homes social media page We must remain vigilant with cases rising in the community, therefore we will continue to monitor the situation and further updates will be communicated as needed.

For further information www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes

Visiting care homes during Covid -19

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/summary-of-guidance-for-visitors--2>

Updated 25th October 2021