

# Visitors to our Homes

At the WCN Care Group we see visiting as an integral part of care home life. It is vitally important for maintaining the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our residents and crucial for family and friends to maintain contact and life-long relationships with their loved ones, alongside contributing to their support and care.

We encourage and facilitate visits wherever possible, and to do so in a risk-managed way.

Additional measures are therefore in place to facilitate visiting while keeping care home staff and residents safe. These include:

1. Planning of visits
2. Infection prevention and control (IPC) measures
3. Individual risk assessments
4. Testing arrangements
5. Isolation on return from some high-risk activities out of the home

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council provide guidance regarding visiting in Care Homes. We monitor local infection rates on a daily basis, with guidance from the local Director of Public Health, and you should be aware that this policy may change at very short notice.

## 1. Planning a Visit

Visits should be planned to allow us to offer a safe environment and reduce risks. You can do this by contacting the homes directly:

St Anne's Care Home  
01202 425642  
stannes@wcn-care.com

Stour Road Care Home  
01202 481160  
stourroad@wcn-care.com

The length of visits will not normally be limited, however, during busy times we may not be able to accommodate lengthy visits. The team will be able to inform visitors if this is the case.

Whilst we are not restricting numbers of visitors, we would ask that you think about how many people come to the home as this forms part of a risk assessment for visits. The space that you visit in may dictate the maximum number of visitors and if there are large numbers, we may ask that you split the group and visiting times.

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### 2. infection prevention and control (IPC) measures

The following precautions should be followed when visitors are inside the care home. All visitors should:

- You will be asked some health screening questions on arrival.
- Visitors should not enter the care home if they are feeling unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 and are fully vaccinated and have received their booster. Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to care home residents as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest other transmissible viruses and infections, such as cough, high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid the care home until at least 5 days after they feel better.
- You will be asked to sign in and out of the building and detail who they are visiting. This information will be kept for Track and Trace purposes.
- You will be asked to scan the code for the [NHS Test and Trace App](#) on entry to the home.
- When you enter the home you will be asked to sanitise your hands and will need to ensure a mask is worn, if you do not have one, we will provide one for you.
- You will be asked to wear a mask and apron during the visit.
- Staff will also take your temperature, if your temperature is 37.8 degrees or higher, your visit will not be able to go ahead.
- Children aged 12 and over should wear the same PPE as adult visitors. Children under the age of 6 and under will not be asked to wear masks.
- Physical contact is encouraged help health and wellbeing. We would encourage hand washing before and after visiting – gloves are not needed for handholding and stringent adherence to hand washing is advised.
- If you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 we would ask you not to visit the home for 10 days. This includes if you have not legally be required to self-isolate, unless absolutely necessary, even if they have been fully vaccinated. Where visits do occur, visitors should have received a negative lateral flow test result earlier in the day of their visit

Vaccination is one of our best defences to combat infection, particularly after 2 or more doses. It is strongly recommended that residents and visitors receive 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, plus their booster. The data shows that booster doses are required to provide higher levels of protection against symptomatic infection. If eligible, visitors should also get their flu jab when it is offered to them.

### 3. Risk Assessments

We will continue to do individual risk assessments for residents, their families and facilities to best meet the needs of the people who live in our homes.

These assessments include:

- the needs of their residents and visitors
- residents' rights to visits and the important role visitors play in residents' wellbeing

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- what is possible within the layout and facilities within the home to ensure that mixing between visitors is limited as much as possible
- where and how visitors might be received on arrival at the home to avoid mixing with other visitors, staff or residents
- the precautions that will be taken to prevent infection during visits (including PPE use, ventilation, limiting close contact and hand washing)

#### 4. Testing Arrangements

You will be asked to have a Lateral Flow Test for Coronavirus prior to your visit. Whilst we are able to do these on site and would be happy to do so, you are welcome to do these at home and provide evidence of the result (in the form of a valid covid pass through the NHS app). If the result is positive then we will ask you to follow government guidance and postpone your visit.

Children under 12 should not undertake regular asymptomatic testing.

#### 5. Where visits can take place

You can visit your loved ones in their rooms or in the garden, or garden room if available. We generally discourage visiting in communal places at this time.

#### 6. Alternatives to Face to Face visits

We ask all families to continue to consider alternatives to visiting in person such as Zoom/Skype video calls or telephone calls. Please see our website for more information on these [https://www.wcn-care.com/staying\\_in\\_touch](https://www.wcn-care.com/staying_in_touch)

We appreciate there are still a lot of restrictions in place, however these are only in place to ensure the safety of the residents and reduce the risk of spread of infection within the home. We will continue to update families as new guidance is shared with the Homes.

#### 7. Visits out of the care home

We continue to encourage outside visiting by residents to venues outside of our homes, with or without families. Residents will not normally need to self isolate after one of these excursions.

Residents will be expected to isolate after an emergency admission to hospital for 10 days (which are higher risk than elective admissions). They can end this early if they are:

- vaccinated (with their primary dose and any eligible booster dose) should take a lateral flow test on day 4, 5 and 6, following their return to the care home (day 0), and, if negative, can end isolation.
- unvaccinated should take a lateral flow test on day 6, 7 and 8, and, if negative, can end isolation
- If they are unable to test then they should complete the full 10 days of isolation.

## 8. Changes to visiting, visiting during outbreaks and if your loved one has a positive test for covid

Visiting restrictions may be put into place if positive cases of coronavirus are found in the home or an outbreak is declared. In these circumstances, whilst we may still encourage visits, visiting may be restricted to garden visits, the use of a garden room or visiting pod if available and video calls. It may be that during these times our infection control policies change (for example we may ask you to wear PPE including gloves at these times or the location of the visit may change to an outdoor space). These restrictions are often temporary and will be communicated to you by the homes.

If your loved one has a positive test for covid we would normally follow government advice on self-isolation. Visits would still be allowed in certain circumstances (ie distress or end of life care) and from essential care givers – please speak to the manager so that we can try and support you and your loved one. Infection control processes would be heightened at this time and additional testing may be in place. You would be required to comply with these requirements if a visit was to take place for your own and other residents safety. The home will be able to inform you at the time.

## 9. Essential Care Givers

Every resident who lives in our homes is encouraged to be supported to choose an essential care giver to benefit from companionship and additional care and support provided by someone with whom they have a personal relationship.

Essential care givers can visit in periods of outbreak and when their friend or family member in a care home is isolating. If a care home resident has tested positive for COVID-19, essential care giver visits can be made in exceptional circumstances (for example, severe distress or end of life) with appropriate infection protection and control support, and consideration of vulnerability and vaccination status of the essential care giver.

There are exceptional circumstances where someone may need the additional support of more than one essential care giver and this should be considered (for example, if a nominated essential care giver is unwell).

Essential care givers will need to follow the same testing arrangements as staff for both regular asymptomatic testing and in an outbreak. Further information on staff testing regimes can be found in our covid policy.

## 10. Visiting Professionals

Care homes must ask visiting professionals when they were last tested and see proof of the result and date of the relevant professional's test. They should be fully vaccinated if entering the home.

Proof may include:

- NHS covid pass
- an email or text from NHS Test and Trace
- a screenshot of where the professional has to upload their test result
- a date-stamped photo of the test cartridge itself
- signed confirmation from their manager
- the NHS signed log included with the test kits provided to NHS staff

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If it has been more than 72 hours since the NHS professional was tested, we will ask to test the individual before entry to the care home.

If the professional is not tested regularly or cannot provide evidence, then they will be asked to take an LFD test as per our protocol.

If you have any queries regarding the information above, please contact the Homes direct via telephone or on [stannes@wncare.com](mailto:stannes@wncare.com) or [stourroad@wncare.com](mailto:stourroad@wncare.com) for more information.