

December 2021

Dear Relatives and Friends,

You may have seen in the news that the government has made changes to the guidance that outlines visiting arrangements in care homes. The government guidance outlines that care homes must ensure visits can take place wherever possible.

Friends of the Elderly will of course be adhering to this guidance, and we are pleased that we already had in place most of the recommended changes. I have outlined the guidance below for your convenience.

All visitors are advised to:

- Continue to book your visit with the care home before visiting your relative or friend.
- Take a Covid-19 test on the day of your visit - the visit should only take place if your test is negative.
- Anyone who is fully vaccinated and has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, does not need to self-isolate if they receive a negative PCR test result and take daily rapid lateral flow tests until 10 days after their last exposure to the positive case. *However*, the guidance advises *against* visiting a care home if identified as a contact of anyone with Covid-19, Omicron or otherwise, unless **absolutely necessary**.
- Wear a face mask and PPE appropriate for the visit and as advised by the care home team.
- There will be no time limit and the visit can take place in a setting most practical and comfortable for your relative. This may include communal areas, but only one group at a time may use the communal area. Visits can continue in resident bedrooms.
- Physical contact such as hugging is now permitted, but the guidance advises that safety precautions are put in place such as wearing visors and sitting in a well-ventilated room.
- If there is an outbreak of Covid-19 at your relative's care home, government guidance outlines all indoor visiting should stop, apart from in exceptional circumstances such as visits for a person at the end of their life.
- However, if you are an essential caregiver, you can still visit your relative indoors - as long as neither you nor the person you are visiting have tested positive for Covid-19.
- In the event of a Covid-19 outbreak Friends of the Elderly will support other ways of visiting, including in our safe and screened visiting areas. We will also ensure your relative has access to phone and video calls.
- Residents are now only allowed *three visitors*, who need to be nominated, as well as an Essential Care Giver to visit them. No other visitors will be able to visit the resident. (Preschool children are not included within the limit of three).
- Care home residents who have had 2 doses of the vaccine, or are exempt from vaccination, should not have to isolate for 14 days after most visits out of the

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care home, but should take a lateral flow test every day for 10 days following their visit out. This does not apply in the case of an emergency stay in hospital or visits deemed to be high-risk following an individual risk assessment. In these instances, isolation for 14 days is required.

- Care home residents who have not received at least 2 doses of the vaccine, and are not exempt from vaccination, should *not go on visits* out of the care home unless they isolate for 14 days after the visit out.

If you have any questions at all about the above changes then please do not hesitate to speak to your care home manager in the first instance.

Many thanks for your time and I wish you all a happy and healthy festive period.

With best regards,



Rosemary Naylor
Director of Care Homes
Friends of the Elderly