

Covid-19 – Updated visiting arrangements for care homes April 2022

The wellbeing and safety of our residents and staff remains our most important priority, as it has been throughout the pandemic. We also want to keep all visitors to our care homes as safe as possible.

We have continued to monitor changes in guidance from Government and Local Authorities in each of the areas that we operate. Most recently on 1 April 2022 the Government published changes to COVID-19 guidance for adult social care providers mainly relating to infection prevention and control. These changes apply only to England and further details are awaited of any changes to guidance for Wales.

It is important to note that there remain some important day to day differences within our care homes compared to prior to the pandemic and compared to everyday life outside of care homes. We have set out below the key changes to the guidance relating to visiting which will ensure that visits can be conducted safely for the benefit of all residents, family, friends and our staff team:

- Visitors are generally no longer required to take a lateral flow test on the day of, or prior to, their visit. The only exception to this will be for Essential Care Givers who provide personal care to residents in which case twice weekly lateral flow tests must be taken and registered in the normal way;
- All visitors must continue to undertake a risk assessment and have their temperature taken prior to entering our care homes;
- All visits should continue to be booked in advance using our online booking portal where possible, so that our staff team can support the visits and ensure all the relevant checks are completed before each visit;
- Visitors must continue to wear medical face masks at all times;
- Visiting can take place in the resident's bedroom or designated visiting area. Visits in communal areas such as the lounges and dining room cannot be facilitated at this current time;
- Visitors must not visit if they are currently self-isolating, have tested positive or experienced symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 6 days and two negative LFT must have been completed otherwise visiting must not recommence for 10 days;
- Every care home resident should have one nominated Essential Care Giver who can visit in all circumstances (including during periods of isolation and outbreak).

There will continue to be situations where the local Public Health Team close one of our homes to general indoor visiting and also external visits out of the care home due to an outbreak. This may result in visits being cancelled at short notice, but we will do our best to give as much notice as possible. In these circumstances only the nominated Essential Care Giver for each resident will be allowed to visit. The Essential Care Giver will be required to undertake Lateral Flow Tests twice per

week if they are providing personal care. If personal care is not being provided by the Essential Care Giver, then Lateral Flow Tests will not be required to be taken prior to the visit.

We have set out below some of the other changes which have been updated in the most recent guidance impacting on our residents and staff team. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

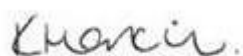
- Our staff in England are now required to take a lateral flow test twice weekly. Our staff in Wales continue to take two lateral flow tests per week and a weekly PCR;
- Our staff team and visiting professionals are no longer required to be vaccinated;
- Our residents are no longer required to take monthly PCR tests;
- Residents showing symptoms of COVID-19 should take two lateral flow tests, isolate for 48 hours and then take another lateral flow test to confirm their status. If both lateral flow tests are negative, then isolation ceases;
- Residents who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for 10 days and take part in daily lateral flow testing from day 5. Isolation ceases after two consecutive negative tests 24 hours apart, or after 10 days of isolation;
- Any new resident who is admitted to one of our care homes from the community must have a PCR at least 72 hours prior to the admission and must take a lateral flow test on the day of admission;
- Care home residents should only self-isolate if they test positive for COVID-19, or if they are admitted from a hospital where there is an active outbreak.

Whilst we appreciate there are still some protocols to follow in order to reduce the risk of transmission to residents, visitors and our staff team, we hope that you will continue to support our staff team in adhering to this guidance. We will continue to monitor updated Government guidance for care homes.

We know how much our residents enjoy seeing their loved ones, and you seeing them, and we would like to thank you again for your continuing patience and understanding.

If you have any questions, please speak to the Home Manager in the first instance or email corona.helpline@akaricare.co.uk

Karen Harkin



Chief Operating Officer