

## Visiting in Care Homes in Leicestershire and Rutland – Director of Public Health, Policy Statement

On 15 October 2020, Government updated its guidance on policies for visiting arrangements in care homes<sup>1</sup>. The guidance highlights the need for Directors of Public Health and care providers to ensure policies for visiting arrangements and decisions are based on a dynamic risk assessment and that risk is minimised wherever possible.

*As of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, national guidance was updated to incorporate rapid (lateral flow) testing<sup>2</sup>. This enables care homes to test visitors prior to visiting residents*

Further national guidance, was introduced in December 2020/January 2021, stating that close contact indoor visits are not to take place whilst the care home is in a tier 4 area, or during the lockdown period introduced in January 2021 (see link to guidance below). Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#care-home-visits>

Our priority remains to prevent infections in care homes and protect staff and residents from the avoidable risk of contracting COVID-19. However, we also recognise the importance of allowing care home residents to safely meet their loved ones for their own wellbeing as well as that of friends, family and staff. We recognise that each resident and care home is unique, therefore a one size fits all approach is not suitable.

In line with the above, guidelines for care homes across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), have been developed. These guidelines offer an approach that care homes can use to ensure that all the necessary and appropriate precautions are in place, when developing their own visiting policy, to protect the health and safety of residents and staff.

**The Director of Public Health's position is as follows:**

***Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland, statement to care homes re visiting arrangements, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021:***

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

Care homes, may take a bespoke approach to visiting arrangements, based on the 'Guidelines for Visitors to residential and nursing homes in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland' and in line with national guidance.

This will include the following, which relates to the current Lockdown period:

Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. **Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed.** No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak.

You should check the guidance on [visiting care homes during COVID-19](#) to find out how visits should be conducted. Residents cannot meet people indoors on a visit out (for example, to visit their relatives in the family home). There is [separate guidance for those in supported living](#).

N.B. This statement should be read in conjunction with the 'Guidelines for Visitors to residential and nursing homes in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland'.

*This statement will be regularly reviewed, at least every 28 days, to reflect changes in the local area. If you have any queries regarding this statement or the guidance please contact: [enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk](mailto:enquirylinequality&contracts@leics.gov.uk)*