

Good Practice Guidance for Professionals Visiting LLR Care Homes during Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for Care Homes to keep some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society safe. Whilst there is national guidance for Care Homes to receive visitors, there has been a wide range of actions and requests by Care Homes across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in relation to professional visitors, including Health, Social Care, Care Quality Commission, Paid Personal Representatives, etc. These visits to care homes will have been reviewed and agreed as necessary by all parties to provide essential care and services.

The aim of this guidance, which is based on both national and local directives, is to provide assurance regarding the amount of information that Care Homes are required to gather from professional visitors who are employed by statutory organisations and are required to visit residents for care interventions. Also included is a reminder of the appropriate use of PPE, on entering and exiting the Care Home. Whilst acknowledging that Care Homes are independent providers, it is also hoped that this guidance assists in creating a consistent approach across LLR for visiting professionals.

Visiting professionals

A visiting professional is defined as anyone visiting the care home to provide essential care or services. The current guidance around testing states that for NHS professionals, care homes should see evidence from the professional of a negative rapid lateral flow test within the last 72hrs, which shows they are following the NHS staff testing regime. This evidence can be provided by showing the lateral testing message on their work phone. If visiting professionals are unable to show evidence of lateral testing, they will be required to take a lateral flow test on arrival at the care home.

Like care home staff, visiting professionals are exempt from testing for 90 days following a positive PCR test, unless they develop new symptoms. For individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are within 90 days of their initial illness onset or positive test date. These individuals will have completed their 10-day isolation and appropriately returned to work following no new symptoms and are not considered to pose an infection risk. They therefore do not have to be re-tested. Professionals will be asked to provide evidence of positive PCR test and date of test to confirm 10 days has elapsed. This can be provided via the text receipt on their phone.

Required Contact Details: visiting professional's name, role, organisation, contact telephone number and who they are visiting. For Covid contact tracing purposes, the telephone number for LPT Community Health Service Nursing and Therapy Staff should be HCP line: 0300 300 1000. Specialist staff will provide their appropriate centralised hub telephone number.

Covid-19 related questions: all visiting professionals and their employer have a responsibility to ensure they are working within the relevant guidance and are fit to work. This means that as there is an employing organisation that has this oversight, it is not necessary to ask a list of Covid specific questions or require signing of disclaimer documents. A single question based around whether the visiting professional is experiencing any Covid-19 related symptoms at the time of visiting is sufficient.

PPE: On entering a Care Home, a visiting professional is required to be wearing an appropriate fluid resistant mask and either wash their hands or use anti-bacterial hand gel. An apron and gloves are required as single use only where the visiting professional is providing a care intervention or where social distancing is not able to be complied with. This PPE can either be supplied by the Care Home or visiting professional but it should not be put on prior to entering the care home. On completion of the care intervention with the individual resident, the apron and gloves must be removed and disposed of in line with the relevant guidance. As a sessional item of PPE the visiting professional will remove their mask on exiting the Care Home.

Covid-19 Response Care Home Cell

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