

7<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Sir /Madam

### National Care Group COVID-19 Response

I am writing to you to outline our position in respect of visiting arrangements following new Government advice in respect of *care homes* in Wales which was updated on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

National Care Group is committed to implementing all national and local guidance to keep everybody safe but also to make visiting services easier for family and friends during the continued and sustained outbreak of COVID- 19.

Wales have announced an updated policy which directs the visiting policy via alert levels and defines a designated visitor.

### Delivering the right support at this difficult time

Individuals we support have the opportunity to nominate designated visitors (family member/friend) depending on the alert level, along with a nominated deputy if a designated visitor is unavailable to visit due to illness or absence. The two roles are not intended to be routinely interchangeable.

Designated visitors and deputies should consider the level of risk they are exposed to through their social or occupational contacts before taking on this role.

Wales current remains in Alert Level 4 and based on this the following rules apply;

- one designated indoor visitor is allowed (a deputy visitor to be designated in the event that the designated visitor is unable to fulfil this role.
- two visitors are allowed for an outdoor visit, or a visit in a visiting pod and similar enclosed spaces. Testing is not required for outdoor visits
- routine indoor visits by a designated visitor should, where possible, take place in a designated room to avoid visitors moving around the building.
- face coverings should be worn by any visitor for the duration of an indoor visit.
- in visitor pods and similar enclosed spaces which are self-contained and which do not allow the exchange of air from one side to another, face coverings may be removed. Similarly during outdoor visits where 2 a metre distance is maintained, face coverings may be removed while seated

Indoor visitors will be subject to rapid lateral flow tests before every visit. This testing can only be completed by a trained member of staff and visitors are unable to take the test kits home to self-test. In order to ensure that there are trained staff available to perform this test it is important that your visit is pre-arranged and that you allow an additional 30 minutes to enable this test to be performed prior to the visit taking place.

If on completion of this test a positive result is returned your visit will not be able to go ahead and you will be advised to leave the premises to go home and self-isolate, avoiding public transport wherever possible. Further to this you must follow government [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). You will need to then complete a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction test (PCR) which will be provided to you by the service.

It is not a condition of visiting that the visitors should have been vaccinated. However, it is strongly recommended that all visitors take up the opportunity to be vaccinated when they are invited to do so through the national programme.

Visitors should also be careful to ensure they observe strict social distancing from other residents, visitors and staff at all times.

Where COVID – 19 cases are suspected or confirmed, visiting arrangements will be reviewed and amended to restrict to only essential visits.

We will do everything that we can to facilitate a visit as long as the above principles can be met and where we would recommend a different or revised approach this can be discussed with you.

### **We are here to provide support**

We appreciate these new guidelines may be frustrating and will need for your visit to be planned in advance however maintaining the safety of all involved is of paramount importance to us.

If following your discussion with your normal service contact, you are not happy with the proposed way forward please do contact the National Care Group Regional Operations Manager in your area for advice. Their details will be provided to you upon request by your normal service contact.

Thank you once again for your continued support at this difficult time.

James Allen  
Chief Executive