

Date: 4th March 2021
Our Ref:



**Integrated Health and Care
Partnership**

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Dear Colleague

RE: Advice and Support to Care Homes for Inside visiting from 8th March 2021

We are writing to you in relation to the government announcement on the 22nd February 2021 that visiting for relatives inside care homes can commence from 8th March 2021 under certain conditions.

It is acknowledged that as providers you are under considerable pressure due to COVID-19 and the additional requirements on you, we also appreciate that the restrictions on care home visiting have been extremely challenging for so many of your residents and their loved ones and we want to support you to offer safe visiting where you are able to do so.

Last week (26th February 2021) we sent out a letter recommending a two-test approach to families visiting inside the home, this week further discussions have taken place across all Greater Manchester local authorities at Director level to understand the government recommendations in the context of the regional COVID-19 situation. In the current local position of reducing numbers of positive cases and the continued pace of the vaccination programme it has been decided that Bolton along with all GM local authorities will support the national guidance on visiting.

Guidance states:

- Every resident will be allowed one, named, regular indoor visitor from 8 March (this must remain the same person while these rules are in place)
- Visitor will be required to have a lateral flow test beforehand, wear PPE during the visit and avoid close contact other than holding hands.
- Outdoor, pod and screen visits will be able to continue in line with the published guidance which has been in place during lockdown, meaning there will be chances for residents to see more than just the one person they nominate.
- The government will continue to provide tests and PPE to support the scheme.
- Vaccination is not mandatory and will not be a condition of visiting.
- visiting will be suspended during local outbreaks in individual homes.

This means that Bolton will not be asking care homes to take any additional measures than those detailed above, we recognise the importance of this cautious step to reopen care homes for the well-being of your residents and their families.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

However, we also understand the anxieties that homes may have about opening their homes to visiting families and should any home manager wish to implement the two-test approach to provide additional assurance then we would support your decision.

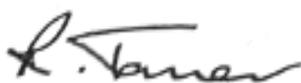
In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak the care home should rapidly move to stop visiting, other than for exceptional circumstances such as end of life, in which case visitors should be notified about the outbreak to enable them to make an informed decision around supported visit.

Bolton care homes are not currently required to re-submit visiting Risk Assessments however it remains each homes responsibility to maintain and update these dynamic risk assessments to reflect changing policy and the approach agreed across Greater Manchester authorities.

We will notify you of any relevant further changes with regards safe visiting as these develop in line with national and local COVID-19 plans.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your continued support and dedication to Bolton's care home residents and their families. If you have any further questions or concerns about supporting safe visiting please do not hesitate to contact either Bolton Quality Assurance Team quality@bolton.gov.uk or the Community Infection Prevention and Control Team communityinfectionprevention&control@boltonft.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely



Rachel Tanner
Managing Director ICP
Director of Adult Services



Dr Helen Lowey
Director of Public Health