

Registered Managers  
All Care Homes

Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford  
Herts, SG13 8DP

Date: 5th March 2021

Dear Colleagues

### **Arrangements for Family and Other Non-Essential Care Home Visits**

We want to thank you for your continued hard work to keep your staff and residents safe during this time. The roll out of the vaccination and the easing of restrictions gives us hope, however while the virus is still circulating, it is important that we continue to remain vigilant and keep people safe.

We, like you, want to make visits to care home residents happen as soon as possible and as safely as possible because of the immense strain restrictions have placed on residents and their loved ones. This can only happen if we all do everything we can to prevent the spread of infection in the home and the community.

### **New Government visiting guidance with effect from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

You will have seen that Government guidance has been issued. This guidance provides that:

- With effect from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, each resident can now have one visitor who can hold hands with their loved ones without the need for a screen; and up to two visitors at a time for “screened” or outdoor visits.
- The guidance differentiates between visitors and essential “care givers”:
  - Essential care givers are where a family member delivering personal care to the resident is central to their immediate health and wellbeing. The essential “care givers” are to be supported to follow the same testing, PPE requirements and infection control measures as staff and therefore will be able to continue to visit when the care home is closed.
- We also want to take the opportunity to remind you that visits in exceptional circumstances, such as a resident at the end of the life should always continue at all times for residents, even when the home is closed to visitors.

- All visitors must continue to be screened to check for COVID-19 symptoms, wear appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) whilst in the care home, follow social distancing where possible and follow good hand hygiene.
- For indoor visits without screens, visitors will also need to be tested with LFD tests. If any visitors test positive using the Lateral Flow Testing or show symptoms, they need to self-isolate and may not visit. If this is the case, you should not allow them into the home and you should ask them to call to obtain a PCR test by calling 119 or via the NHS App.

### **In outbreak situations**

If a home has an outbreak (two or more cases which are linked) then all visits must cease until the outbreak is over (28 days from when the last date of the positive case). Homes may appeal through the usual established process for either all or some of the home (for example a wing of the home or a separate bungalow) to open before 28 days, which is outlined in our guidance document.

### **Checklists for the new guidance**

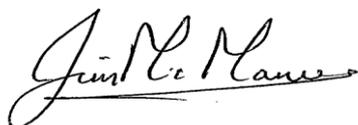
Working with Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA), we have updated a number of checklists to support you in implementing the new guidance. These can be accessed via the HCPA website or through the framework document attached.

You can access our local guidance at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/serviceupdates](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/serviceupdates)

If you have any further questions, then please call the HCPA Provider Hub on **01707 708 108** or email [assistance@hcpa.info](mailto:assistance@hcpa.info)

Once again, thank you for all your tremendous work and your continued commitment to looking after our most vulnerable people.

Your sincerely



**Prof Jim McManus**  
**Director of Public Health**

Yours sincerely



**Chris Badger**  
**Director of Adult Care Services**