

## Residential Care Facilities Visitation Guidance during Covid-19

Guidelines around visitation within residential care facilities have been issued from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and came into effect 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Guidelines state that **visits to residential care facilities are at the discretion of the Registered Provider/ Person in Charge in management of each facility and it is their responsibility to ensure that visitations do not compromise overall resident care or adherence to requisite infection control procedures.**

### Visiting in a residential care facility with no ongoing COVID-19 outbreak: key points to consider

- Each resident has a **maximum of two named visitors. Only one of those visitors can be present at any one time** and visits should be arranged in advance with the facility.
- Visitors should declare that they have no symptoms and undergo a temperature check before being permitted to enter the facility.
- Visitors should be guided in performing hand hygiene when they arrive.
- Visitors are required to wear a surgical mask if they are not able to maintain social distancing during the visit. This surgical mask will be provided by the facility and its disposal will be monitored.
- **Unplanned visits shall not be facilitated.** The Person in Charge /Designee will be notified of any difficulties encountered in implementation of this measure.
- Visits should occur either in the resident's room if the room is a single room, or in the case of a multi-occupancy facility, a room away from other people or in an outdoor area (weather permitting) where distance can be maintained will be provided.
- **Visits are limited to less than 30 minutes, with each visitor allowed a maximum of one visit per week.** Visits should only take place during the day when the main cohort of staff are on duty and away from mealtimes with pre-arranged timings
- Children under 16 are not permitted to visit.

### Visiting during an outbreak of COVID-19: key points to consider

- During an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 within a residential care facility, family and friends should be advised that all but essential visiting (for example end of life) is suspended in the interest of protecting residents, visitors and staff at this time.
- In order to declare that the outbreak is over, the residential care facility should not have experienced any new cases of infection (resident or staff) which meet the case definition for a period of 28 days (two incubation periods).

## Guidance around end of life care within residential care facilities during Covid-19

- Exceptions to visitation restrictions will be made on compassionate grounds, such as at the end of life. It is advisable to contact the nursing home directly for up-to-date information and advice about visiting during this time.
- Current guidance from the HSE and the HPSC states that a compassionate, pragmatic and proportionate approach is required in the care of those who are dying and recommends that the presence of a person close to the resident should be facilitated in so far as it is possible.
- If you are visiting, you may be required to wear personal protective equipment over your clothes and to use a face mask. Staff will show you what to do before you go into the room as well as when you come out.

## Addressing issues experienced due to restrictions on visitation during Covid-19

If you experience any particular issues or difficulties related to visiting a resident in a care facility due to the restrictions around Covid-19, it is advisable to contact the nursing home directly and address these issues with the Director of Nursing or Person in Charge.

## Links to relevant guidance issued around visitation in residential care settings

- Full HPSC guidelines on visitation to residential care facilities can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/vulnerablegroupsguidance/COVID-19%20Guidance%20on%20visiting%20residential%20care.pdf>
- Information pertaining to what to expect when visiting residential care facilities can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/vulnerablegroupsguidance/COVID-19%20Guidance%20on%20visiting%20residential%20care.pdf>
- HPSC infection prevention & control guidelines pertaining to outbreaks in residential facilities can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance/residentialcarefacilities/RCF%20guidance%20document.pdf>
- HSE guidance on visiting residential care facilities can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/visiting-nursing-homes-and-residential-care-facilities.html>
- Nursing Home Ireland's advice to members of the public FAQ's can be found at: <https://nhi.ie/covid-19-guidance/>
- The Irish Hospice Foundation's guide on What can I do when I can't visit a loved one who is dying can be found at: <https://hospicefoundation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/What-I-can-do-when-I-cant-visit-a-loved-one-who-is-dying-during-Covid19-June-2020.pdf>

Should you have any queries with regard to the guidelines around visitation in residential care settings, these telephone numbers may prove useful;

**The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)**

- Tel: 01 8765300
- Tel: 01 8561299

**HSE LIVE**

- 1850 24 1850

**Nursing Homes Ireland**

- 01 4699800

# 1850 71 94 00

8am – 10pm daily

Leave your name, a contact number and a very brief description of the issue. Our aim is to respond to you within an hour. When urgent support is required an experienced Sage Representative can be available nationwide within 24 hours.

24-26 Ormond Quay Upper,  
Dublin 7 DO7 DAV9

 01 536 7330

 [info@sageadvocacy.ie](mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie)

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