

Guidance to support visits among residents with learning disabilities living in supported accommodation

Camden & Islington Public Health
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1. About this guidance

This guidance is intended to support supported living and other residential settings when restarting visits from residents' family or friends. This guidance has been classed as 'interim local guidance' while we await an update to national guidance.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the current government [Adult social care guidance](#).

This local guidance does not replace national guidance. Local guidance has been produced to facilitate the interpretation and application of national guidance to specific local services and situations, taking full account of national guidance and evidence.

Any changes, for example if there are considerable increases in the community transmission rates, which changes this guidance will be clearly communicated to care homes.

2. Guidance to allow residents to receive visitors

In reducing risk of transmission supported living settings have been advised to suspend visits from family or friends, in line with wider social distancing measures in place for the whole population. Updated government guidance now allows individuals from a different household to meet in outside spaces while still practicing social distancing and maintaining a distance of 2 metres.

The risks and benefits of visitors for each resident need to be discussed with them and their families. The below suggestions will help reduce risks, where it is agreed with the resident and their family that visits are in the best interest of the resident. This includes with people who are shielding, where the risks are higher (further guidance for those who are shielding is available [HERE](#)).

Be aware that some residents may find maintaining social distancing difficult to understand or distressing – explain this to the resident and reassure them prior to and during the visit.

Should any residents develop symptoms of covid-19 or receive a positive test result, all non-urgent visits to the home should stop until a full 28 days passes from the date that the last person developed symptoms.

Top tips for safe visits:

- Only one resident should have visitors at any one time. The number of visitors from the household should be kept to a minimum and restricted to members from one household.
- All visits should be scheduled in advance.
- All visitors must wear a face covering or surgical mask at all times and should use hand sanitiser before entering the premises. Consider providing PPE to visitors (mask, gloves and apron) in cases where there is a risk that social distancing won't be fully adhered to, for instance where residents have dementia or limited understanding in maintaining social distancing.
- **Visits should take place outdoors wherever possible as this reduces the risk of transmission.** If possible, use a garden entrance, if not, visitors should be taken through the home in the most direct route, avoiding communal areas and wearing a face covering.
- **Visits should only occur indoors in exceptional circumstances** (for example in relation to end of life, and where PPE should be worn by visitors).
- There should be no physical contact, ie. touching or kissing. Social distancing guidance rules should be followed at all times. This means any members of the visiting household must stay more than 2 metres away from anyone outside their own household, including the resident and staff. Acknowledging that this could be challenging, consider in advance how the space is set up to try and help residents and their family to adhere to this. eg have chairs laid out ready and one party seated to discourage embraces.
- Any visitors should be able to understand and comply with social distancing e.g. young children who will struggle to socially distance should not visit.
- The visit should ideally be from the same household each time. There will need to be a level of pragmatism around this, but the expectation is visits will be from a limited number of people i.e. not different people each visit.
- Visitors should not bring food or gifts.
- Wherever possible, visitors should not use the bathrooms in the home. In this cannot be avoided, then the bathroom should be cleaned down by staff wearing appropriate PPE after use.
- Frequently touched areas, such as handles, chair tops etc, should be cleaned down before and after the visits.

In advance of visits:

- Send families information on how to visit safely. Explain to relatives what to expect such as maintaining social distancing, infection control, not using the care home bathroom and not sharing food. You should also ask that they bring a face covering, and advise them not to come by public transport where possible.
- Telephone in advance of the visit to complete screening questions to check that no-one in the visitors household has symptoms of Covid-19 (see below screening questions you could use).

Screening questions:

1. Does anyone on the household have symptoms of COVID-19 that started in the last 14 days?
 - a new cough or a high temperature?
 - felt shivery, achy, or are they hot to touch?

- A new, continuous cough, different to usual?
 - A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste
2. Is anyone in the household currently self-isolating due to a household member having COVID-19 symptoms or a positive diagnosis?

If those wishing to visit answer yes to any of these questions the visit should not be allowed to go ahead

4. Considerations for people who are shielding

If the resident or other residents in their shared household*, or family member (or other person in their household*) are shielding then visits are not recommended. However, the risks and benefits of increased social interaction among residents who are shielding should be discussed with them and their families. In some cases, there may be a case for allowing increased interaction to reduce distress. If this is agreed, then visits should be limited to one individual (ideally the same person each time in line with [shielding guidance](#)), keeping a 2 metre distance, and in an outdoor space (preferably an outdoor space connected to the supported living accommodation where available).

* where they are not able to socially distance within the property.