

Visiting arrangements in Care Homes: Islington position

Version 1.0: 31 July 2020

1. Background

The [update on policies for visiting arrangements in homes](#) published on 22 July 2020, sets out a requirement for the Director of Public Health to provide a local view on visiting policies in care homes based on dynamic risk assessment. This replaces the previously published local interim guidance on care home visits.

This assessment covers all adult care homes in the borough. It does not cover supported accommodation or other residential settings. Separate national guidance for supported living settings is pending.

This assessment will be kept under regular review, and any change will be communicated directly to homes. The assessment and subsequent updates will also be published on the Council website.

2. Scope

The following **borough level** data forms the framework on which the local view on visiting policies is based:

- Weekly number of tests completed in the community
- Positivity rate for testing (proportion of tests which are positive for Covid-19)
- Cumulative and weekly number of infections in Islington, including 7 day rate per 100,000
- The proportion of cases successfully contacted under NHS Test and Trace
- Number of deaths due to Covid-19 among Islington residents
- Local intelligence on clusters and outbreaks in the borough

The local position is also be informed by regular review of the following **care home** data:

- The number of current infections among care homes residents and staff
- The number of recent infections, and date of onset in last symptomatic or confirmed case of Covid-19 among residents or staff members.

3. Governance

The data on which this assessment is based will be kept under regular review by the Islington Covid-19 Health Protection Group, which forms part of the Islington Prevention and Outbreak Management Plan governance structure and is chaired by the Director of Public Health. Any changes to the visiting policy will be agreed by the Islington Covid-19 Health Protection Group, which includes representatives from the following organisations:

- Public Health, Islington Council
- Adult Social Care, Islington Council
- Emergency Planning, Islington Council
- Islington Directorate, North Central London CCG
- Environmental Health, Islington Council
- Communications, Islington Council
- Schools and early years, Islington Council

4. Local visiting position

As at 31 July 2020, community rates of Covid-19 infection in Islington are very low. Since 21 May, the average number of confirmed cases per day has been between 1 and 0. The number of tests completed by residents in the community has risen in recent weeks, but the number of positive tests remains low. A high proportion of those who have tested positive, have been successfully contacted (79%) via NHS Test and Trace. The number of deaths from Covid-19 continues to remain low.

Care homes in Islington and the health and care services that support them have responded exceptionally well to the enormous challenges presented by Covid-19. They have robustly implemented infection control regimes including PPE, and engaged in whole home testing effectively. The number of infections in Islington care homes remain low. As of 31 July 2020, there were no current outbreaks in Islington care homes.

While this does not mean that we can become complacent, the current risks from allowing visits in care homes is considered low and this needs to be balanced with the impact on wellbeing of residents and their families throughout the lockdown period where visits have been suspended and the importance of social connections in maintaining wellbeing.

As such, the view of the Director of Public Health is that visits from family or friend can resume. It is essential that all visits are done in a way that adheres to the important infection control precautions set out in the update on policies for visiting arrangements – available [HERE](#).

If any care home experiences two or more connected suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 among residents or staff within 14 days, visits should be stopped (unless exceptional circumstances, such as end of life visits). Visits should only resume 28 days after the last confirmed case and following consultation with Public Health (ciphadmin@islington.gov.uk).

The Director of Public Health also supports visiting of external professionals prioritising face to face visiting where this improves residents' health and wellbeing. As an initial step, this includes visits from multi-disciplinary teams of health and social care staff in instances where face-to-face delivery provides additional benefit than when provided remotely.

Please email CIPHAdmin@islington.gov.uk if you have any questions on this.

Julie Billett Director of Public Health for Camden and Islington

31 July 2020