

Covid-19 - Guidance for Care Homes in Jersey

18 May 2020

Background

To limit the spread of Covid-19, the Government of Jersey implemented 'shielding' measures. These involved restricting the movement of people and minimising contact within vulnerable groups to protect the most vulnerable coming into contact with the virus. These measures were implemented on 31 March 2020¹. For residents living in care homes this has meant 'strict resident self-isolation, quarantine measures implemented and no social interaction'.

Indications are that the need to continue with some of these measures is likely to continue for some time.

Some of you have advised the Commission of your concerns about the negative impact and consequences of strict resident isolation on the wellbeing of residents. Managers need to strike a balance between their responsibility to keep residents safe with the need to promote the overall wellbeing of care receivers. In order to manage this balance, it is likely that some easing of strict resident self-isolation measures will be necessary.

To date the majority of care homes in Jersey, have remained virus-free. The priority for managers continues to be to ensure that this does not change. As a result, typical everyday activities in care homes such as group activities, using communal areas and enjoying outdoor space have largely been put on hold.

Suggestions for care home managers

With effect from 11 May 2020, some restrictions imposed by the Government of Jersey have been eased. However, the need to maintain physical distancing of 2m between people outside of the household remains.

Whilst the need to shield the vulnerable from Covid-19 remains advisable, care home managers may wish to develop, in line with advice from Health and Community Services Infection Control Team, ways in which strict resident self-isolation can be reduced. It is suggested some easing of restrictions, if considered appropriate to your service should be carefully planned and based upon an assessment of the associated risks and benefits.

The most recent advice from Health and Community Services was issued on 13 May 2020 and states:

- 1. We still advocate to shield residents, this is the prime principle still for the time being and therefore in line with the current gov.je advice*

¹ Government of Jersey Community Residential/ Nursing Care Home COVID Principles 31st March 2020

2. *The following measures are only considered with those residents that are showing signs of a significant enough deterioration from other detrimental effects such as Mental health, Wellbeing and Nutritional intake that the benefits from shielding are not being realised in terms of their overall health*

We must advise you on the following bullet points to take into consideration of stepping down any isolation periods.

We recommend you must strictly adhere to:

- *Social distancing of 2m for staff and residents (consider staged dining room times for breakfast, lunch and dinner and social distancing in lounge/garden)*
- *Maintain good communication and monitoring of staff. Any symptomatic staff must stay away from work and adhere to isolation periods*
- *Prompt identification and isolation of any new symptomatic cases*
- *Regular hand hygiene*
- *Staff must wear PPE. Gloves and aprons must be changed between residents and hand hygiene performed. Surgical mask to be worn at all times within care environment*
- *Maintain increased frequency of cleaning and decontamination of re-usable medical devices.*
- *No visitors*

The Commission also recommends that the following measures are taken to promote the safety and wellbeing of both residents and staff:

- Residents displaying symptoms of Covid-19 or those who have tested positive should remain in strict self – isolation
- If group activities are to take place, the number of residents should be limited to the smallest feasible groups and physical distancing of 2m should be maintained
- Any resources such as books, electronic tablets etc should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use
- Increased frequency of cleaning of all surfaces throughout the home
- Environmental cleaning should remain and be in accordance with infection control guidance
- Use of outdoor space should be facilitated wherever possible

Visiting Arrangements

While the restrictions on visitors coming into the home are still expected to be closely adhered to, you could explore any opportunities to utilise outdoor spaces such as gardens to facilitate residents and relatives to have sight of and direct communication with each other. However, physical distancing would need to be strictly enforced and should be demonstrably in excess of the recommended 2m. There should be no contact between visitors, staff or residents throughout this time

and you may wish to place limits on these visiting times and introduce a schedule of visits to facilitate their safe management.

Additionally, Health and Community Services have recommended the following:

- Check with visitors via telephone regarding any recent symptoms/contacts before they attend
- Check there isn't COVID in the home
- Any chairs and tables to be decontaminated after use
- Other measures outlined in guidelines must also be adhered to

Outbreak management

A single confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19 should trigger a review of the above measures.