



Guidance for Care Homes during COVID-19

Updated November 2020

Introduction

Whilst the prevalence of COVID-19 is still low in Jersey, we know COVID-19 will be a risk to Islanders for many months, and particularly over the winter period. We need to have a safe approach to protect those receiving care, whilst ensuring that their social and mental wellbeing is maintained.

This guidance is for staff and managers working in care homes, to help reduce the risk of infection with COVID-19 among both staff and those receiving care. Care homes are responsible to implement this guidance and take measures to ensure that care giving arrangements are safe with regard to COVID-19.

Other guidance relevant to care home settings

This guidance is in addition to the following guidance published on gov.je, which is also applicable to registered care providers:

Guidance for visiting in care homes:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/healthcareprofessionals/pages/coronavirusvisitingcarehomes.aspx>

Advice for care homes around waste disposal:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/healthcareprofessionals/pages/guidancecarehomesdisposalwaste.aspx>

Guidance on PPE for health care and essential workers:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/healthcareprofessionals/pages/ppeforessentialworkers.aspx>

Guidance for Islanders at higher risk:

<https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/ShieldingForVulnerablePeople.aspx>

Public health guidance on protecting yourself and others:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/publichealthguidance/Pages/index.aspx>

Guidance for all Islanders and the COVID-19 winter strategy update:

<https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/SafeExitFramework/Pages/ExitFramework.aspx>

Safer Hygiene

Care home staff should follow the following steps in line with public health and infection control guidance:

- Strict hand hygiene following the WHO 5 moments of hand hygiene: <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/campaigns/clean-hands/5moments/en/>
- Thorough cleaning and decontamination of all hard surfaces/floor/chairs/door handles/reusable non-invasive care equipment/sanitary fittings in the room.

- Following PPE guidance, including a requirement for all staff to wear a face mask at all times within care home settings,
- Full PPE is required when delivering direct care to a resident, when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- There may be some instances when full PPE is not required when within 2 metres of residents, where there is no direct contact with residents, for example when staff are giving a drink to a resident. Wearing of surgical masks is sufficient for these interactions, unless the resident is symptomatic or has tested positive for COVID-19, in which case full PPE is still required.

Safer at a distance and in smaller groups: staff and care home residents

- Residents of care homes may physically distance by 1m from each other rather than 2m where this is necessary, in small groups of 2-3, for example in dining rooms and group activities, preferably within the same groups. Group activities outdoors are safer and encouraged wherever possible when weather permits.
- To safeguard staff and care home residents, it's recommended that staff also work in smaller groups and preferably the same groups wherever this is possible.
- Cross-organisational working is strongly discouraged at this time. In the unlikely event that this occurs, mitigation measures should be carefully followed, such as following physical distancing recommendations, wearing PPE as per the PPE guidance and ensuring strict hand hygiene at all times.
- All staff working in care home settings are strongly advised to download the COVID ALERT app which is available for iPhone and Android mobile phones. This alerts users when they have spent time with a positive case outside of a safe distance so that rapid action can be taken and advice given from the contact tracing team.
- Staff, along with all Islanders, are strongly encouraged to carefully follow the public health guidance available on gov.je, and reduce their level of risk exposure, both at work and outside of their working hours.

Contact tracing and welfare checks – staff and care home residents

- Staff must not attend work and must immediately call the Coronavirus helpline on 445566, as well as immediately informing their manager, if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (listed at: <https://www.gov.je/Health/Coronavirus/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/CoronavirusInformation.aspx>).
- If staff develop symptoms during working hours, they must immediately inform their manager, return home, and phone the Coronavirus Helpline for further advice.
- Staff should be actively screened for any symptoms of COVID-19 ahead of them starting a working shift, to include a temperature check wherever this is feasible, with staff instructed not to work if their temperature is 37.8C or above.

- All staff should take part in regular PCR screening for COVID-19, currently every 4 weeks. This is co-ordinated by the swabbing team with the registered manager.
- Staff can individually arrange their own test by phoning the Coronavirus Helpline on +44 (0) 1534 445566, for example if they are absent from work when screening takes place.
- Care home residents will also be offered routine PCR testing which will be arranged with care home managers.
- Results of staff swabs will be managed by the contact tracing team, who will give further advice.
- If the results are not returned, phone the COVID-19 results team on 449994.
- Any symptomatic care home residents must also be isolated immediately on identification of symptoms and the GP contacted to arrange review and swabbing.

Visitors to care homes

Visitors must follow the guidance set out in the visiting in care homes here:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/healthcareprofessionals/pages/coronavirusvisitingcarehomes.aspx>

Ventilation

While opening windows is more challenging as we move into winter months, staff are encouraged to open windows wherever possible, particularly during any group activities or dining hours, where residents are gathered.

Good ventilation, which enables movement of air within indoor spaces, can significantly reduce the risk of virus particles remaining suspended in the air and transmitting infection to others.

Resident outings

If staff take residents for outings, the following should be considered:

- Carefully following physical distancing and other public health guidance at all times when outside the care home.
- Avoiding the use of public transport wherever possible.
- Utilising outdoor spaces and activities wherever possible.
- Staff and residents wearing face coverings or masks whilst out.
- Practicing good hand hygiene before the outing, whilst out and on returning.
- If travelling in a private car, car surfaces/touch points should be wiped down before travel with disinfectant wipes such as Clinell.
- Any accidental exposure to risk of infection should be reported immediately to care home managers and infection control.

Further guidance on resident outings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.je/health/coronavirus/healthcareprofessionals/pages/coronavirus-visitingcarehomes.aspx>

Useful information

- PPE can still be accessed via the PPE@gov.je cell
- Workforce can still be accessed via nursebank@health.gov.je
- Infection control can still be accessed via HSSinfectioncontrol@health.gov.je or bleep 616 Monday to Friday 8-5.
- If staff need to individually arrange their own PCR screening test, they can phone the Coronavirus Helpline: +44 (0) 1534 445566