

7th December 2020

Emergency policy for care homes to protect care home residents from COVID-19

Following recent increases in the number of positive cases and further likelihood of community transmission within Care Home settings, Deputy Richard Renouf, Minister of Health and Social Services, was asked for an urgent guidance review based upon proportionality and balance of harms.

Updated policy statement for care homes throughout December and in the lead up to vaccination roll-out

We are close to being able to vaccinate our most vulnerable Islanders, potentially starting the week of 14/12/20 for care home residents, with completion of second doses planned before the end of January.

Vaccination in care homes will be compromised if there is widespread COVID-19 activity within this setting, as the vaccine cannot be given if a resident is unwell or until 4 weeks after a positive test result.

Aside from this, our stated aim is to protect those at greatest risk from severe health outcomes if infected with COVID-19, which includes all care home residents.

Whilst it is acknowledged that interactions with family members is extremely important for a resident's wellbeing, this must be balanced against the current elevated risk of an outbreak and the significant harm this would cause.

Time-limited policy on visiting care homes throughout December and in the lead up to vaccination roll-out

Visitors should not visit care home residents until this group have been vaccinated (estimated end of Jan), unless:

- a. the visit is in exceptional circumstances which should be limited to end of life circumstances, or**
- b. the visit is in relation to 25thDecember (Christmas eve and boxing day included)**

The above will be reviewed regularly and updated either when community viral activity reduces, or Jersey care home residents have been vaccinated. Guidance on Visiting in care homes during COVID-19 (appendix 1) outlines full guidelines for visits such as on the use of PPE, for when visits happen on the three days around Christmas day. Additional guidance to increase patient safety may be issued around antigen testing for visitors in due course.

Swabbing of staff will continue.

Care home staff are strongly encouraged to assist with the elevated stress and anxiety that restricted visiting may cause by supporting residents and their families with communication via other means such as virtual.

Trips out of care homes throughout December and in the lead up to vaccination roll-out

The MOH has approved the below policy update on trips outside of care homes in December and in the lead up to vaccination roll-out.

With elevated risk to care home residents, it is not currently recommended for residents to take trips outside of their care home. However, if trips do happen:

- They should be willing to self-isolate on return and be tested in line with the self-isolation policy, at day 0, 5 and 10.
- Visits outside the home should be limited to being with the two named visitors of the resident.
- All trips must adhere strictly to government guidelines for those who fall into the high risk category. This guidance includes:
 - Advising against going into other people's homes
 - Advising against mixing with others in all indoor settings
 - Avoiding public transport

This is in addition to all risk mitigation guidance relating to trips out within the current guidance for care homes published on the Jersey Care Commission website.

Appendix 1

<https://carecommission.je/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Final-20201030-P-Visiting-in-Care-Homes-during-COVID-19-1.pdf>