



**Guidance for Care Homes during COVID-19**  
**Updated March 2021**

**Thank you to all care home staff for all your hard work in keeping care home residents and each other safe.**

### **Introduction**

As we make progress with delivering the COVID-19 vaccine to Islanders who are at highest risk, we must continue with a safe approach to protecting those receiving care in care homes. Whilst the COVID-19 vaccine offers a good level of protection to the person receiving it, it does not prevent illness from COVID-19 or the spread to others, in every case.

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, whilst ensuring that health and wellbeing are prioritised.

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>

## **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. This includes careful sanitisation of all areas where visitors have been after any visits to a care home.
- Follow 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**

- Unvaccinated residents should be cared for by fully vaccinated staff wherever this is possible.
- Residents of care homes may physically distance by only 1 metre from each other, in small groups of 2-3 where this is necessary, for example in dining rooms and during group activities. This should be within the same groups from day to day wherever possible. 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 for staff who have not been fully vaccinated. 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 homes 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.
- 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. This will include not attending work if a member of staff has a confirmed positive test result.
- Any symptomatic care home residents must be isolated immediately on identification of symptoms and the GP contacted to arrange review and swabbing.

### **Visitors to care homes**

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

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

### **New residents entering a care home**

When moving into a care home, a new resident must have a PCR test at day 0 (which could include a discharge test from hospital if within 24 hours of

entering a care home), day 5 and day 10. They must remain in self-isolation until they have received a negative day 10 test.

They should be offered vaccination if they have not already received it and this be given as soon as they have received confirmation of a negative PCR test after entering the care home, and once it is confirmed that they are medically fit and consenting.

### **Ventilation**

While opening windows is more challenging during 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, or residents take trips on their own, the following guidance should be carefully followed:

- Physical distancing of 2 metres should always be maintained with anyone other than the care home staff.
- Although not always possible to keep 2 metres physical distance between residents and staff, this should be attempted in all situations where it is possible.
- Wear a face mask whenever possible. This is especially vital:
  - when physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained, for example when travelling by car.
  - when indoors.
- Any surfaces that more than one person touches, such as a door handle, should be sanitised. For example, if travelling in a private car, car surfaces should be wiped down before travel with disinfectant wipes.
- Residents should be guided to use 60-70% alcohol hand-sanitiser frequently where regular handwashing is not possible.
- Avoid use of public transport.
- Spend time outside wherever possible.
- Tell the care home manager if any risk of exposure to COVID-19 occurs.

For residents who are not fully vaccinated in particular, the level of risk of certain activities should be considered. An [Activity Risk Guide](#) highlighting factors that make an activity higher or lower risk is available at [gov.je/shielding](http://gov.je/shielding).

### **Useful information**

- PPE can still be accessed via the [PPE@gov.je](mailto:PPE@gov.je) cell
- Workforce can still be accessed via [nursebank@health.gov.je](mailto:nursebank@health.gov.je)
- Infection control can still be accessed via [HSSinfectioncontrol@health.gov.je](mailto: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