

Your full name

Address

Date

Name of Care Home Manager

And or senior manager / executive at Head Office

Their address

Dear XXXXX

I hope you're keeping well in what are still challenging times for all of us.

I'm writing in relation to your visiting policy which seems to be at odds, in many respects, with the new DHSC advice on visiting that took effect from 4th April:

I would like to clarify my own intention to visit without the need to book ahead and do not expect my visits to be time restricted in any way (or to be confined to set days of the week). (Mum's) mental health and well being have been severely affected as a direct result of not seeing those she loves and she desperately needs to spend time with her wider family now.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the care (mum) receives from yourself and the staff and I recognise that the pandemic has been extremely hard on you all. I also know that previous government guidance on visiting to care homes has been confusing, contradictory and extremely risk averse and that appointments, the wearing of PPE, testing and limiting visits has been encouraged by the DHSC. I know that in more normal times mum would not have been deprived of the love and reassurance of her family and you would have gladly welcomed us.

However, as part of the Living with Covid Strategy the Government have replaced the visiting guidance with much less confusing and simple advice to care homes and those wanting to visit. Visitors are no longer required (or even encouraged) to book ahead before visiting, or to make arrangements before taking their loved one out of the home for a day out or to visit family or friends. This section of the guidance has now been removed:

“visitors should make arrangements with care homes in advance of the visit, so that care providers can manage the number of people attending at any one time to ensure safe visiting practices can be maintained taking into account the size and layout of the care home”

Unlike previous versions of guidance new advice issued by DHSC does not support the limiting of visitors or the need to give advance notice via an appointment or booking system:

“There should not normally be any restrictions to visits into or out of the care home”.

The Government has also now stressed that care providers must ensure their residents have the same right to family contact as those in the wider society:

“The right to private and family life is a human right protected in law (Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights)”.

I’m happy to take a test prior to visiting - if they are provided free of charge. If not, your visitors will need to decide whether or not to continue testing but are not bound by any advice or guidance from the DHSC to do this (unless there is an outbreak or they are providing personal care). Whatever my own thoughts may be on this – the fact remains that testing is no longer supported in guidance or in law:

“Only visitors providing personal care should test before visiting”.

Your policy on PPE and face masks is also now out of step with new DHSC advice released on 4th April. The wearing of PPE is **only required** if visitors are providing personal care. However, this isn’t relevant to myself or other family members:

“Some residents may need support with personal care from a visitor with whom they have a close relationship. Visitors who are providing personal care should wear appropriate PPE”

While I’m happy to wear a face mask when moving through the care home, I will need to remove it when I’m in my mum’s room (in line with current DHSC advice) as it causes her a great deal of distress and there is no longer any rationale for doing otherwise:

“Visitors should wear a face mask when visiting a care home, particularly when moving through the home. Individual approaches may be needed as the wearing of face masks may cause distress to some residents. In circumstances where wearing a face mask causes distress to a resident, face masks may be removed when the visit is not in a communal area of the care home”.

As outlined above there is no longer any government guidance or law that would prevent my mum from enjoying unregulated visits from her family and friends – outside of an outbreak. With this in mind, I expect you to urgently revise your visiting policy in order to comply with equality and human rights legislation (in particular Article 8 of the Human Rights Act) and current advice from the DHSC.

Mum has the same right to a family life as those residents in care homes that have welcomed the new advice and returned to open visiting. Please be mindful that this is not just a place of work – it’s my mother’s home and her mental health and well-being are just as important as her other needs.

If you are not prepared to return to open visiting, or adhere to other aspects of the new advice from the DHSC, could you please let me know what law or piece of guidance supports your decision.

Kind regards

XXXXXXXXXX

All the information quoted can be accessed on the DHSC website:

[COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resource for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-supplement-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care)

If your care home is still referring to ECGs or finding complicated reasons for not allowing your loved one access to the support of a family member/ friend during an outbreak then add this point into your letter:

I understand that as of 4th April ECGs no longer exist and guidance on this has now been superseded. However, the Government have stated very clearly that during an outbreak, every resident should have one visitor and that allowing this vital contact is not at the managers discretion:

“Where visiting is modified during an outbreak of COVID-19 or where a care home resident has confirmed COVID-19, every resident should be enabled to continue to receive one visitor inside the care home”.

“Every care home resident should have one visitor who can visit in all circumstances (including during periods of isolation and outbreak”.

With this in mind, either myself , or another family member / friend will continue to visit mum during the current outbreak unless you can point to anything in official DHSC guidance or law that would prevent my loved one from seeing me.

If you're unable to do so I expect to continue to visit and support mum during outbreaks – in line with DHSC advice.

Yours Sincerely

SIGNATURE

Your Name