

Implementing Open with Care to support visiting in care homes

A joint statement by the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Care, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland and Social Work Scotland.

The Scottish Government's [Open with Care](#) guidance, published on 24 February 2021, clearly sets out how care homes can welcome visitors safely with the appropriate measures in place. We expect all care homes in Scotland to ensure this is in place by fully implementing Open with Care.

We recognise the complex and difficult circumstances that care homes in Scotland have been operating under during the COVID-19 pandemic, and acknowledge and commend your continued commitment and that of your staff to care for people safely and with compassion and dignity. Now that multiple protections are in place across Scotland and the vaccination programme is well underway, people living in care homes must have access to good-quality, meaningful contact with their loved ones that makes a positive difference to their lives. [Open with Care](#) should be applied consistently and fully with care homes implementing all parts of the guidance. Open with Care is supported by regularly updated supplementary information, which is detailed and clear. We want to acknowledge the work of care homes in implementing this guidance.

Balancing rights with safety can be complex and we are here to support you. [Open with Care](#) provides guidance on good practice, infection prevention and control, and testing of visitors. We will continue to work across the sector to ensure consistent application of the guidance across Scotland so that all residents and their families have the benefit of meaningful contact.

We know that human connection is fundamental to everyone's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. People must have meaningful contact with those who are important to them. Where people live in a care home, they need our support to ensure their connections to loved ones, friends and family are re-established or strengthened.

Having visits is essential for wellbeing and good mental health. Separation from loved ones has been difficult and traumatic for residents and families, and many have struggled to connect virtually, particularly those living with dementia.

Care managers are working to review care plans for people living in homes and a critical part of that review is the view of the person living in the home and their family, or other significant person. It is important that meaningful contact has been re-established to enable their voices to fully inform those reviews.

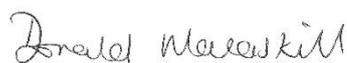
All care homes must continue to support and enable compassionate essential visiting as defined and set out in Section 7 of [Open with Care](#). Essential visiting is in addition to routine visiting and must be supported by all care homes.

If you need support or advice in implementing the guidance, please contact either your inspector, local oversight group, Scottish Care or Coalition of Care Providers Scotland, who can offer support and assistance, including linking you to support in your area through local oversight groups. Where the guidance is not being implemented or essential visiting is not in place, despite advice/support given to homes, you will need to take action to ensure that meaningful contact is in place for people living in the home.

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Further guidance and support for services

- Providers, managers, and staff should become familiar with [Open with Care](#).
- A Scottish Government webinar is available - [presentation on implementing the guidance](#).
- Supplementary guidance that answers questions from services is regularly updated and available on the [Open with Care](#) webpage.
- Guidance for the public is available on [NHS Inform](#).