

Minister of Mental Wellbeing and Social Care
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Registered care home providers (adults) copied to
Chief Executives NHS Boards and Local Authorities
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships
Chief Social Work Officers
Directors of Public Health
Nurse and Medical Directors

06 August 2021

Dear Colleague

Relaxations to COVID-19 regulations / restrictions - 9th August ('Beyond Level 0') Associated updates to Open with Care and Open for Care

The First Minister this week announced further, cautious relaxations to COVID-19 regulations and a retention of a range of protections effective from 9th August. We are writing to update you on what this means for you as you continue to support residents to connect with their friends and family both in and out of the care home.

On a short term and interim basis, the [advice issued on 15th July for Level 0](#) continues to apply. This letter recommends that you work towards further normalising visiting arrangements for people in and away from the care home. In practice this means increasing opportunities for meaningful contact between residents and their friends and families as much as it is possible to do in a safe and flexible way, for example moving beyond the minimum of two designated visitors and removing any very limiting time restrictions when residents are seeing others in the home. It also means reconnecting residents with each other and through enhanced communal and group activities. We are working with national clinical and professional colleagues to develop updated *Open with Care guidance for Beyond Level 0*. This approach to sustain Level 0 advice in the meantime aims to minimise short term changes while updated advice is finalised for publication in the near future.

Open with Care guidance for Beyond Level 0 will set out advice on the continued embedding of residents' meaningful activities and contact, including gradual increases to community-in reach activities. It will also advocate continued resumption of face to face, proactive health, holistic, social and spiritual care with residents, by visiting professionals. It will consider continued COVID-19 protections within care homes for residents, working to minimally impact residents' home life, while sustaining effective protection against harm. Public Health Scotland (PHS) are also updating their [COVID-19 - information and guidance for care home settings \(adults and older people\)](#), taking account of the move away from

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Strategic Framework Protection Levels. The new version can be accessed online (link above), from early next week.

In the meantime, we encourage you to continue to support residents' re-engagement and reconnection through communal activities, outings away from the care home and in the grounds, and visits in line with [Open with Care](#). While collectively we have made huge progress with the pandemic and remain committed to supporting you with care home residents' resuming closer to normal lives, greater COVID-19 risks do remain for residents and care homes compared to the general population. Continued adherence to the layers of protection against COVID-19 therefore remains crucial and we appreciate your support with helping staff and visitors to sustain these. Sustaining measures such as rigorous infection prevention and control including compliance with the [Care Home Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) and [Addendum](#), testing, ventilation, symptom vigilance and avoiding any crowding of indoor spaces all remain important.

Additionally, as you may know the Scottish Government has launched a survey to gather feedback from care home managers on implementing Open with Care. We would like to hear from you about your experiences in resuming meaningful contact for care home residents, your current practice and future plans. Thank you to all who have completed the survey so far and shared helpful feedback about your experiences.

If you have not yet completed the survey we would really appreciate you taking 5-10 minutes to do so. It's anonymous and confidential – we won't know your name, or the name of your care home. You can access the survey here:

<https://response.questback.com/scottishgovernment/75edchcrwl>

Your responses will help us to understand the current picture in Scotland and plan future support to the sector. We will write to you to share any published summaries in due course.

Each care home should submit one return only. The survey is open **until 6pm on Sunday 15th August** .

We would like once again to thank you and your staff for your continued efforts and commitment to supporting people during these challenging times.



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