

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Family Visitor Protocol - v13 (05/04/22)

### **This protocol guidance on family visits reflects current Government Guidance**

As many of the COVID -19 restrictions placed upon us all are being lifted, we must continue to acknowledge that the risk of COVID-19 has not fully gone away and whilst it is reassuring that things are starting to return to 'normal', Aspire recognises that some working practices must remain with us within many of the settings and services we provide for the foreseeable future to ensure the safety of the people we support, staff and visitors.

### **Can I visit my loved one?**

There are no longer government restrictions on the number of visitors who can attend. Outdoor visits continue to be the safest option where possible, however given the easing of restrictions, visits can take place indoors with additional control measures in place.

All visits should be planned and agreed in advance with a member of the local management team who will undertake a risk assessment with you about the visit. The risk assessment process will look to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 to ensure that you, your relative, the people they live with and staff who support them are as safe as possible.

### **If I am still concerned about visiting, are there alternative methods of staying in touch with loved ones while restrictions are in place?**

Our staff will continue to encourage and help the people they support to stay in touch with relatives and friends in other ways, for example, by phone or Wi-Fi services such as Zoom, Skype and Facetime.

### **When visiting restrictions still apply**

Although government 'stay at home' guidance has now been lifted mandating people who are symptomatic or who have tested positive for Covid-19 to self-isolate, the government still advises people to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. Given the vulnerability of the people we support, we would strongly advise anyone who is symptomatic, or has tested positive, not to visit any of our services until they no longer have a high temperature (if they had one) or until you they no longer feel unwell.

The symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- high temperature
- new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell.
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

**Additional advice is also in place for Respite Services which include;**

- Visitors should not enter Respite Service if they are feeling unwell. Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to Respite customers as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest other transmissible viruses and infections, such as cough, high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid the care home until at least 5 days after they feel better.
- It is worth noting that there may be instances when visiting restrictions may need to be re-introduced. This could be in the event of outbreak in a service. An outbreak is defined as 2 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19, among people in the same setting, with the onset of symptoms within 14 days. In these circumstances Aspire will work closely and follow advice from local Health Protection Teams (HPTs), which may recommend the introduction of some additional visiting restrictions.

### **Guidance for safe visiting**

We want to welcome visitors in a safe way by balancing infection risk and family access. All visitors have an important role to play – helping to keep their loved ones, other customers and staff safe by carefully following the procedures described in this guidance.

#### **Things we would ask you to do.....**

- It is not a condition of visiting that the visitor or the customer should be vaccinated against COVID-19. However, we recommended that all visitors and customers take the opportunity to be vaccinated unless they are medically exempt. Vaccination protects the individual and there is increasing evidence it also reduces the risk of transmission of the virus.
- Whilst it is great news that people can hug each other, please do so with caution and exercise personal judgement. Physical contact like handholding is acceptable if hand washing protocols are followed. Close personal contact such as hugging presents higher risks, but will be safer if it is between people who are fully vaccinated, PPE is used and there is brief contact only.
- Visitors should bring their own refreshments if required, and not share these with the people they are visiting.

#### **Things we will do**

- Ensure that support staff wear full PPE in accordance with government guidance.
- Continue with regular COVID-19 testing regimes for staff and customers.
- Ensure COVID-19 visiting protocols are followed, which may include; asking screening questions upon arrival, taking visitors temperature, sanitising hands, PPE etc.
- Ensure that hand washing facilities, hand sanitizer and masks are offered to visitors upon arrival.
- Ensure visiting areas are cleaned and disinfected BEFORE and AFTER use.
- Ensure visiting areas are adequately ventilated where possible. This may include opening windows, doors or turning on mechanical ventilation where available.
- Where possible, provide gazebos or other coverings for your comfort for outdoor visits.

#### **Things we ask you NOT to do.....**

- Please do not share food and drinks.
- Visitors should not enter the property until instructed to by staff.
- Please avoid close contact with other customers and do not hug people other than your relative.

**Thank you for your support and co-operation and for helping to keep the people we support and staff safe. We appreciate it.**