

# Penny Pot Care Home - Visiting Protocol during COVID-19 Pandemic

## **Purpose**

This protocol aims to provide a set of principles and top tips to help people visiting Penny Pot during the COVID19 pandemic, while minimising the risk of its introduction to, or spread within, the care setting.

This protocol recognises how difficult it has been for both people using care and those who care for them to restrict visits, and the importance of finding ways to start to enable visits again in a risk-based, balanced way, and help to reduce the inevitable anxiety experienced by the families and friends of those in care settings as they have been unable to visit them for some time. This is intended to complement and not to replace 'virtual' visits, which are connecting people via technology to keep in touch

## **Background**

The protocol is intended to help during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is anticipated to last for a sustained period, compared to the usual period for other infectious outbreaks. As we see other parts of our community experiencing a small degree of easement of the lockdown rules in England, it is important to recognise that for those in residential care settings, there is a need to balance the continued management of COVID-19 risk, with a cautious approach to enabling the opportunity to receive visitors.

Human rights recognise that all people living in care settings have the right to freedom of movement and association, including the right for residents to see their families. This protocol seeks to balance the rights of an individual with the rights of the others within the care setting (residents and staff) and the duties and responsibilities of the care provider.

For many people living in care settings, it is very important that they are able to experience 'in person' visits; especially, for example, those with cognitive impairment or dementia whose understanding of the current situation may be limited and who may be significantly affected by the absence of visits, with a deterioration in their overall health and wellbeing. Levels of anxiety and distress resulting from the absence of visits may be increased, while nutrition and hydration may be decreased as often their visitors play an important role in supporting these daily routines in the care setting. People with communication difficulties are another group for whom 'in person' visits are key as 'virtual visits' can be very challenging.

As each area will experience different local transmission rate the care provider (Penny Pot) will be working in a dynamic situation and will require constant vigilance and may possibly withdraw visits if a localised lockdown is put in place.

In the event of any suspected or actual outbreak of COVID-19, or a suspected or known case of COVID-19 within a home, visitor restrictions may need to be immediately implemented which suspend some of these enabling approaches and will include exclusion of any non-essential visitors

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### **Responsible Visitor Code**

Visitors will be required to:

- book visits in advance for a specific day, time and length of visit
- be mindful of time, as other Service Users will also be having visitors, and to adhere to social distance it is not possible to have multiple visitors at one time.
- check in with the care provider on the day prior to their visit, to ensure the situation in the service has not changed
- be free of any COVID-19 symptoms on the day of their visit
- not be unwell on the day of their visits
- provide the necessary information required by the provider at the visits (e.g. honest response to screening requirements about COVID-19 risk factors)
- comply with the infection prevention and control measures, including a temperature test, mandatory hand hygiene, the use of PPE as required and social distancing requirements, remaining in the designated visiting area
- ensure that any gifts or personal items (clothes etc.) brought to give to the individual they are visiting can be sanitised.

### **Types of Visits**

**Window Visits:** Visitors may sit in the garden and talk with a Service User through the window, however visitors are required to wear masks and social distance in order to have the window open.

**Garden Visits:** Visitors and a Service User may sit in the front or rear garden, adhering to social distance guidelines. Visitors are required to wear masks and aprons and gloves (where appropriate). Visitors will not be able to have physical contact with their love one(s) due to the risk of transmission. Visitors will be reminded to use hand sanitiser regularly during their visit.

**Designated indoor area:** Visits may take place in the front room, known as the sun lounge. Visitors again will be required to wear masks and aprons and gloves (where appropriate) and physical contact prohibited. Visitors will be reminded to use hand sanitiser regularly throughout their visit.

**In room visits:** These visits will only be authorised is an individual is on end of life care, so that the Service User may die with dignity and comfort, taking into account their physical, emotional, social and spiritual support needs.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Care providers have the right to:**

Mitigate risk of infection by refusing entry to their home to anyone, or requesting that a person leave the premises, for any justifiable reason consistent with this protocol.

Consider increased visitor restrictions when an outbreak (including

#### **Visitors have the right to:**

Access care homes in accordance with the entry requirement set out in this protocol

Be notified by timely and regular updates and information about what is

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nonCOVID-19) occurs within the home, or declared outbreak / clusters have occurred within the home's local area or if there are other extraordinary circumstances that require it, and usage of such circumstances will be closely monitored	happening in the home, in relation to visiting and local COVID-19 prevalence and transmission risk.
Provide a clear policy and information on how they will facilitate visitors, using a dynamic risk-based approach, and make this publicly available as needed	Be provided and supported with additional ways to connect such as video conference or telephone calls in addition to a limited number of in-person visits
Provide clear information about how the visit will work and the infection and prevention control measures that must be followed.	Follow the home's visiting policy and Visitor Code, including booking in advance
Appropriately support staff in order to facilitate visits including written processes and procedures	Not to visit when unwell or displaying any signs of a cold/flu, respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms
Treat all visitors with respect and courtesy, and to provide clear instructions about the visiting protocol	Treat all staff with respect and courtesy, and to follow their instructions on the visitor policy
Proactive communication with residents and families where an outbreak occurs, and the impact on the visiting protocol	Follow visiting requirements including, infection and prevention control measures such as washing hands, use of visiting windows, remaining designated areas and social distancing requirements – as directed by the care home staff – and that failure to do so may affect the future ability to visit

### **Key Words / Definitions**

**Infection, Prevention Control** - prevents or stops the spread of infections in healthcare settings. This site includes an overview of how infections spread, ways to prevent the spread of infections, and more detailed recommendations by type of healthcare setting.

**COVID-19** - is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

**Local Lockdown** - As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Where increased local transmission of COVID-19 is identified, areas may be required to take additional measures to reduce the spread of the virus. This could include closing certain premises or restricting the movements of people and interactions with others.

## Penny Pot Care Home - Visiting Protocol during COVID-19 Pandemic

### **Questions staff will ask Visitors at the Door**

Have we got your details? If not please may we have them? (Name and phone Number)

Do you have the following Symptoms; Cough? Temperature? Change in taste? (If yes to any of these staff can turn visitors away)

Have you been in contact with anyone, who is confirmed to have COVID19, within the last 7 days? (If yes to any of these staff can turn visitors away)

Are you unwell, with any other flu, cold, chest Infection Etc. (If yes to any of these staff can turn visitors away?)

Please may I check your temperature?

Staff will make a record of your visit and temperature, and who you are visiting. Please be patient with all members of staff during this process.