

HAYFIELD SUPPORT SERVICES WITH DEAF PEOPLE

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Care Home and Enhanced Care at Home Meaningful Contact, External Excursion and Visiting Policy

This policy is kept under review and is following Scottish Government guidance for Care Homes as well as other appropriate guidance, bearing in mind that there are vulnerable service users in all 4 x Care Homes and our Enhanced Care at Home Services. Therefore, regular reviewing and consideration to each service user's personal risk assessment as well as the risk assessments of their fellow residents at each Hayfield location.

This document is an update following the Scottish Government guidance on Care Home visiting dated 17 May 2021 and 15 July 2021 which eases the current restrictions provided that visits and outings can be made safely without increasing the risks of virus transmission. Glasgow has been declared a Level 0 from 19 July 2021 within the Scottish Strategic Framework permissions.

This policy is subject to change and will be reviewed in line with current Scottish Government Guidelines. It introduces opportunities for residents to be visited regularly by two named persons and for an "essential care giver" to be fully involved in their relative's care. These arrangements will always be subject to individual risk assessments, regular testing of the named visitors, wearing of suitable PPE during the visit and following Infection Prevention and Control measures including hand hygiene.

The specific guidance for Adult Care Homes which supports meaningful contact is named **[Open with Care which has been in place since February 2021. Additional advice and guidance on Supporting Meaningful Contact and activities in and away from Care Homes on 17 May 2021 and Supplementary information 15 July 2021 - access via link below.](#)**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-care-supporting-meaningful-contact-care-homes/>

The main principles are:

- It is everyone's responsibility to follow any advice and guidance, action to help Care Homes / Services stay safe
- Decisions should focus on supporting meaningful contacts to take place safely, to protect and restore the well-being of service users and their loved ones
- To safely balance the risks of visiting to the risks of NOT visiting or having meaningful contact.
- Recognise that service users have different needs and preferences for visiting and supporting these, where possible
- Every service user to have their own visiting plan as part of their COVID 19 Care Plan and Risk Assessment, to enable a balanced approach to their individual needs / preference to those with whom they live
- Service users have the right to have quality time with family and visitors
- Flexibility remains key to all decision-making processes in collaboration with Local Public Health and professional judgement. Factors such as the Care Home environment, staffing availability, COVID 19 outbreak status, IPC measures, LFD tests, PPE are all variables that need to be considered
- Visiting policies are to take Article 8 of The Human Rights Act into account which provides the right to respect family and private life.

With the spread and effects of COVID-19, Hayfield Care Homes and Care at Home services has put into place all the safety measures recommended by Scottish Government, public health authorities and care inspectorate guidelines as well as making its own risk assessments for individual service users and locations. This is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all service users and staff and visitors. This policy outlines the arrangements Hayfield has made and will be making in the evolving situation for its service users to receive family/friends and leave the premises with family/friends.

Government guidance recognises that protecting residents from COVID 19 pandemic has rightly been a priority for all, however Hayfield are aware how these restrictions have been harmful in some ways to residents, their relatives and staff. There has been emerging and recent international COVID 19 evidence that demonstrates potential physical, emotional and cognitive harm for residents from prolonged isolation. In view of this, WHO ad hoc COVID 19 IPC Guidance Development Group have unanimously agreed that visiting should be supported as long as Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) measures are in place. The Scottish document 'Open with Care' is based on the following principles which include:

- Adequate, available and properly used PPE for care home staff and visitors
- Routine testing for all care home staff and visiting professionals
- Testing of residents prior to hospital discharge and admissions to care homes
- Care home testing of visitors or results of on the day testing at home prior to arriving.
- COVID 19 vaccination of service users and staff
- Support from local oversight arrangements – Public Health and Primary Care

With these measures in place, we continue to actively address the emotional harm caused by the absence of meaningful contact between residents and family or friends within the Care Home where they live.

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a major impact on those residing in Care Homes and Housing Support Services because of the necessity to ensure their safety from the spread of this highly contagious disease and although COVID may continue to limit lives, we will continue to facilitate all requests made by service users, families and friends regarding visiting or excursions.

Health care and other professionals continue to see service users and tenants living in Hayfield care services on an emergency and routine basis.

Hayfield have continually reviewed the Scottish Care Home guidance (mainly issued for Care Homes for the Elderly) and considered the risk assessments for individual service users in Hayfield and have made every attempt to improve the emotional well-being of each person by safely accommodating meaningful contact with family, i.e. garden visits, window visits, care home visits, overnight stays / weeks at home, Café visits and so on. Hayfield will continue to take every measure to safeguard service users, staff and family members and balance physical and emotional health risks.

Access to service users for relatives and friends via telephone, messaging, social media, Facetime, Skype and Zoom will continue. These methods are well established and will continue as options due to the distance between many service users and their families. Travelling restrictions may still affect some family members visiting depending on the level of their Local area. Travel into and out of a Level 3 and 4 area to visit a loved one in a Care Home is classed as essential travel. There continue to be **very strict criteria** regarding not sharing food, cutlery, provided hand wash facilities / gels and FRSM masks to also be provided for family and individual friends visiting.

Service users, even those who were 'shielding', to shop with 1-1 support or independently if risk assessed as competent to follow safety guidelines, wearing FRSM provided as per general population guidelines in all retail venues and public transport. Hayfield continue to reevaluate all service users COVID 19 support and development plans and risk enablement plans in order to reach the best outcomes for each individual's safety and wellbeing.

Hayfield will continue to promote meaningful contact and activities within all care settings and outings outwith the Care Homes and Care at Home settings.

Hayfield: Covid 19 Visiting and Meaningful Contact Policy - 19 July 2021

- Home visits for the mental and emotional welfare of all service users
- More activities for fresh air and exercise, meeting of friendship groups and diverse activities within lesser restrictions yet safe measures remain in place.
- See individual risk assessments and resumption of community life document for further details.

The general easing of the coronavirus restrictions has enabled Hayfield to review its visiting policy and to revise it in line with the most recent updated government guidance FOR CARE HOMES as above as well as observing individual risk assessments that are made for each service user in each individual setting. Staff are continuously aware of the importance of easing restrictions safely in order to reduce the social isolation of service users and improve their emotional health and wellbeing whilst still containing the virus until the vaccination programme is fully rolled out and the Scottish Government roadmap dates are reached and reviewed, whilst still following Care Home guidance.

Indoor visits are now in place and all documents were sent to Public Health Unit although the guidance was that each Care Home set their guidance and safety measures. Day Service also submitted their documentation in early March 2021.

- Service users can have visits indoors
- Visits will take place by arrangement
- The visit will only continue if they are feeling well and do not have any COVID 19 symptoms
- On arrival, all visitors will be offered Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) unless they have taken this at home, prior to their visit and can demonstrate the results available. This is NOT mandatory but it is still strongly advised.
- All visitors will be asked to wash their hands and / or apply alcohol-based hand gel on arrival and regularly
- Visitors are encouraged to wear the FRSM mask provided / clear visor for communication provided at each of Hayfield locations
- Staff will complete the visiting book
- All visitors will be asked some questions to ensure that they do not have COVID 19 symptoms and be asked to complete a short compliance slip
- Visits should be flexible, generous and welcoming.
- Visits are untimed and unlimited, however due to the distance travelled by families and friends, this does not pose any management difficulties for staff on duty however, if required, additional staff would be arranged to facilitate any support (i.e. communication). Multiple visits weekly is highly unlikely due to the home location of many relatives.
- Infection prevention and control – visits generally do not need to be supervised. Each situation needs to be taken on a case by case basis and visits to be as close to normal as possible
- It is not required that the resident and visitor sit two metres apart for the whole visit.
- Masks can be removed so that drinks and food can be served and taken.
- The visiting room / area will be well ventilated but also warm and comfortable
- As well as other protections it is recommended that a minimum of one metre's physical distance is maintained where possible, two metres distance allows for better 'body space' for BSL signing.
- Hayfield infection control measures and PPE and social distancing of 2 metres for BSL coverage will remain in place although not 2 metres for the entirety of the visit / contact, 1 metre is acceptable.

- Physical touch, including brief hugs and embraces to be supported when a fluid resistant surgical mask is worn by the person visiting and good hand hygiene and recommended ICP is observed.
- The number of visitors will remain within household guidelines and will take other residents into account.
- Visitors should be allowed to bring in gifts and residents' belongings. If item(s) can be wiped clean, such as books, then do so. Gifts are not to be quarantined.
- Food / drinks can be served BUT no food / drinks or utensils to be shared between guests
- Toilet facilities can be designated for visitors only on that day until it can be cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff can provide an update on person's well-being, assist with communication and continue to support the visit at this point, as necessary. 1 to 1 support is not essential and can be assessed prior to each visit.
- Staff will guide visitors how to safely remove and dispose of their mask and other PPE, if used, and prompt handwashing before leaving the premises.
- Visitors / staff can be advised that if they are going home to a vulnerable person, they may consider they immediately go home, change, shower and launder clothes separately
- Staff will diligently carry out full disinfection processes after the visit
- Hayfield's aim is to work alongside service users and families sharing our overall responsibility to keep service users, families, staff, and our community safe. Please refer to the SAFE HOMES poster.

Hayfield operates small Care Homes (4 to 6 people) and an Enhanced Care at Home Service for 12 individuals. Many families are situated throughout the UK and have been in regular contact regarding their visiting / contact wishes therefore their requests have always taken priority consideration as has the well-being of service users.

Hayfield may continue to use Day Support premises (individual ground access, designated room with screen and PPE, LFD Testing, cleaning staff availability, designated toilet if required) to provide a safe and welcome venue for families to visit if they are unable to manage stairs.

Excursions with Family Members or Staff

Hayfield has reinstated some examples of activities (those activities previously established in the summer of 2020 (August), if the virus remains below "1" and there are no local COVID-19 "outbreaks or spikes", or changes to Public Health and Care Inspectorate guidelines.

The guiding principles would apply to all potential service user and staff/family scenarios – masks or see through visors to be worn; only personal cars/black taxis to be used for transport for people within the Care Homes or vulnerable / shielding tenants, LFT testing on return from overnight stays if they wish, social distancing recommended at 2 metres as this is the best position for BSL; any high-risk situations refer to management for consultation. Many service users want to restore their level of independence for travel, shopping etc and this must be encouraged but also risk enabled.

- *Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing guidance.*

Examples (not scenarios covering every eventuality - anything else would need fully discussed with management):

- Staff with service user outings further afield if black taxis/personal staff cars were being used and masks worn at all times (not public transport at present unless agreed by management).

- Service users living in their own flats could holiday with relatives using agreed transport and masks and return to their flat with support reinstated.
- Service users living in a care home setting would be able to make a short visit to a relative's home
- Service users living in a care home setting could visit an outdoor bar or restaurant with family members.
- Service users living in a care home setting could visit an indoor bar and restaurant with family members.
- Holidays with relatives with a non-mandatory LFT test on their return, if they wish to take one.
- Picnics with family in an outdoor location e.g. park following outdoor safety criteria, PPE were fully followed including separate picnic food/utensils.
- Exercise with a family member locally with social distancing of 1 metre and infection control before and after e.g. walk, cycle etc.
- The Day Support Service Garden can host weather dependent get-togethers following social distancing and infection control measures which will allow inter residential setting reunions, day attenders and their visitors and Moffat Street skeleton staff to meet up by arrangement (15 people, 15 households).

This list of examples is by no means exhaustive and if there is any confusion or doubt please contact management for a decision about your desired scenario.

Hayfield recognises that any of the above examples or any other requests may require organisation, management and regulation.

To help Hayfield families and friends be Covid 19 safety aware within care and community settings, plans are set out the arrangements for each service user. These, with agreement, outline people's responsibilities for the safe and successful visit or outing or home visit. This will be in consultation with service users, their family and any supporting staff. All visits and outings will be recorded and this will assist Test and Protect service.

As expected, anyone suffering from any virus symptoms would cancel their arrangements immediately.

Essential Purpose Visiting

Essential visits must have a supportive, flexible approach should any service user be **extremely ill or distressed**.

Conclusion

Hayfield management are confident that with these safety measures in place and the co-operation and support of service users, staff, families and friends we will be able to keep service users, staff and family members as safe as possible from any transmissions of COVID-19.

Hayfield will update this Meaningful Contact and visiting policy in the light of further developments and the easing of restrictions as the risks decrease. It will, however, return to a tightening-up if there are cases of COVID-19 in the setting or evidence of any increased risk from community transmission as easing continues.

As this is an evolving policy, comments and discussion are invited.

Suzanne Finnigan

19.07.2021