

5 February 2021

Dear Islander,

Care home visiting

In December 2020, we made the very difficult decision to advise all care homes to close their doors to visitors in all but the most pressing of circumstances. We did so knowing that this would cause distress for residents, their families and loved ones. However, we needed action to help protect residents who are at extremely high risk of severe illness and mortality if infected with COVID-19.

With the help of all Islanders, we are in a better place than we were before Christmas so I am delighted to release updated guidance which will support care homes to reopen for visits.

The guidance adopts a cautious approach; it recommends that a limited number of visits should be permitted and that protective equipment such as surgical masks should be worn, wherever possible, throughout the visit. Furthermore, visitors must provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test before they visit. The attached information sheet explains how often tests are required and how to book them.

Caution is needed because COVID-19 presents a potential ongoing risk to all residents, particularly those who are not fully vaccinated. While the COVID-19 vaccine offers a good level of protection to the person receiving it, it does not prevent illness from COVID-19 in every case and we do not yet fully know whether it stops the spread of infection to others.

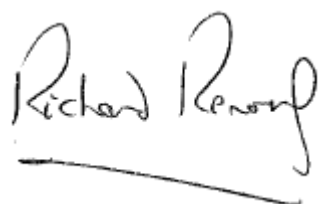
The visiting guidance, which will be regularly reviewed and adapted as required, is available on the Government of Jersey website (gov.je).

I must emphasise that **it is up to each care home to decide when they can safely accept visitors** in accordance with this guidance. So check with the home before you plan your visit. Whilst I know we all want to see our loved ones as soon as possible, it is important that we allow care home staff sufficient time to plan and prepare for safe visiting.

While we continue to face challenging weeks ahead, I would also like to emphasise that we all have a responsibility to follow this guidance and keep ourselves and others safe. We are making progress thanks to the tenacity of Islanders and many difficult sacrifices that they have made.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Deputy Richard Renouf

Minister for Health and Community Services

19-21 Broad Street| St Helier| Jersey| JE2 3R

COVID-19 Care Home Visitor Testing Programme

Visitor information sheet – updated 2 February 2021

Regular COVID testing is critical to keeping everyone safe and stopping the spread of COVID. So, in addition to offering the COVID-19 vaccine, we will continue to test all care home staff and all residents every 4 weeks.

From 2 February 2021, testing is now required for anyone who visits a care home resident, and you will be asked to produce evidence of your negative test result by the care home before you can visit.

Each resident can choose named visitors, based on the following guidelines. These apply regardless of whether the visitor has been vaccinated:

If the resident is fully vaccinated (has had their second dose more than 2 weeks ago) – a maximum of two named visitors can visit up to twice a week, one visitor at a time. Visitors must have a negative PCR test within 4 weeks.

If the resident is not fully vaccinated (no vaccine, 1 dose only, or a second dose but less than 2 weeks ago) – a maximum of one named visitor can visit up to twice a week. Visitors must have a negative PCR test within 72 hours.

The test

The test is a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) swab; the test itself takes less than 30 seconds, and will involve a swab being taken from the back of your throat and nose. The test identifies if you have the virus at the time of the test. It does not indicate if you have previously had the virus. **If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 you should not take part in testing and should contact the helpline immediately on 01534 445566.**

Testing will take place at the Harbour testing centre (Elizabeth Terminal), or the airport drive-through. These both include a walk-through facility, so you can attend in your vehicle or on foot.

Results will be provided, by text message, in an average of 12 hours. You do not have to isolate whilst waiting for the result, but you cannot visit a care home until you have a negative result.

If you test positive, the Contact Tracing team will telephone you. They will explain what action you need to take, and will ask for details of anyone you have been in contact with.

If you test positive for COVID-19 you must self-isolate, along with members of your household. You may be able to claim isolation benefit if you need to self-isolate and can't work.

How do I book my test?

Your care home will advise how your test is to be booked.

What happens if I have any questions, concerns or complaints?

If you have any questions, or wish to complain, call the Coronavirus helpline on 01534 445566.

Thank you for helping to keep our Island safe.