



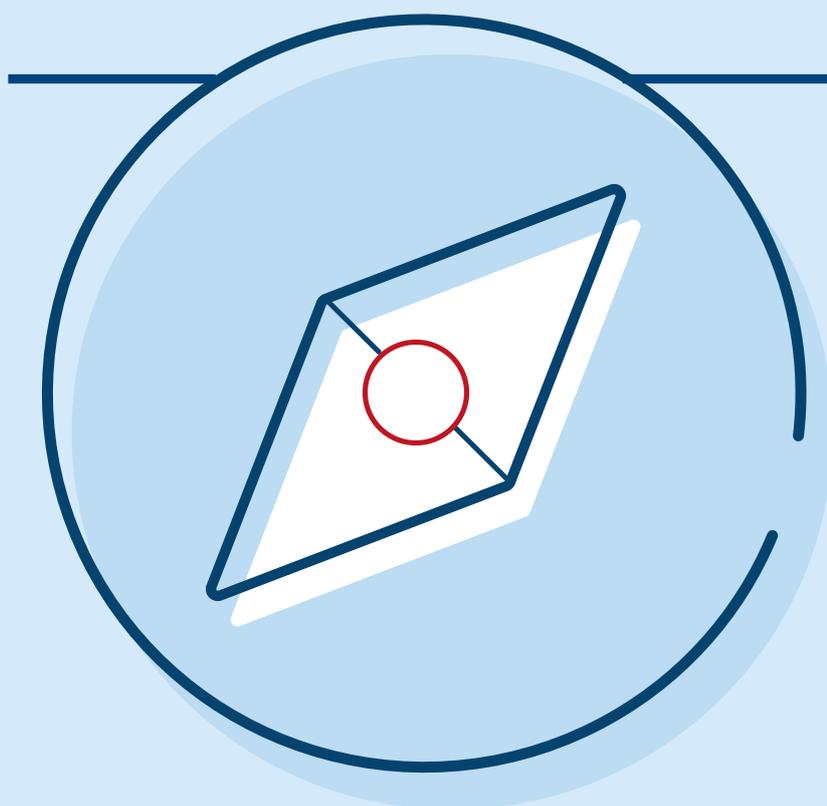
Open with Care

Additional advice and guidance:
activities and outings away from the care home



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Introduction

Introduction

SECTION
01

General restrictions around meeting up indoors and outdoors are relaxing as Scotland plans to move to Level 0 around the end of June. Following publication of [Open with Care](#) in February 2021, this document provides further guidance around care home residents leaving the care home for meaningful contact or activities.

For simplicity, for the purpose of this guidance, we refer to all personal and social activities as ‘outings away from the care home’. These might include, for example:

- Meeting people outdoors or indoors
- Meeting people in public or private spaces (including people’s homes)
- Attending the hairdresser
- Visiting a café, pub or restaurant
- Group events, such as weddings or parties.

This advice relates to personal and social outings away from the care home only and does not impact on, or supersede, [existing guidance](#) on essential personal outings (such as hospital visits) and hospital stays, which is shortly to be reviewed. Updated advice may follow as a result of this review.

Open with Care’s key principles and context, which set out ‘visits’ as ‘meaningful contact’, should be read in conjunction with this document and applied when considering opportunities to leave the care home.

The references in this document to what the COVID-19 lockdown regulations allow on particular dates will be accurate as of the date this guidance is published. These refer to [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\)\(Restrictions and Requirements\)\(Local Levels\)\(Scotland\) Regulations 2020 \(as amended\) \(SSI 2020/344\)](#). It is important this guidance is read in conjunction with laws which impose lockdown restrictions (and any guidance made under or about those matters), as these laws regularly change and are updated. Independent advice on the meaning of any obligations under those laws (or guidance made under it) should be sought where that is needed.

Nothing in this guidance document is intended to supersede any health and safety obligations which individual care home providers may be subject to. It is important individual providers continue to comply with all legal obligations on them to ensure the care home is a safe place to visit, as well as with any health and safety or other obligations on it in respect of it being a safe workplace and seek independent advice on these matters if needed.

SECTION
01



General Principles

General principles

SECTION
02

When a resident wishes to go on outings away from the care home, the presumption should be that these should take place in line with general population COVID-19 restrictions / permissions relevant to the local area.

The exception is where there is clear evidence justifying a more restrictive approach and it is considered this is a necessary and proportionate course of action to protect the health and safety of other residents in the care home when balanced against the individual circumstances of the resident in question and the benefits which leaving the home may have for them.

Promoting opportunities

Opportunities for people to make personal and social visits out of the care home are important to life's meaning and purpose. Accordingly, they should be seen as much more, and of more importance, than merely 'trips'.

A big change, getting ready

Outings away from the care home will, for many, be a big change and not without concern. People may wish to put in place additional precautions, for reassurance, while outings begin and become normal practice. Care homes, relatives and residents are recommended to work together to ensure that everyone is comfortable in planning and supporting outings, in line with advice, individual needs and preferences and local conditions.

Huge progress has been made but risks remain

Care home residents remain a vulnerable population and communal living arrangements present additional risks. General principles and actions to prevent COVID-19 infection and spread remain key both inside and outside of the care home and everyone has a crucial part in rigorously sustaining these.

While vaccination coverage among care home residents is good, there is still a risk that residents could contract COVID-19 in the community and become infectious in the care home afterwards. Vaccination may never be 100% effective in all individuals – it is a population intervention that aims to protect most of the individuals at risk.

Everyone's responsibility

It is important therefore that care homes, residents, family and friends take steps to manage and mitigate this risk, at all times in line with advice, and during outings away from the care home.

Care homes should continue to recognise that an outbreak can arise at any time and the return of a resident after an outing, whether for a day or a week (where overnight stays are permitted under the COVID-19 lockdown laws), may introduce risk to other residents and staff, in particular if all expected COVID-19 controls are not in place.

Care homes are best placed to develop their overall policy for supporting outings from the care home, taking account of the needs and vulnerabilities of all their residents as well as the resources of the care home.

Local oversight teams have an important role in supporting care homes in developing their policy and ensuring outward visiting can happen safely in their local area. They should take into account the circumstances both in the care home and the wider community.

Planning and risks: consider alternatives too

Plans for the outing should be discussed and agreed between the care home and resident/family and friends and recorded in visiting care plans, including advance and proportionate planning of COVID-19 and other risks. Consider alternative outings or ways of doing the trip too – see detailed questions below.

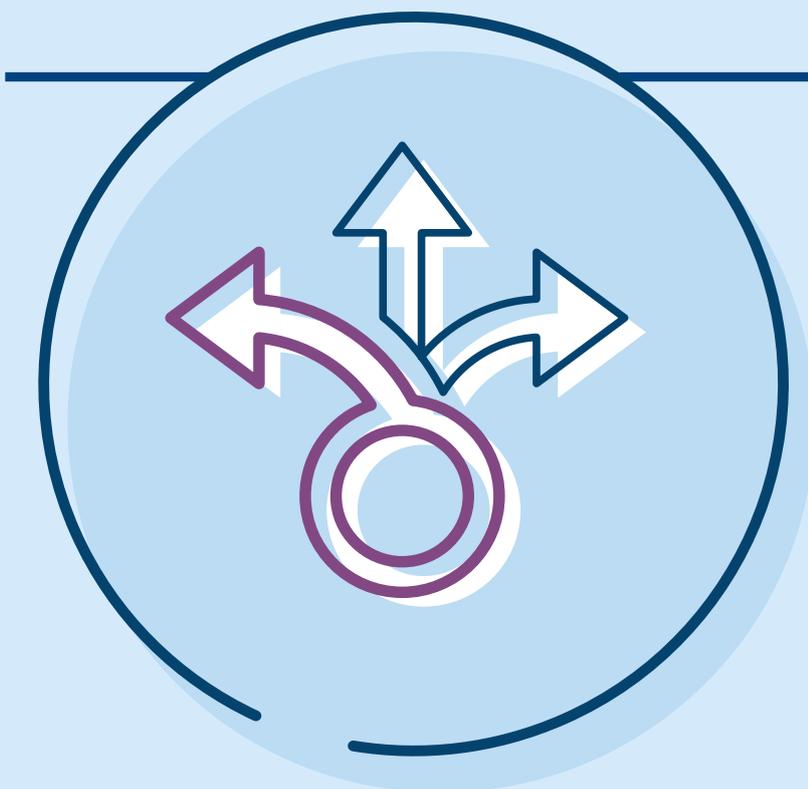
Exceptional circumstances

Care homes should always support visits out in exceptional circumstances, such as to visit a friend or relative at the end of their life.

On the resident's return to the care home

It remains possible that COVID-19 could be brought into the care home and this may then lead to an outbreak. Therefore, it is crucial that current guidance on care home protections continues to be rigorously sustained and maintained.

- Self-isolation and testing of residents is not routinely recommended on return from day visits away from the care home in Levels 0-4 or overnight visits in Levels 0-2.
- Only exceptionally will residents self-isolate on return from outings where health protection teams indicate this is necessary on the basis of COVID-19 clinical concerns.
- Care homes should remain continually vigilant to COVID-19 symptoms within the care home generally.



Planning and arranging outings during the pandemic

Planning and arranging outings during the pandemic

This section summarises how the COVID-19 lockdown regulations apply to residents' outings away from the care home grounds. It covers the key advice and considerations for everyone in planning and supporting outings at the time this guidance is published.

COVID-19 regulations on socialising with others

Care homes should put in place additional plans to support increased outings by residents, as COVID-19 restrictions reduce to a more normalised basis. Relatives are asked to work with care homes as they make the necessary preparations to support this to happen.

Scotland's COVID-19 lockdown regulations remain in place with restrictions reducing with each level, to Level 0. During this time, following those Regulations and the guidance that has been issued on what these contain on how to protect against COVID-19 in the community remains very important for everyone, including care home residents. Key points are that:

- Outside the care home, residents are generally subject to the same COVID-19 regulations around meeting people indoors and outdoors in public places or private houses as the general public.
- COVID-19 lockdown regulations are based on the COVID protection levels, as set out by Scottish Government, at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels> and are subject to change. These webpages should be reviewed regularly to ensure the appropriate regulations and advice is being followed.
- Care home accommodation is currently exempt from COVID-19 lockdown regulations on gatherings in private dwellings. This means that outdoor visits within the care home grounds can continue and are not subject to the same restrictions that apply more generally to people meeting up outdoors in private homes or public outdoor places, provided residents and family wish and the care home deems it safe to do so (taking into account factors such as group size).

- As restrictions differ across Levels, planning should take account of how these affect proposed outings. For example, if a resident planned to stay overnight with family in a different local authority, both areas' Levels (and restrictions) need to be considered to assess if the Regulations permit this.
- It is possible that, if conditions in the pandemic change for the worse, restrictions on socialising may need to increase again. In such instances the COVID-19 lockdown regulations may need to be amended, followed by any local advice and guidance.

A range of national advice should be considered before residents take part in any outings outside the care home, and key web links are included below. These web pages will provide the current advice:

- [Strategic Framework Levels](#) – what people can do when, in different Levels and settings (also see summary table in this document)
- FACTS advice must always be followed: Face coverings - Avoid crowds - Clean hands (good hand hygiene) - Two-metres distance - Self-isolate if you have symptoms. FACTS [advice for everyone to protect against COVID-19 infection](#) is available from Scottish Government, in English and other languages.
- More detailed advice on shielding, physical distancing and face coverings is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Scotland | NHS inform](#).
- Travelling: [how to travel safely](#) is available from Transport Scotland.



Key considerations for supporting outings away from the care home

Key considerations for supporting outings away from the care home

The list below outlines the key considerations that should be in place to support outings away from the care home. This has been adapted from the checklist to supporting indoor meaningful contact in care homes, in Open with Care.

Consideration:

No outbreak in the care home	No ongoing outbreak in the home or outbreak declared over and Health Protection Team sign off.
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Consideration:

Planning for outings

Plans for the outing are discussed and agreed between care home and resident/family and friends and recorded in care plans (visiting).

Advance and proportionate planning of risks (COVID-19 and otherwise).

Risks of COVID-19 exposure increase with outing duration, the number of people meeting together and the number and type of settings that residents visit, as well as the level of infection prevention and controls in the environment (e.g. clean surfaces, face masks, hand hygiene and airflow).

Additional information

Key questions to identify any additional protective steps are below. These questions are for everyone to consider and relate only to COVID-19 (not wider or routine risk assessment):

- Where will the visit take place?
- Who will the resident be meeting up with?
- What frequency and duration is proposed?
- How will the resident/s travel to the location?
- What are the risks of the outing?
- Is everyone (residents, family/friends and care home staff) appropriately aware of risks and protective measures to take?
- How can families and friends support residents to take account of FACTS and other advice (particularly optimal hand hygiene), where there may be difficulties in complying with or understanding the control measures in place?
- How do the vulnerabilities of the resident and others need to be considered?
- What measures can be taken to reduce risk, if there are concerns that outings are higher risk? For example:
 - Can the risk be reduced by changing the location or shortening the visit; visiting outdoors; visiting at the care home?
 - Can the visit be delayed or is there another alternative?
- What plans are in place should the visiting resident return as a close contact of a case in the household or other setting they have visited? Or as a case themselves?
- Care homes should always support visits out in exceptional circumstances, such as to visit a friend or relative at the end of their life and taking advice from local health protection / oversight as necessary.

Consideration:**COVID-19 risk
minimisation**

Family and friends should follow existing best practice around mitigating risk of infection

FACTS advice

Additional information

- Families and friends should consider how best to help protect their loved ones from COVID-19 while on outings together. Examples include:
 - Households that the resident visits having ventilation maximised throughout the home.
 - Increasing the cleaning of surfaces such as door handles as well as shared facilities such as bathrooms.
 - Strictly adhering to household/gathering restriction numbers whilst on outings (e.g. if 6 people from 3 households can meet, the visiting resident is considered one of the 6 people and one of the 3 households).
- Face coverings
- Avoid crowds
- Clean hands (good hand hygiene)
- Two-metres distance
- Self-isolate if you have symptoms

**Friend/family
symptom
screening**

Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who has been confirmed as case does not meet up together, even outdoors

Anyone with any other illness eg cold, gastroenteritis, other virus, should avoid meeting up together

Additional information

Friends and family should also download and activate the [Protect Scotland app](#) to support with any onward need for contact tracing, if they have not already done so.

Consideration:**Vaccination**

High level coverage is in the care home and a robust process in place to ensure continued coverage of staff and residents

Loved ones should consider the important protection offered by vaccinations when meeting indoors in private settings

Additional information

Vaccination is not mandatory to supporting outings, for either individual residents and/or their loved ones. Preliminary evidence suggests that vaccination does appear to reduce mortality and sickness from COVID-19 and so people should give consideration to being vaccinated before meeting up, where at all possible.

This condition has not been placed on the general population but it is important to reiterate the importance of the vaccine as a measure to mitigate risks to care home residents, particularly those over 65 years of age.

Where people have not been vaccinated ensure that those making that decision are aware of the potential risk to the individual and to those they come into contact with.

[Current advice](#) is that vaccination status does not change the need to continue all current COVID-19 mitigation measures (for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals). In particular: vaccine status does NOT change subsequent public health actions or interventions (including isolation); vaccinated people should continue to comply with ALL testing regimes as per unvaccinated people.

Clinical Oversight Team

No concerns about care home quality assurance indicators

No recommended restrictions on outings by the local Public Health Team or Oversight Group due to concern about rates of infection in the area

Additional information

HSCP partners or delegated representatives of local oversight teams can advise on individual and unforeseen or complex circumstances, where input is needed in addition to existing COVID-19 advice.

In the scenario that community prevalence of COVID-19 increases, local oversight or health protection teams may recommend that overnight stays and indoor socialising are paused.

Consideration:

Friend/family testing

Friends and family members may wish to consider community-based testing before having their loved one to stay or going on an outing together.

Additional information

Anyone planning to meet up with care home residents socially may wish to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before they do so, using community test sites or ordering online even if they do not have symptoms. This is to help provide an additional layer of reassurance, alongside the other COVID-19 protections (such as FACTS).

Where an overnight stay is planned, family LFD testing is recommended beforehand using community test sites or ordering online.

Testing could help to reduce the risks of COVID-19 being transmitted during outings by people who are unaware they are infectious, however it is important to remember that no test is 100% accurate.

Please note that if a test result is negative, this is not a guarantee that the person does not have coronavirus. Family and friends testing negative must continue to follow restrictions and guidance, including [FACTS](#).

Anyone who tests positive should get a PCR test and immediately start self-isolation.



On the resident's return to the care home

On the resident's return to the care home

This section covers key advice and guidance when residents come back to the care home from outings. These relate to self-isolation and testing.

As noted earlier, it remains possible that COVID-19 is brought into the care home and can lead to an outbreak. It remains crucial that current care home protections continue to be rigorously sustained and maintained to protect residents and staff.

Self-isolation of care home residents

Care home residents should not routinely be asked to self-isolate for 14 days on return from outings away in Levels 0-4. This includes after residents have visited other households or had overnight stays away (permitted in Level 0-2 areas only).

Care homes should consider the facts and circumstances of each case and any individual circumstances that, on the basis of assessed clinical risk and local health protection advice, deem self-isolation important (for the protection of the individual and other residents as well as staff). For example, an exception might be where a resident has become a contact of a COVID-19 case and is advised to self-isolate by local health protection teams.

Care homes should remain continually vigilant to COVID-19 symptoms within the care home generally.

Testing of care home residents

Together with self-isolation, testing of residents is not routinely recommended after day or overnight outings away from the care home (across Levels 0-4). Care homes should consider each case and any circumstances that, on the basis of assessed risk, may deem testing and self-isolation important (for the protection of individual and other residents as well as staff).

Wider existing guidance on self-isolation for essential outings (including hospital stays) and respite is available [Public Health Scotland Care Home Guidance](#).

If the resident becomes symptomatic, during or after an outing

If someone becomes symptomatic during an outing away from the care home and they are either suspected or confirmed as being COVID-19 positive, to either return to the care home immediately to self-isolate or immediately return to the home of the family to self-isolate together. Local health protection teams should advise on such decisions which should be discussed with the individual, their family and care home. Discussions should take into account individual circumstances and needs, risks posed and whether the family or friends are able to ensure ongoing self-isolation of the whole household for 14 days, noting the extended self-isolation period for care home residents (not 10 days). **They should self-isolate in line with current advice and have PCR testing (as per existing testing practice for all individuals).**

LFD testing should not be undertaken in symptomatic individuals. If symptomatic, PCR testing should be arranged through the care home or at a testing centre if they are still out on the visit.

If someone becomes symptomatic after an outing away from the care home, the resident should be supported to self-isolate in line with current advice, and have PCR testing (as per existing surveillance testing practice for all individuals). [The Public Health Scotland Care Home Guidance](#) provides detailed advice should this situation arise.

If the care home develops an outbreak while the resident is away

If an outbreak develops in the care home while the resident is away then a decision will need to be made as to whether the individual returns to the care home, which should be supported if the resident so wishes, recognising that the care home is their place of residence and home. Local health protection teams should advise on such decisions which should be discussed with the individual, their family and take into account the nature of the outbreak, the risks posed and whether the care home is able to ensure that the individual is isolated on return.

Continued COVID-19 vigilance

Care home 'COVID-19 surveillance' – or ongoing vigilance – remains important. To support this, care homes should maintain a record of residents' overnight stays and outings in residents' visiting care plans.

Care home management should review infection prevention and control at the care home regularly, ensuring current advice and guidance continues to be rigorously sustained.



Strategic Framework permissions

Strategic Framework permissions: outings by Level, May-June 2021

At the time this guidance is published, the aim is for Scotland, in the main, to move to Level 2 on 17 May 2021, to Level 1 in early June 2021 and Level 0 by the end of June 2021. From 17 May 2021, socialising in other people's homes will be permitted in areas in Levels 0-2, including overnight stays.

However, it should be noted, that whilst travel across Scotland will be permitted, no-one will be able to enter a Level 3 or 4 area (where applicable) unless for a permitted reason (e.g. being part of an extended household).

The following table outlines advice when care homes have a current outbreak:

**Confirmed
outbreak in
care home**

Essential personal business only, e.g. attending a funeral, hospital visits to A&E or planned out-patient or day case appointments.

Until outbreak declared over.

The following table outlines key advice in the COVID-19 lockdown regulations on meeting people outdoors and indoors outside of the care home grounds. It is provided to support consideration of the types of outings and activities residents may wish to do. **It is not a complete outline of the regulations. Care homes, families and residents should refer to the full guidance online for the complete and current version of the lockdown laws and guidance which is applicable to their local area (and any area which they may travel too).**

Please note: the proposed easing of restrictions are subject to change, therefore the Scottish Government’s strategic protection levels should be reviewed regularly: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels>.

National Strategic Framework level	Proposed timescale	Outings away from the care home (All subject to change and illustrative only)
Level 4	(Before 16th April)	<p>Essential personal business only, e.g. attending a funeral, hospital visits to A&E or planned out-patient or day case appointments.</p> <p>All other trips out of the care and any admissions from hospital or the community require a 14 day isolation period on entering the care home.</p>
Level 4 amends	(From 16th April)	<p>Meeting people outdoors Up to 6 people from up to 6 households, plus children under 12, can socialise outdoors</p> <p>Travel - removal of travel distance limit within Scotland for outdoor, small group recreation, socialising or exercise (but do not stay away from your local authority area overnight for that purpose).</p>

National Strategic Framework level	Proposed timescale	Outings away from the care home (All subject to change and illustrative only)
Level 3	From 26th April	<p>Meeting people outdoors – as above.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (public space) Up to 6 people from 2 households can socialise indoors in a public place such as a café or restaurant unrestricted travel within Scotland, England and Wales (subject to other local restrictions in place).</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (private dwelling) No in-house socialising in houses outside of a care home unless relevant exemptions apply.</p> <p>Relevant: all shops, stores and close contact services can open hospitality venues like cafes, pubs and restaurants can open until 20:00 indoors. Indoor attractions and public buildings such as galleries, museums and libraries can open.</p>

National Strategic Framework level	Proposed timescale	Outings away from the care home (All subject to change and illustrative only)
Level 2	From 17th May	<p>Meeting people outdoors Up to 8 people from up to 8 households may socialise outdoors in a public place.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (public space) Up to 6 people from up to 3 households may socialise in an indoors public space.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (private dwelling) Up to 6 people from 3 household can socialise indoors in a private home.</p> <p>Note: From Level 2, overnight stays in other people’s homes are permitted (where they are not part of an extended household).</p> <p>Events (indoors and outdoors) Outdoor and indoor events can resume. Hospitality venues can open until 22:30. Performance arts can resume outdoors.</p>

National Strategic Framework level	Proposed timescale	Outings away from the care home (All subject to change and illustrative only)
Level 1	Early June	<p>Meeting people outdoors Up to 12 people from 12 households can socialise outdoors.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (public space) Up to 8 people from up to 3 households can socialise indoors in a public place.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (private dwelling) Up to 6 people from up to 3 households in a private dwelling.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Hospitality can remain open (indoors) until 23:00hrs and local licensing laws outdoors. Funfairs and soft play can open.</p>
Level 0	By end of June	<p>Meeting people outdoors Up to 15 people from up to 15 households can socialise outdoors.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (public space) Up to 10 people from up to 4 households can socialise indoors in a public place.</p> <p>Meeting people indoors (private dwelling) Up to 8 people from up to 4 households in a private dwelling.</p> <p>Events increased numbers, increased numbers at live events, all sport activities permitted.</p>