

Guidance for our families support bubbles

From 13th June, single adult households in England can form a 'support bubble' with one other household. All of those in this support bubble can spend time with each other indoors and outside, including overnight stays. While in the bubble, people do not need to stay two metres apart.

The government introduced these as they recognised that people who lived alone might be finding lockdown particularly difficult.

It's important to remember the support bubble can only be between two households and once decided it cannot change.

What does that mean for your family member?

If your family member lives alone, even if they have support (staff are not considered part of the household) they can form a support bubble with one other household. This includes if they live in their own flat with their own front door but there are some shared areas for example lounge or laundry area (we will share more about this later on). Once in a support bubble they won't have to keep a two metre distance and can touch and hug others in their bubble.

If your family member lives in a care home or supported living where there are other people living there too we are really sorry but at the moment they cannot form a support bubble with another household. We will however continue to support them to meet up with family and friends in outside spaces keeping a two meter distance.

If your loved one is in the shielding group or at a very high risk the government strongly advises they stay home and limit outside visits to once a day. We want to follow this advice, however there may be times when we support people in this group to meet up in a support bubble with family, if being apart is really affecting their mental health or behaviour or they are on an end of life pathway. If you are not sure if your loved one is in this group ask their team.

How do we all decide who is in the support bubble?

We will talk to your loved one and you about our guidance and our responsibilities as an organisation; together we will complete a risk assessment to see if there are any risks and what we can do to lessen them.

If your family member is able to make their own decisions, we will help them to understand the guidance and risk of support bubbles, so that they can decide if they want to be part of one and how it will work.

If your loved one doesn't have capacity to make this decision and you hold Court Appointed Deputyship (CoP) for them or Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) it will be you that makes the decision for them. We know that your decision will be made in a way that keeps risk to your loved one to a minimum.

If your loved one is not able to make their own decision we will involve you in deciding what is in the person's best interests.

You may decide that it is not the right thing for you to form a support bubble with your loved one and that is okay, we will continue to support distanced visits in outside spaces.

As you know at Dimensions keeping the people we support and the team who support them safe is a priority which means we sometimes have to add extra precautions into our guidance.

If you have formed a support bubble with your loved one we ask that you:

- Consider meeting up only one day per week or two if your loved one is staying overnight.
- Don't form a further support bubble with another household, this is against government guidance.
- Continue with hygiene precautions - regular hand washing and wiping down surfaces.
- If your loved one, you or a member of your household develops symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 you must isolate for 14 days as per the government guidance.
- If your loved one is part of your bubble you can pick them up in your vehicle if you would like to.
- We will be able to drop your loved one off if they are visiting you in your home but our staff will not be able to stay and support them during the visit.
- When your loved one returns we will take their temperature and ask them to have a shower and change their clothes so that we are minimising any risk.

If your loved one lives in their own flat but has shared areas for example a lounge or laundry area:

- We will ask your loved one who is in your support bubble to not use the shared lounge.
- If there is a shared laundry area it would be really helpful, but not essential, if you could do your loved one's washing for them to minimise the risk to others who use the laundry area. If this is not possible we will help them to use the laundry area when no one else is around and wipe down all the areas they have touched when they leave.

If you would like to talk about this please call our Family Helpline and talk to one of our Family Consultants.

call: 0300 303 9161.

It's available Monday– Friday 10am-2pm

Or you can email us:

family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org

There for you

Dimensions (UK) Ltd. Registered office: Building 1430, Arlington Business Park, Theale, Reading RG7 4SA • June 2020