

Guidance on visits in Supported Living Settings from 17th May 2021

Introduction

As we are now into step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown in England People living in supported Living Settings are now able to have family and friends visit their homes and to visit other people.

From the 17th May the restrictions in relation to COVID19, have changed to allow people to socialise indoors with other people from different households. The new guidance states that people can: "socialise indoors in a group of up to 6 people or 2 households, including for overnight stays," and "Up to 30 people can meet outside".

In supported living settings the same rules will apply for family and friends visiting people we support, or for people we support visiting friends and family in their homes.

To support Dimension's guidance for supported living settings, the definition of a household in this instance is: *where people live together in a property with shared facilities e.g. kitchen and living areas and a shared front door.* We have also prepared some FAQs which can be found at the end of this guidance to give some scenarios of numbers and make up of visitors.

Visits in outdoor spaces and in community settings e.g. meeting in a pub will follow the national guidance and numbers as identified above. E.g. 6 people from any number of households. . If they met in a pub garden the number can increase to up to 30 people.

Safety Measures

The following will continue to be part of the safety measures that services are required to use to support safe visiting, while continuing to manage the risk from covid19. They will be determined by the level of risk remaining for the people who live there.

All visitors will be required to undertake Lateral Flow Testing (LFT). Visitors will be advised by the manager on how they should access LFT tests. These can be ordered online here: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>. In some cases the service may be able to provide these, but visitors will be asked to access these themselves in the first instance prior to visiting and provide proof of a negative test result taken in the last 24 hours (unless they are exempt from testing following a positive test result for coronavirus in the previous 90 days).

All visitors will have their temperature checked before entering the person's home. If their temperature is 37.8 degrees Celsius or above, they cannot enter, regardless of the test result and will be asked to go home and wait for 48 hours before trying to visit again.

All visitors will be asked to use the PPE provided to them and to follow any requests by colleagues that may be in place to support the reduction of risk when they visit. These could include only accessing specific areas to reduce additional cleaning requirements or limiting contact with others etc.

In the event of a Covid outbreak in any of our settings, visiting will be suspended and a risk assessed approach will be implemented in line with the principles from our [framework for making decisions about in-person contact during the pandemic](#).

In the event of changes to local restrictions, Dimensions will follow the local guidance and apply this local guidance to decision making using the framework.

Advice for Families visiting our services

We will also ask that were possible visitors and family members self-isolate for at least two days before visiting (so that the result of the rapid lateral flow coronavirus test they will take on arrival is more reliable) and that they consider if any of the following apply before visiting:

- They do not have any COVID-19 symptoms
- They have not tested positive for Corona virus in the last 14 days
- They are not currently self-isolating
- They do not share a household with anyone who has been told to self-isolate (close contact of a COVID-19 case) in the previous 10 days, or anyone who has returned from high risk countries in the same time period.
- They have not been in contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms in last 10 days
- They have not been contacted by or advised by any Test and Trace system to self-isolate in the last 10 days
- They have not travelled or returned from a trip outside of the UK in the last 14 days

If someone having contact with family might put another person they live with at risk, we will need to work with all parties to find a safe solution and may ask external services, e.g. social services care management to assist us with the risk management.

Physical Contact

People we support and their families and friends may want to hug when they meet. They should follow the [government guidance about how to reduce risk when hugging](#). People may also wish to hold hands, but everyone should bear in mind that any contact increases the risk of transmission of Covid and while we have seen great progress with vaccination, the risks and unknown risks from new variants means that we are still maintaining high levels of infection control.

There may still be people that are considered a high risk due to their vulnerability, especially if they have been unable to receive the vaccine due to a health condition etc. We will ask that families talk to colleagues about how they can have physical contact with their relative and what levels of PPE and hand washing/sanitising will be needed during the visit to reduce the risks from this contact.

For services where multiple people live together, visits will need to be limited to set time frames, and will need to be planned in advance and booked with the manager/service so that only two households or 5 other people are visiting at a time. We ask that you plan times in advance and work with teams to keep to these so that there is sufficient time between any visits for infection control procedures to be followed.

Colleagues will be undertaking additional high levels of infection control cleaning following visits, so we ask that families continue to work with us to keep everyone as safe as we can.

If family members have any queries about this guidance, they can call the helpline for families (open from 9.30am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday) on 0300 303 9161 or email the team at family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org.

Visits to Supported Living Settings FAQ's:

Q: If a person lives with 3 others in a house, are they classed as 1 household?

A: Yes, everyone that lives together in a house are classed as one household, they can have up to 5 other people visiting from 5 different households or one other household with no limit on how many people as long as they are considered a household and all live together.

Q: What if there are 6 or more people living in a house?

A: For households with 6 or more, the same rules would apply and up to 5 people from 5 other households, or one other household with any number of people can visit indoors.

Q: What if there is already a 'bubble' within the household?

A: Households may not always be limited to a single property, for example: a household with a married couple and 2 older children may have already formed a bubble with an older parent making this 5 people in 2 houses, this would be ok as the number of people is below 6. If the same scenario included 3 older children and a grandparent, with a second grandparent in a support bubble, this would make 7 people but would still be permissible, as the family group who formed a support bubble are one household, even though they may live in 2 different houses.

Q: What if I live in my own flat?

A: People with their own flats and front doors are also classed as one household but they may already have a support bubble with another household. In this scenario an additional household can be added making it 3 households who can meet indoors, with no limit on numbers or the 2 bubbled households and up to 5 people from different households.

Q: Are colleagues included in the numbers within a household?

A: No, Colleagues do not count as part of the household and are also excluded from the numbers of visitors.