

# Information leaflet for visiting nursing homes and residential care facilities



**Version 1.2 03.12.2020**

This leaflet is based on the new HPSC [Guidance](#) for visiting **Long Term Residential Care Facilities (Version 1.4)**. It is for people who are visiting people who live in nursing homes and other settings like nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The leaflet is about visiting inside the nursing home. “Window visiting” is where a person stands outside and speaks to a person at safe distance through an open window or by telephone. This is safe at any Framework Level and during outbreaks. If outdoor visiting suits the visitor and the resident this is also safe at any Framework Level or during outbreaks provided people keep a safe distance. An outdoor visit needs to be planned as the nursing home will need to check if there is suitable place and a good time for an outdoor visit.

## **Reducing the risk of COVID-19 in Nursing Homes**

Older people and people who already have health problems are at the highest risk of getting very seriously ill if they catch COVID-19 infection. Since COVID-19 started we have seen how quickly this infection can spread and how much harm it can do if it gets into a nursing home. Everyone knows that visiting is very important but the nursing homes need to follow Government Recommendations on visiting and need to keep all the residents safe from COVID-19 as best they can.

## **Do not visit a nursing home**

- if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection or of any other infection
- if you have been told you are COVID-19 contact.

## **During your visit**

- you will be asked to sign in
- you will be asked about symptoms of COVID-19

- you should clean your hands with hand sanitiser or wash with soap and water when you arrive (and again when you leave)
- try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- you will be asked to wear a face covering (please bring one with you). You can get more information on wearing a face covering on [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie)
- keep a safe distance ([social distancing](#)) from everyone you meet. If the visit is in a place where you can keep 2 metres away from the person you are visiting (and from everyone else) and the mask is causing problems with communicating with the resident you may be able to take off the face covering during the visit. Check with staff.
- if you cough or sneeze at any time when you don't have mask on cover your nose and mouth with use a tissue or your sleeve (not your hand)
- do not wear disposable gloves unless you are asked to do so by staff.
- It is OK to bring a gift or other things the person needs when you visit.

### **Framework Levels 3, 4 and 5 and Outbreaks**

During Framework Levels 3, 4 and 5 and during outbreaks of infection there is very little visiting but visiting in *critical and compassionate circumstances* is always allowed by the Government Policy. Critical and compassionate circumstances includes if someone is close to the end of their life but there are lots of other critical and compassionate circumstances too. If you want to see other examples of what this means click on the link to the full document at the top of this leaflet.

At framework levels 3 and 4 up to one visit per week by one person should be facilitated on compassionate grounds. At framework level 5 up to one visit every two weeks by one person should be facilitated on compassionate grounds and at level 5 up to one visit every week by one person may be appropriate in certain disability services based on risk assessment.

## Quick check table

Please check the table on the next page as a general guide before you plan to visit a nursing home or facility like a nursing home. You must always check in with the nursing home before you arrive.

Type of visit	Government Framework Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor and window visiting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support for remote visiting (phone and video calls)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access for essential service providers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access for important service providers	Yes	Reduced	Suspended if required	No	No
Critical and compassionate visiting	Yes	Yes	Yes – 1 visit per week	Yes 1 visit per week	Yes 1 visit per fortnight
Visitors should be assessed for features of COVID-19 and check if COVID Contact before admission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open for visiting with protective measures	Yes	No	No	No	No
Open for visiting with enhanced protective measures	-	Yes	No	No	No
Social drive in private car	Yes	No	No	No	No
Outing for essential business (risk assessment)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visits by children (with supervision)	Yes	No	No	No	No
Number of routine visits per week (general)	2 (with 2 people)	2 (with 1 person)	0	0	0