



COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) BCOP BULLETIN 26th November 2020

The BCOP Bulletin aims to ensure that families and other visitors remain informed of the latest guidance, and latest BCOP specifics in relation to the virus. Click on these headings to access the information relevant to you:

[Christmas Gift Guidance](#)

[BCOP Guidance on Christmas Visiting](#)

[Appendix: Government Guidance on Christmas 'Bubbles'](#)

I know it is not long since I last wrote to families via a Relatives Bulletin but I am sure that you are all anxious to understand what Christmas might look like this year for yourselves and your loved ones.

Increasing the number of people moving in and out of our care homes increases the risk of transmission of the virus with every individual; as heartbreaking as it is, this virus does, as we all know, kill the very elderly and vulnerable. We can all remember how horrific the first wave of Coronavirus was.

We are equally extremely keen to be able to, **very** cautiously, enable some kind of Christmas for our BCOP family in a way that acknowledges the very high risk and minimises that as much as possible.

[Christmas Gift Guidance](#)

Any gifts that you bring to the care home must be wipeable, left at the entrance of the home, and staff informed so that they can collect them. Please try to ensure that you leave Christmas gifts at the nursing home at least 72 hours before you would like the resident to open them; the gifts will be left in a receiving area for 72 hours before being given to the resident, as the virus is known to die after this time span on hard surfaces.

DISCLAIMER: This information is compiled by BCOP and updated at 2pm on 26.11.2020. The information about BCOP policies and actions is correct at the time of publication.

While we make every effort to accurately communicate the latest government recommendations, due to the fast-moving nature of the current coronavirus situation, we advise relatives, external visitors and staff to check the official guidance from the UK government at www.gov.uk for further clarification/information.

BCOP Guidance on Christmas Visiting

The government's recent guidance refers to the possibility of visits home for care home residents to celebrate Christmas with family; see the Appendix for more information. However, any visits home will also need to abide by BCOP's own rules below, which are in place to keep yourselves, our residents and our staff safe.

If you or the resident decides that you want a visit home on Christmas or Boxing Day:

- A visit home can take place on either Christmas or Boxing Day, not both
- The resident must only be in contact with people from one household on the day.
- Visits should be short, ideally a maximum of 4 hours because the virus has left many of our residents extremely frail, and a visit any longer than this will physically exhaust them. This will, in turn, suppress their already compromised immune system and make them more vulnerable to the virus.
- The people in your household must restrict their contact with others for two weeks prior to the visit, have each arranged to have a Covid-19 test and have received a negative result. Evidence of the test result will be required by the nursing home. You should speak to the nursing home manager about getting tested prior to the visit, allowing approximately 1 week prior to the visit for the test results to be returned.
- When you arrive to collect your loved one, you must wait at the external doors of the nursing home, and staff will bring the resident to you. You must be able to help the resident into the vehicle, as staff cannot mix with you to do this.
- On their return to the nursing home, your loved one must then self-isolate for 14 days and have a Covid-19 test prior to being able to mix with others within the 'Nursing Home Family bubble'. You will not be able to visit during this period of isolation.

I would urge all families to take these rules into consideration when deciding if your loved one will have a visit home and to seriously consider whether this visit would really be in their best interest, if your loved one is suffering with a dementia illness and lacks capacity to make their own choices.

I know that these arrangements may seem very restrictive, but as other restrictions are reduced, the risk increases and the prevalence of the virus is still high; all the steps we are taking are designed only with everyone's safety in mind.

That being said, in the circumstances, we all wish you the very best of the seasons greetings, urge you to stay safe, and certainly wish everyone a normal and very different New Year!

Kindest regards

Janet

Head of Care & Quality, BCOP

Appendix: Government Guidance on Christmas ‘Bubbles’

The extract below is taken from the government guidance on Christmas Bubbles for those in residential care:

3.7 If you are a care home resident

The guidance on care homes applies to England - see guidance for [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#).

Spending time with others outside the care home will increase risk of exposure to coronavirus for the resident and the other residents in their home on their return, and is likely to place an additional burden on the care home. Given this, visits out of care homes should only be considered for care home residents of working age. Residents, their families and care homes should very carefully consider whether this is the right thing to do, or whether visiting at the care home would provide meaningful contact in a safer way.

Some residents may be able to leave their care home, in agreement with the home and subject to individual risk assessments. A care home resident may form a bubble with one other household, and should not form a three-household Christmas bubble at any point.

If a care home resident does join a household for Christmas they should maintain social distance, wash hands regularly, and let plenty of fresh air into rooms by opening windows and doors.

Others in the household should take steps to minimise the risk to the care home resident and others in the care home, recognising that introducing coronavirus to a care home puts all those who live and work there at risk. All members of the bubble should:

- take steps to minimise their potential exposure to coronavirus by limiting the number of people they meet for two weeks prior to allowing a care home resident into their household
- talk to the care home about getting tested prior to meeting the care home resident outside the care home. In order to safely return to the care home, the resident will need to be tested and isolated. We will provide further details shortly through the publication of relevant guidance.

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