



COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) BCOP BULLETIN 8th December 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:

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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 the latest information that is in the public domain regarding 'Relatives Testing' in care homes and the roll-out of the coronavirus vaccinations.

Visiting from 14th December onwards

Care homes are currently being provided with Relative Lateral Flow Device (LFDs) coronavirus tests. This means that from 14th December onwards there will be two ways for a limited number of visitors to visit their loved ones:

- Taking an LFD test and being able to visit the resident in their room in the care home
- Using the visiting pod

We are busy preparing for the LFD tests, and there is much to do before the system becomes a live working practice:

- Selected staff are undergoing rapid training in the use of the LFDs.

DISCLAIMER: This information is compiled by BCOP and updated at 2pm on 08.12.2020. 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.

- Each care home is setting up a designated area in which to conduct the testing, and enable you to wait, wearing full PPE, for the 30 minutes it takes to get the results of the test.
- Each care home is receiving additional PCR testing kits to use if any of the relatives' LFD tests return a positive result.

Please be aware that although the government date for the provision of LFDs is 14th December, care homes are experiencing delays in deliveries - we can only begin this type of visiting once the LFD tests have been delivered.

LFD-tested visits - who can visit?

- Each resident will be able to have 2 nominated visitors for a 30 minute visit, twice a week.
- The nominated visitors must be the same people every week, you cannot change who the nominated visitors are.
- No more than 2 visitors will be permitted in any 1 hour period.
- Each visitor will be required to undergo LFD testing at each visit, before entering the care home. The first time you visit you will need to sign a consent form for this, the form will be given to you to sign on your first arrival to the home for visiting.
- All visits must be booked in advance.

The LFD Testing Process

You must arrive at the care home 30 minutes before your scheduled visiting time.

When you arrive, you will need to follow the following procedure:

1. Put on the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that we give you - a face mask, gloves and apron - before entering the care home.
2. Take your temperature using the thermometer provided. If your temperature is above 37.5°C, you will not be allowed to continue the visit.
3. You will then be shown to the designated testing area of the care home, where a member of staff can help you with the testing process. This member of staff will have a higher line of PPE on, which will include a face mask and visor - please don't be alarmed at this!
4. After taking the test, you will be given a bar code sticker and asked to wait in the designated testing area for 30 minutes, until the test results can be read.
5. When you have the test result, you will need to register it using your mobile smart phone, on the online self-test registration form - you'll need your barcode sticker to do this. A member of staff can help you through this process.
6. If your results are negative, you will then be shown to the resident's room, where you must remain for the duration of your visit.

7. You must observe all PPE and Infection Control and Prevention Guidance i.e. wearing PPE, handwashing / sanitising (you can do this with gloves on!), 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' and social distancing - but with these precautions in place, you will be able to hug and hold hands - hurrah!

Positive Test Results

- Sadly, if your LFD test is positive, you will not be permitted to visit.
- You will be asked to allow a member of staff to carry out a PCR Coronavirus test on you.
- You will need to register this test on the Care Homes Portal as a "Testing at Home" registration. Staff will provide you with the website address of the care homes portal. The care home will then book an emergency 'same day' courier to collect the test.
- You must then go straight home, avoiding public transport if possible, and self isolate for 10 days.
- At the end of 10 days, you will be allowed to visit again, but the testing process will be repeated.

Vaccination Consent

As you may have heard, the UK now has stocks of the Covid-19 vaccine, and in some areas of the UK, the roll out of the vaccine to Care Home Residents has begun. With a 90 year old resident of a care home in Coventry being the very first person in the UK to receive the vaccine!

We are currently receiving Gov.uk guidance and directives thick and fast!

The vaccine and the process will not be administered by our staff - it is being administered by specially trained teams of NHS / Public Health England staff.

NHS England / PHE have asked care homes to send you all letters that explain the process of vaccination and give information relating to the nature of the vaccine, along with consent forms for those residents who cannot consent themselves.

Our care home administrators are sending out copies of both the letter and consent form to you all.

It is important that the consent form is completed, and returned without delay, as the vaccine roll-out will move at a considerable pace now that it is here.

You can return the signed form either by scanning and emailing it to us, by popping it through the care home's letterbox, or by 1st class post, but do be mindful that the Christmas post might cause delays. Receiving the forms back as soon as possible will give us a clear picture of which residents are to receive the vaccine.

Prioritising the care of your loved ones

It goes without saying that we are all thrilled to be able to invite our missing family back into our care homes. This does, however, come with extreme caution, given how virulent this virus is.

Conducting the LFD and PCR tests place a considerable additional time burden on staff, so please do be patient if you are waiting, and understand that the very staff testing you are also the ones who provide care to your loved ones. Despite the multitudinal demands upon our teams, that care must always come first.

I thank you in advance for your patience and understanding, and I do wish you all safe testing. It will be heartwarming for our teams to be able to see you all again, and for you all to be able to hug and hold hands with your loved ones once again for a short period only, but please, **not with the staff - we must still observe social distancing as much as we can.**

So finally, allow me to be the first to send you all the biggest 'welcome back virtual hug'!

Kindest regards

Janet
Head of Care & Quality, BCOP