

A statement from Birmingham City Council on Care Home Visiting:

“The national programme, led by the Department of Health and Social Care, to issue lateral flow testing kits to care homes is underway and our homes in Birmingham are due to receive kits over the next 4 weeks.

The intention is that rapid regular testing will be offered to two visitors per resident, which, when combined with other infection control measures, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing and good hygiene will support meaningful visits.

Whilst this is really welcome news, we need people to be patient with our homes as they receive their kits over the coming weeks. Care homes will have a lot to work through, including training their staff to support the testing, putting in place booking and logging processes and rolling it out for every one of their residents - this may take a little time. The Council and our partners will support homes and visitors with this programme.

The new [national guidance](#), which came into effect on 2nd December, is clear that anyone visiting indoors in a care home must test negative before each visit. Homes are still getting their test kits and setting up their systems, so until testing is available any visits need to be outdoors, through a window, in a “visiting pod” or behind a substantial screen in a separate visiting room. In all cases PPE must be used along with good infection prevention and control, and social distancing must be maintained.

Our homes are keen to remind families and friends that the safety of their residents remains their priority and a negative test does not mean there is no longer a risk of transmitting the virus - people visiting their loved ones have a really important role in helping care homes to keep residents safe. Care homes will still be taking a measured approach to receiving visitors in a safe way, following robust infection prevention, and taking into account their specific circumstances and things like the layout of their home and the individual needs of their residents and staff.

Equally where our care homes are experiencing a Covid outbreak, they will unfortunately not be able to support you with in-person visits for 28 days from their last confirmed Covid case. However, they will continue to support residents and families with video and telephone calls. We would ask for your continued patience in these circumstances to allow the home to safely manage the outbreak and focus on providing essential care to residents.

Once the testing is finally underway, homes will let families know by letter or email and also remind them that visitors are still required to adhere to the hands, face, space measures to keep their loved ones safe.



We are immensely grateful to our care homes who continue to work incredibly hard to protect some of our most vulnerable residents, friends and family members through very difficult times.

The Council will update it's care home visiting Position Statement in light of the national guidance shortly, this will be available [here](#)."

Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health (DPH) &
Professor Graeme Betts, Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)

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