

Rev#/Version:	Date Issued:	Comment	Author:
1.4	3 July 2020	Published	James Wilson
<b>Evidence Base:</b>	<i>COVID-19 Regional Principles for Visiting in Care Settings in Northern Ireland (30 June 2020)<sup>1</sup></i>		

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Beeches accommodation services (Nursing, Residential and Supported Living) are the home of each resident residing in them. The Beeches recognises and respect the rights of each resident to a family life and to not have undue restriction on their movement. The Beeches recognises the benefits to the wellbeing of each resident from regular contact and social interaction with their loved ones.
- 1.2 The Beeches also seeks to balance these rights against our duty of care towards each resident to protect them for harm.
- 1.3 Equally the Beeches has duty to its staff and visitors to not expose them to undue risk of harm and to take reasonable precautions when organising and managing its workplaces.
- 1.4 While COVID-19 remains an active risk to every person and in particularly those with underlying health conditions and other defined vulnerabilities to this disease i.e. member of BAME group. The Beeches aims to provide guidance to management, staff, residents, and relatives to facilitate visiting during these exceptional times. Visiting restrictions are very important in our overall strategy to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into our services.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/covid-visiting-guidance.pdf>

- 1.5 This document while providing guidance regarding operationalisation of these measures also seeks to respect the autonomy of the residents while also mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19 to residents, staff, and visitors.
- 1.6 Visits to accommodation services are at ultimately at the discretion of the Registered Manager of each facility and it is their responsibility to ensure that visitations do not compromise overall resident care or adherence to requisite IPC procedures. Consultation with the Public Health Authority and Infection Prevention and Control expertise from local HSC Trust teams will assist the Registered Manager in review of their plans and risk mitigation to facilitate visiting. Restrictions to visiting are aimed at protecting residents, staff, and visitors from exposure to COVID-19 and prevent an outbreak in the home.
- 1.7 All these measures will be in alignment with national guidance in relation to infection prevention and control, current and future guidance and recommendations with regard to social distancing and other public health measures, and in addition, current and future guidance specific to accommodation services.
- 1.8 The Registered Manager will take as their first consideration the **REGIONAL SURGE LEVEL** position and align their homes visiting policy with the current Level's visiting guidance.

*From: Appendix 1, Regional Principles (30 June 2020)*

Surge Level	High/Extreme Surge	Medium Surge	Pre/Low Surge
<b>Description of Surge</b>	All health and social care systems significantly affected.  <b>ICUs operating at 100% and above capacity.</b>	Community spread impacting on health and social care delivery mechanisms.  <b>ICUs operating at 50% above steady state capacity.</b>	Evidence of community spread and increasing numbers of hospital admissions.  <b>All ICU beds converted to level 3 and working up to 25% above steady state capacity.</b>
<b>Care Homes</b>	NO FACE TO FACE VISITING	End of Life Visiting only.	Visiting and accompanying of visitors will be limited as follows:  No more than 2 people will be permitted access to visit at any one time where this can be accommodated within social distancing.

1.9 At Pre/Low Surge level the Registered Manager must then take account of their own circumstances and then apply the following guidelines to their home.

## **2 No Ongoing COVID-19 Outbreak in Home and Surge Level is Pre/Low (Visiting to Care Homes is Permitted)**

2.1 When visiting for residents is permitted the following general visiting guidance will apply in all Beeches homes:

2.2 Each resident will have a **maximum of 2 named/nominated visitors**. Only one of those visitors should visit at any one time. In circumstances where the visitor may require assistance then 2 people may visit. This must be discussed and agreed with the Registered Manager prior to the visit occurring.

2.3 Visits are limited to a **maximum of 1 hour**.

2.4 Each visitor can visit once per week. Resident can therefore have a maximum of 2 visits per week.

2.5 **ALL** visits must be prearranged with the home. Each home will implement a booking and appointment procedure accessible to all families.

2.6 **Unplanned visits will not be facilitated**. The Registered Manager will be notified of any difficulties encountered in the implementation of this measure.

2.7 The Registered Manager will have discretion to restrict visiting to certain days and times for their home. Restrictions will be influenced by the number of residents, staffing levels, layout of the home, availability of rooms, IPC requirements before and after visits and any other factors which the Registered Manager considers significant.

- 2.8 Resident wishing to have a Minister of Faith visit will be accommodated. These visits must be prearranged and will **not** count towards or replace the maximum 2 visit per week. All social distancing, IPC and PPE requirements must be adhered to.
- 2.9 Visits should only take place during the times when most staff are on duty and not during mealtimes.
- 2.10 Visitors are required to sign in on entry to the home. They should either use their own pen or be signed in by a member of staff.
- 2.11 Visitors should be guided in performing hand hygiene when they arrive and before they leave.
- 2.12 Visitors will be screened prior to the visit commencing. Visitors must explicitly declare that they have no COVID-19 symptoms, have had no recent contact with anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19. Their temperature will be checked before the visit commences.
- 2.13 Family members who are shielding are **strongly discouraged** from visiting.
- 2.14 Any visitors with a fever or other respiratory symptoms will not be admitted.
- 2.15 Visitors must wear a mask during the visit. Visitor should bring their own mask and its use will be monitored. Visitors will be instructed by staff in the correct use of masks.
- 2.16 Indoor visits must occur only in the home's designated visiting room.
- 2.17 Outdoor visiting will be at the discretion of the Registered Manager. A maximum of 6 persons can visit. All social distancing, IPC and PPE requirements must be adhered to.

- 2.18 Visitors must restrict themselves to the visiting room or designated outdoor area and designated visitors WC. The visitor must not wander from the designated room or area and they must not enter communal areas, offices, bedrooms, or bathrooms.
- 2.19 Visitor who do not abide by these restrictions will be asked by staff to return to the visitor's room or designated outside area. It is expected that they will comply immediately with this reasonable request.
- 2.20 The home will not be able to provide either food or refreshment during visits.
- 2.21 The home may provide a designated visitors WC. It should be easily accessible by visitor and close to the visiting room/area. Visitors will be advised of its location and must not use any other WC facilities during their visit.
- 2.22 Children under 16 are not permitted to visit except in exceptional circumstances, with the prior agreement of the Registered Manager, and on a case by case basis.
- 2.23 Visiting residents in their own rooms should only happen in exceptional circumstances and under strict IPC measures. This should be guided by individual risk assessments and management plans that include the details of requirement for use of appropriate PPE. Any such visitors must limit movement and interactions inside the home, going straight to the resident's room and leaving directly after the visit.
- 2.24 The resident's right to decline a visitor shall be respected.
- 2.25 The Registered Manager will communicate these general procedures and any specific guidance for their home to their residents' families.
- 2.26 The Registered Manager will make every reasonable effort to work with and assist families to maintain contact. Minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission and

preventing an outbreak in the home is the primary goal and we expect every visitor to comply with these procedures.

- 2.27 Repeated failure to abide by any of these restrictions may result in the visitor's name being removed from the nominated visitor list.

### **3 An Outbreak of COVID-19 in the Home and/or Surge Level ABOVE Pre/Low (Visiting Restricted)**

- 3.1 A change in the Surge level or an outbreak of COVID-19 in the home will mean the immediate reintroduction of the **No Visitors** policy to protect residents, visitors, and staff.
- 3.2 All families will be advised by the Registered Manager of the change in the home's visiting policy status as soon as practical.

### **4 Special Circumstances - End of Life Visits**

- 4.1 During an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 or at Medium Surge Level all but essential visiting (for example end of life) is suspended in the interest of protecting residents, visitors, and staff at this time.
- 4.2 A resident may have indicated in their Advance Care Plan who they would like to visit as they approach end of life. If this has not been recorded, a resident approaching end of life should be asked where possible who they would like to visit. Family, next of kin and/or appropriate others may be able to advise where a resident is unable to provide this information themselves.
- 4.3 All requirements in terms of the home's visiting policy, which includes IPC measures, use of PPE etc. must be adhered to.