

Linda Kelly
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Dear Colleagues

VISITING IN CARE HOMES OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD 2021

I have written to you previously to provide an update on progress on the “**Visiting With Care – A Pathway**”, visiting arrangements. That position remains in force, subject to the outcome of those ongoing scheduled reviews.

However, we do need to recognise the importance attached to seeing family and friends over the Christmas period, and our intention remains to make sure our care home residents can enjoy the festive season in the company of family and friends. To that end, the working group established by the PHA, and including representatives from families, providers and statutory stakeholders has worked to develop the attached guidance leaflet specifically focussed on arrangements over the Christmas period this year.

The leaflet supplements the Pathway, while outlining the guiding principles to support visiting in care homes over Christmas that is meaningful for residents, families, loved ones and care home staff, but optimising protection from Covid transmission. Central to this is ensuring strong partnerships between the Care

Home manager, residents and families, with all conversations around potential visiting arrangements held in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

It is important to note that this guidance may need to be reviewed and updated in light of any evolving situations in relation to the prevalence and impact of COVID-19 across our society. However, we are issuing this festive guidance now to allow providers, residents and families to begin their discussions around each resident's arrangements as soon as possible.

I would again highlight the importance of encouraging uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination for care home staff and continued engagement with the regular testing programmes for staff and visitors.

I would ask you to please circulate this update appropriately to facilities, residents/families and staff as soon as possible, and to assist with this I also enclose a joint letter from myself and the Public Health Agency restating the key messages that apply.

I wish you all a joyous festive season.

Yours sincerely



LINDA KELLY

Chief Nursing Officer

cc: Trust Directors of Older People Services

Sean Holland

Dr Michael McBride

Dr Lourda Geoghegan

Tim Johnston

Debbie Murray

Geraldine Traynor

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