

Care homes residents allowed more out-of-home visits

- Residents will be able to visit their family's garden or take a walk with a care worker or named visitor
- Guidance updated as the data shows cases falling in the community

All care home residents will be able to participate in more out-of-home visits without having to isolate on their return, the government has announced today.

From Tuesday 4 May, residents will be able to leave their care homes to visit a friend or family member's garden, or go on walks in places such as parks, public gardens and beaches. They will not have to self-isolate when they return.

Residents must be accompanied by either a care worker, or nominated visitor, and follow the government guidelines of washing hands regularly, keeping social distance, and remaining outside, in line with [step 2 of the roadmap](#).

The changes come as the data shows cases continuing to fall, meaning it is now much safer for care home residents, who are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19, to leave their homes. Keeping visits outdoors will ensure any risk is minimised as much as possible.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We know how challenging this time has been for care home residents, so I am pleased that they can now leave their homes to reunite with their loved ones outdoors.

With the data continuing to head in the right direction, and as restrictions ease, it is my priority to keep increasing visits for residents in the coming weeks in a safe and controlled way.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

I know residents and their families have found the restrictions on trips out of care homes incredibly difficult. This is one more step towards getting back to normal, while protecting care homes from the continued risk of COVID-19.

As part of this interim update before the next stage of the roadmap, care home residents will be able to leave to spend time outdoors. I know this has been long awaited for those who haven't had a chance to enjoy trips out. I look forward to encouraging more visiting and trips out in future as we turn the tide on this cruel

virus.

To take part in outdoor activities, residents will be accompanied by a member of care home staff, or one of their nominated visitors, and they cannot meet in groups as care home residents are most at risk from COVID-19.

Visits out of the care home should take place solely outdoors, except for the use of toilet facilities, with no visits to indoor spaces (public or private) and avoiding the use of public transport where possible.

An exemption will be in place for those who wish to vote in person in the upcoming local elections, as long as they follow national coronavirus restrictions and measures in place at polling stations. While the majority of residents will have made use of postal votes, or a proxy, those who prefer to vote in person can do so on 6 May.

Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, Professor Deborah Sturdy, said:

The pandemic has been so incredibly challenging for those living in care homes, and our social care workforce have done a heroic job of keeping their residents safe and supported. I know this change to the guidance will be hugely welcomed by many and give so many the chance to safely leave their home.

Arrangements in areas with high, or rapidly rising, levels of infection in the local community, and/or variants of concern, will need additional local advice from directors of public health. Latest statistics show that 95% of residents have received their first dose of the vaccine and 71% have received their second.

Residents who have tested positive, or who have COVID-19 symptoms, must self-isolate and would therefore not be able to leave the care home. In the event of an outbreak, all residents must self-isolate, and visits out will be suspended to prevent the spread of the virus.

As part of the roadmap out of lockdown, guidance was updated on 12 April for care homes to increase visiting, and allow 2 nominated visitors per resident.

Guidance on visits out of care homes will be kept under review, including, when the data shows it is safe, the requirement for residents to isolate on their return from a visit.

Updated guidance will be published in due course.