

Government eases social care restrictions after booster success

Press release

Restrictions in place to prevent the spread of Omicron in adult social care will be eased following the success of the booster roll out



- Unlimited visiting for care home residents to return
- Reduced isolation following a COVID-19 infection for those receiving care
- Changes will ensure those providing and receiving care are kept safe while increasing freedoms for residents

Restrictions in place to help prevent the spread of Omicron in adult social care will now be eased as Plan B measures are removed following the success of the booster programme.

From Monday 31 January, there will be no limit on the number of visitors allowed into care homes and self-isolation periods will be cut and now care homes only have to follow outbreak management rules for 14 rather than 28 days.

By Wednesday 16 February, care workers will be asked to use LFD tests before their shifts replacing the current system which included the use of weekly asymptomatic PCR tests.

86.5 per cent of all care home residents have now had their booster jab, which provides maximum protection against Omicron, with the latest data from the UK Health Security Agency showing it is 92% effective in preventing hospitalisation two weeks after it is administered.

The safety of care home residents will continue to be the priority. The new measures will ensure there are still robust protections in place to protect them while case rates in the community remain high.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I know how vital companionship is to those living in care homes and the positive difference visits make, which is why we continued to allow three named visitors and an essential care giver under Plan B measures.

Thanks to the progress we have made, I am delighted that care home restrictions can now be eased further allowing residents to see more of their loved ones.

Changes to testing and isolation requirements for those receiving care include:

- Self-isolation periods reduced from fourteen to ten days for those who test positive, with further reductions if they test negative on days five and six.
- Isolation periods for those in care following an emergency hospital visit will be reduced from 14 to a maximum ten days, in line with the NHS and following the latest advice from SAGE.
- Removing testing or self-isolation requirements following normal visits out.

Minister for Care Gillian Keegan said:

Thanks to the continued success of the vaccine rollout, I am delighted we can ease restrictions in care settings and allow unlimited visits to ensure people living in care homes see all their family and friends.

The changes announced today are backed by scientists, ensuring we all have more freedoms from coronavirus, including care home residents and their families.

Essential care givers should continue to be able to visit inside a care home even during periods of outbreak affecting a care home.

- Updated guidance will be published in due course with further details on changes to visiting, isolation and testing.
- As set out in the Autumn and Winter Plan, the government will continue to provide LFDs free of charge in the coming months, but universal free provision will end at a later stage as the government's response to the virus changes.

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