

PE1841/SS

Care Home Relatives Scotland (CHRS) submission dated 15 March 2021

CHRS decided to run a survey with its members over the weekend (12/03/21 - 15/03/21) to gauge how visiting was going in line with the new guidance released on 24th February. Our last data capture shows 190 responses to the survey. Sadly we feel the results show a postcode lottery in terms of how the guidance is being implemented and in turn creating an inequality amongst care home residents in terms of what they can access.

Below is a snapshot of some the key findings we feel support this –

We asked “Have meaningful visits started as of 24th February guidelines”. We had 190 responses of which 58.42% answered yes and 41.58% answered no.

It is vital that relatives' voices are heard as what is meaningful to a care provider or government official will always differ to the residents and families. This is key as providers may state visits have started but they are in no way meaningful.

We asked “How long are the visits for?”

We had 190 responses with many time variations. So we have chosen to show some vast differences here. 44.74% were getting 30mins, 2.63% were getting less than 30mins, 18.95% up to 1hr with 6.32% getting 2+hrs. Then we have 8.95% who still know nothing of how long they can spend with their loved one after a year. How can this be acceptable that there is such a difference in visiting times across the country?

We asked “Whereabouts in the care home will your meaningful visit take place?”

Again all 190 responded, we were happy to see that 56.32% were able to visit in their loved ones room. Sadly we saw 20% in a dedicated visiting area, 2.63% in a dedicated visiting area with screens then 12.1% who knew nothing or still had to visit outside. Surely meaningful visits would be in your relatives room where there is less footfall and the ability to have some privacy after a year?

We asked “What level of interaction was allowed?”

This was another question where all 190 answered but with varied responses. We were happy to see 25.79% were allowed touch with no gloves, as opposed to 17.89% with gloves. As we all know good hand hygiene is crucial and regular hand washing is advised by IPC experts as opposed to gloves. Sadly 28.43% were not allowed any form of touch and were still to stay 1m/2m apart. This goes against everything the guidance states and gives no consideration for sensory communication. Once again depending where you reside depends on the interaction you are allowed as resident with your family.

We asked “As of 24 February the Guidance allows the designated visitor to take a resident outside the care home. Please indicate the date where this will start or has already started” sadly we only received 16 responses to this question out of the 190 possible.

Why are care home residents still not being allowed outside for fresh air where we have been told it is the safest place for people to meet?

Lastly we wanted to share some anonymised statements we received within the survey – it captures facts but not feelings.

- Can be withdrawn at any time. The worst part is the fear that the care home may not fully implement the guidelines.
- I only got in to visit after contacting care commission, msp, public health and higher manager than care home manager. Shouldn't have to happen but it did make a difference.
- I am desperate to take dad out of the care home as we used to do 2/3 times each week prior to pandemic. Surely a basic human right. Nothing had been shared on when this will happen. My dad has now had both vaccinations and I have had my first so risks are minimized. My dad is running out of time.
- You ask about indoor visiting starting and meaningful visits. The guidance states screens do not count I have to sit behind a screen all best indoor. How would you view this? Indoor started or not.

We as a group truly believe this shows the inequality that is happening to care home residents and their families across the country despite having guidance. How much longer can we allow this disparity to continue? We need this petition to enshrine the rights of residents to equal access to family life and all we asked for was bare minimum one person allowed access the same way as staff do. Guidance is causing such heartache across the country and no-one is looking at what is right for the residents emotional well being.

We ask the committee to consider this petition strongly and if nothing can be done in this parliament to leave it in the legacy paper for the next.