

Public Health, E3 Zone 1  
County Hall  
Market Road  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1QH



Ref: carehome/050121

Date: 5 January 2021

Dear Care Home Manager

### **Cessation of social visiting in care homes**

I regret that I must recommend all care home social visiting stops throughout the Essex County Council area for all but very exceptional circumstances, such as the end of life. The high prevalence of covid-19 in the community, the growing number of outbreaks in care homes and the difficulty in controlling these outbreaks has led me to this decision.

Care home visiting may resume, with covid-19 secure measures in place, when either:

- At least 80% of care home residents have received at least one dose of a covid-19 vaccine at least two weeks before visiting recommences
- I write to inform you that care home visiting can recommence

The only type of social visiting that could continue is window visits where the visitor is outside on one side of closed window and the resident is on the other side. There should be no indoor visits.

This restriction in visiting will cause distress. I have wanted to avoid it but now this current situation leads me to believe that the risk is too great. The tremendous work care homes have done to keep their residence safe and support their relatives is much appreciated.

This restriction on visiting applies to social visiting only. It naturally does not apply to visits from professional for essential care of residence.

With the vaccination programme underway I hope and expect that these restrictions will not be in place for long. In the meantime, I must ask you for your forbearance.

Yours sincerely



**Mike Gogarty**  
Director of Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities  
Essex County Council