



## 1. What is an outbreak of COVID-19?

- The definition of a COVID-19 outbreak in a care home is when two or more cases of possible or confirmed COVID-19 illness in residents or staff, who are in close proximity to each other, occur within 14 days. Inform your local Health Protection Team when you have cases of COVID-19-like illness in the home.

## 2. How can you reduce the risk of transmission in care homes?



- Follow standard infection control precautions set out in your policy.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and dry thoroughly.
- Ensure frequent cleaning of surfaces.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissues after single use.

## 3. What precautions should you take now there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in the care home?



### 3.1 **Take advice from the local PHE Health Protection Team – they will**

- Verify there is an outbreak and collect further information.
- Offer advice on whether further tests or treatment is required.
- Liaise with other health care professionals who may be involved with the care of residents.
- Ensure that detailed information on infection control precautions is made available
- Monitor progress of the outbreak and offer support for any other control measures that may be required.

### 3.2 **Care of patients**

- If possible, affected patients should be isolated in single rooms, or cohorted in the same area of the care home, to reduce the risk to other residents who are not affected.
- Ensure that standard infection control and droplet precautions are in place.
- Contact the GP or NHS111 if you are concerned about a resident's clinical condition.



### 3.3 **Reinforce Infection Control Measures**

In the event of an outbreak, the standard infection control measures that should be in place in all health and care settings should be maintained, and environmental cleaning measures should be enhanced.

### 3.4 **Additional key measures recommended during outbreaks are outlined below.**

Further advice on these matters can be obtained from your local Infection Control Nurse or local PHE Health Protection Team.



➤ **Restrictions to residents, visitors and staff**

- Restrict visitor access to symptomatic patients to the minimum that is required for patient welfare.
- Visitors should be informed of the outbreak and limited to essential only. Children or people who are vulnerable should not visit.
- Visitors should not visit the home if they are unwell.
- Exclude symptomatic staff and visitors until fully recovered and at least ten days after the onset of symptoms.
- Agency and temporary staff who are exposed during the outbreak should be advised not to work in other health or care settings until the outbreak is over.



➤ **Respiratory hygiene**

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette is essential when an outbreak of COVID-19 is being considered. Recommended measures include:

- Putting up signs at entrance or common areas instructing residents and visitors to inform staff if they have respiratory symptoms and discouraging visitors with symptoms.
- Providing tissues to residents and visitors who are coughing or sneezing so that they can cover their mouth and nose.
- Residents with symptoms of respiratory infection should be discouraged from using common areas where feasible.
- Residents should have an adequate supply of tissues and covered sputum pots, as well as convenient and hygienic methods of disposing of these.
- Ensuring that supplies for hand washing are available where sinks are located and providing dispensers of alcohol-based hand rubs in other locations.
- Encouraging coughing persons to sit at least two metres (7 feet) away from others, if possible.



➤ **Droplet precautions**

- If possible, symptomatic residents should be cared for in single rooms until fully recovered and at least fourteen days after the onset of symptoms. If this is not possible then group together suspected COVID-19 residents with other residents suspected of having COVID-19.
- If possible, staff should work with either symptomatic or asymptomatic residents (but not both), and this arrangement should be continued for the duration of the outbreak.
- Staff should use appropriate infection control precautions while dealing with affected patients e.g. gloves, single use apron etc.
- Fluid resistant surgical masks are advised and if there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimize risk

**3.5 Support for staff**

- Seek advice from your local authority adult and social care team for operational, staffing, and mutual aid support as needed.
- This may well be a very difficult time for your staff. You may find some useful advice and support from the following website <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>

