

Time to Open Up (Part 2)

An information leaflet designed to further reassure and support anyone who is planning to spend time with a care home resident



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WITH COMP♥SSION**

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Information for Friends and Relatives

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the doors of our care homes were closed in March 2020. Lack of contact and meaningful time spent with loved ones has a profound effect on everyone concerned.

The good news

With efficient infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, which include the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand hygiene, safe interaction with loved ones can be managed.

There is evidence for this; you will have heard the messages about the need for everyone to wear masks and clean their hands – that is because these measures work for everyone. This is IPC!

The introduction of lateral flow testing (immediate result) will provide an additional level of reassurance when spending time in a care home.

Important – IPC measures, when applied correctly and consistently, will always work to protect yourself and others. Even with testing and vaccinations, IPC will remain important and necessary at the right times.



This information explains more about IPC and highlights some important points for you. The visual scenarios in Time to Open Up (Part 1) are examples of how to follow the recommended measures when spending time with a loved one.

What is PPE?



Many people will have seen the “space suit” style clothing used in high risk situations, but this is NOT routinely what is required for safe care home interactions.

You should be asked to wear a mask, possibly gloves and a plastic apron. Nothing complicated!

You should be instructed on how and when to wear the items and clean your hands. There may be posters available for you to follow in the care home.

You should also see others taking these measures.



Hand Hygiene is Important

Performing hand hygiene by using hand sanitiser, or washing with soap and then drying your hands, is a core part of safely using PPE.

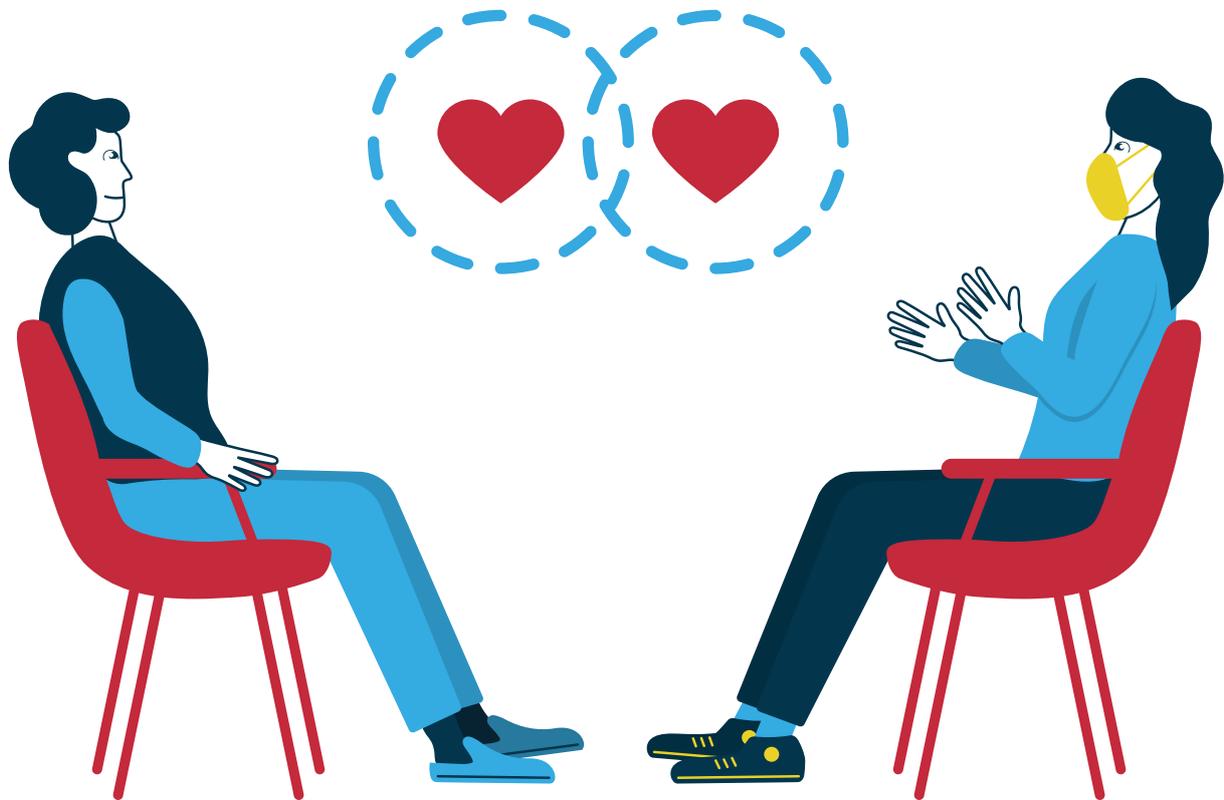
Beware - Contamination of hands can easily occur if you touch your mask. The virus can then be transferred onto hard surfaces and continue its potential spread if others touch the surface.

So, know the right times for the right IPC measures (PPE and hand hygiene) when interacting with your loved one. The visual scenarios in Time to Open Up (Part 1) will help you to be safe and compassionate. This will protect you and everyone else in the care home!

Working together to enable meaningful interaction

The important general points

- The care homes must trust you to use PPE and to clean your hands properly. You are then protecting yourself, your loved one and all other residents and staff in the home. Show the care home staff that you can be trusted to do the right thing. You are like a carer and should act as such during these times.
- Do not come to the home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell in any way.
- It is **essential** that you follow all guidance carefully – if not, it will be very difficult for the care home to continue enabling you to spend meaningful time with your loved one. Take the time to listen.
- Try to fit in with the timetable offered to relatives/friends. Ideally there will be the option for a designated (named) persons to spend time every week with their loved one. Ensure that the care home knows who the specific contact persons are for arranging dedicated times to interact with loved ones.
- Every care home will have different arrangements, depending on staffing levels and routines. The time for every interaction will be scheduled to be as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Take time to read the IPC reminders in the care home and to learn more from reliable sources, e.g. your own national guidelines, when you can.
- Carry your own mask or be ready to accept a mask given to you by the home. Wear your face covering / mask properly (unless exempt) and do not touch your mask while wearing it; if you do then clean your hands immediately.
- Carry your own hand sanitiser if you can.
- Be a role model to others by following the practices of IPC (even if you see others who are not).
- Respect that you should touch things as little as possible, unless it is part of the interaction with your loved one. This provides support and reassurance to care homes, whilst their cleaning regimes also support our safe and compassionate interactions.
- Be respectful of care home staff – everyone is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – it is not easy!



Disclaimer

All the information in this document is published in good faith and for general information purposes. We acknowledge that official government guidance currently outlines the necessary infection prevention and control measures/ resources. The materials were developed to support these measures. The resources are not a substitute for official guidance.

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