



Dear member

Scottish Care as the representative body of the majority of care homes in Scotland has learnt that a growing number of care homes have decided to suspend non-essential visits to their homes as a response to the growing threat of COVID-19.

We appreciate that these are not easy decisions to make and that they will require to be taken after considerable thought and planning. We recognise that it is the responsibility of each care home to make a decision which they consider best protects residents, their families and staff.

We are writing to you to request that if you have not already done so that you give this matter serious consideration and that you should decide to restrict access to your care home if you believe that your care home population is at risk.

We recognise that we are still technically in the 'containment' stage of dealing with the Coronavirus, but we believe, following advice and guidance, that the risks to the highly vulnerable population within care homes is such that early protective action is a reasonable and proportionate response.

We would encourage care homes in making such a decision to try to do everything they can to maintain resident contact with family members and relatives at what is a challenging time. The use of social media and electronic messaging devices and cameras/phones will support this. Particular sensitivity will require to be exercised to support residents who are living with dementia especially in its advanced stages.

We also recognise that many individual residents are in a palliative and end of life stage or may enter this. In such circumstances we would suggest that it is important that families and close friends are able to be with an individual at the end of life. Care homes should adopt appropriate screening methods and undertake risk assessments to enable this to take place.

We are confident that care homes will continue to perform strict infection control practices and to reduce the risk of cross-infection within the home.

In conclusion, we recognise that there are student nurses and others who provide essential services to the care home sector. We would ask you not to restrict their presence providing that you can be assured that they are not working across multiple environments. In the coming days and weeks their role and contribution will be invaluable.

Thank you

Donald Macaskill (Dr)

Chief Executive, Scottish Care