

Guidelines for visiting safely

COVID-19: Pre-arranged visits at all Uniting AgeWell Victorian aged care residences

Update – Effective 18 May 2020

These guidelines take into account the national Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19 as well as Uniting AgeWell's rights, responsibilities and duty of care as an aged care provider.

Arranging a visit

Visits must be pre-arranged with the Uniting AgeWell Residential Services Manager (RSM).

To arrange a visit, please call or email the RSM to organise a mutually suitable visiting time(s).

You will not be permitted to enter the residential care home if:

- Your visit has not been pre-arranged and an appointment time allocated;
- You are undertaking mandatory 14-day self-isolation after returning from overseas or interstate;
- You have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19;
- You have been previously diagnosed with COVID-19;
- You are unwell for any reason, including mild cold and flu symptoms;
- You have not received the 2020 influenza vaccination or cannot show evidence of your vaccination;
- You are 16-years of age or under.

Visit guidelines and precautions

If a pre-arranged visit is agreed, you must adhere to the following guidelines and standard precautions:

- Visiting times will be between the hours of 10am to 11.30am and 1pm to 2.30pm, Monday to Friday by appointment and we encourage families to restrict their visits to three times per week, noting that no more than two visitors per resident will be allowed at any one time.
- For those visitors unable to visit during the week due to work or family commitments, an appointment to visit on Saturday between the hours of 1pm and 3pm can be made.
- We ask visitors to monitor the duration of their visit and leave promptly after 45 minutes.
- A designated member of staff will welcome you at the front entry when you arrive, confirm who you are visiting, screen you for health issues, check your temperature and your influenza vaccination status and support you to visit within the guidelines. You will be asked to sign a declaration stating that you do not present a risk as per the entry criteria outlined above.

- If you do not meet the entry criteria you will not be permitted to enter. This screening and declaration process will occur each time you visit.
- Visitors will be requested to enter in a controlled manner. Visitors will be requested to wait outside until the staff member is ready to screen them.
- Visitors are expected to observe social distancing whilst waiting to be screened – there will be markings on the ground to assist with this.
- We will be requesting visitors use their own pen to complete the declaration form.
- You will be asked to sanitise your hands upon entry for screening, prior to entering the resident's room and again on exit. In some circumstances, you may be asked to apply a facemask.
- Visits must take place in the resident's room or in the garden or courtyard. In the event of a shared room with a non-related resident, a designated room will be provided. Visitors will be escorted to and from the visiting area.
- You must refrain from physical contact and maintain a social distance of 1.5 metres at all times. from the resident you are visiting, staff and other residents. For hygiene and infection control reasons, we request that you do not touch any items in the resident's room.
- We will be recording the entry and exit time of all visitors.

Exceptions

- Uniting AgeWell will continue to facilitate compassionate exceptions to the timing and duration of visits on a case by case basis in relation to palliative and end-of-life care, noting that visitors will still need to comply with the screening and entry requirements and have pre-arranged their visit with the Residential Services Manager.
- On a case by case basis, consideration will be given to visitors who have a clearly established pattern of involvement in providing a resident's care and support prior to COVID-19 (this could be daily or a number of times per week and in instances where they have assisted a resident with their meals or with essential behaviour management).

The Residential Services Manager in consultation with the visitor, will determine the length, frequency, and nature of the visits and ensure they reflect what is needed for the resident to be cared for appropriately and consistent with established practices and routines. It should be noted that such visitors may be required to undertake prior infection control training and apply Personal Protective Equipment in addition to complying with visitor screening and entry requirements.

- Visits from family, families of choice and friends who travel extensive distances to visit the resident. A prior agreement between the visitor and the Residential Services Manager will be required to determine if an extended-duration visit is able to be accommodated.

This approach will help us to carefully manage risk and ensure our care staff can continue to focus on caring for our residents. We understand these processes may be frustrating for some visitors. Despite this, and in line with the national Industry Code and Uniting AgeWell's Visitor Code of Conduct, we ask you to remain respectful at all times and to abide by these guidelines.

Virtual visits such as window visits and electronic communications will continue and we encourage visitors to continue with their regular telephone calls, Skype and FaceTime visits and sending letters and emails.

Please note that visitor access may change if an outbreak occurs within the facility or a declared outbreak has occurred within the local area or if there are other extraordinary circumstances that require it.

Uniting AgeWell's primary concern is always the health and wellbeing of all residents and staff and in maintaining a safe living and work environment for all.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Andrew Kinnersly
Chief Executive Officer
Uniting AgeWell