Supported living and visiting family and friends during coronavirus

Advice on how to keep safe for people in supported living, their visitors and staff

This document was written by Easy Read Wales using Photosymbols. It is an updated easy read version of ‘Supported living guidance: coronavirus’.

This guidance is for when Alert Level 4 is in force.

December 2020
How to use this document

This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.

You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.

Some words may be hard to understand. They are in **bold blue writing**. They have been explained in a box below the word.

If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what they mean on page 25.

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

**Website:**  [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

**E-mail:**  [customerhelp@gov.wales](mailto:customerhelp@gov.wales)

**Phone:**  0300 00300 32

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What this document is about

The advice in this document is for the whole of Wales.

We have written this advice for:

- people in supported living
- their families and friends
- providers of housing care and support
- local government services.
It will help make the new rules that start on 21 December easier to follow. And help people understand how someone in supported living can safely organise visits and see friends and family during coronavirus.

You should follow this advice unless there are changes to local or national rules that stop you being able to do so.

This is different to care homes and supported housing. There is separate guidance on care homes.

Supported living providers can contact Public Health Wales on 0300 00300 32 if they need further support and advice.
What is different about supported living

To help control coronavirus, the government has made rules about what we can and cannot do. Sometimes the rules change if there is lots of virus about.

Sometimes these rules can affect people’s physical and mental health.

For example, some people in supported living may feel isolated during coronavirus.

**Isolated** is when someone is cut off from other people.

It is important that people in supported living can safely see their family, friends, and visit the community.

- It is good for people’s well-being.
- It gives people control over their care and support.
- It stops people being too lonely or isolated.
It is important that we all take responsibility for keeping ourselves and everyone around us safe during coronavirus.

We can do this by:

- following **social distancing** rules

  **Social distancing** means keeping 2 metres apart from someone. This is about 3 steps.

- washing our hands often

- wearing a face mask on public transport and inside places like shops, pubs and cafés

- being aware of the risks.
People in supported living have the same rights as everybody to meet and visit other people.

But it can be more difficult to organise visits in supported living because:

- some people will have more care and support needs

- some people may be unable to make their own decisions

- some people may be sharing kitchens, bathrooms, or lounges.
Visiting or meeting a person in supported living

Support bubbles

Single adult households in supported living can make a support bubble with one other household.

A support bubble is when two households join together as one.

A household means one person living on their own, or a group of people living in the same home. For example, a family.

A person in supported living can have a visit from someone in their support bubble. People in the support bubble can:

- visit indoors
- have physical contact
- stay overnight.
People who provide services

People who provide services or care and support can visit people in supported living. For example, support workers, and builders doing emergency work to keep you safe. As long as they follow the rules for working safely during coronavirus.

People who are not in a support bubble

You can only meet people who are in your support bubble.

But you can meet your care or support worker. As long as they follow the rules.

You should stay at home and only go out to exercise.
Shared living spaces

Sometimes people in supported living live in separate households but share rooms with other people. For example, the toilet, kitchen, bathroom, or eating area.

Up to 4 people living in a shared home can be together in a shared living space. Nobody else can be there at the same time, except people giving care and support.

In shared living spaces, everyone is responsible for making sure visits are as safe as possible.

Each single adult household can have a support bubble with people outside their supported living.

This means lots of different people might be in contact with each other.
It is important to think about how to control the spread of coronavirus in a shared home:

- Do people have their own personal towels, crockery and cutlery?

  This can help control coronavirus.

- Do people organise visits and activities at different times?

  This can help control coronavirus.
• Do people understand about social distancing?

Social distancing helps control the virus.

• How many people have coronavirus in the local area?

If someone gets coronavirus in supported living, it can easily spread to other households.
So it is important to think carefully about becoming part of a support bubble.

If 1 person in your shared house needs to self-isolate because:

- they have symptoms of coronavirus
- or have tested positive for coronavirus

everyone in your shared house will need to self-isolate.

Self-isolate means staying at home for a length of time because you have or might have coronavirus.

When you are self-isolating, you cannot have any visitors.
Visits from a person in supported living to meet or stay with other people

It is important that people in supported living can get out to see and visit family and friends, if it is safe to do so.

But it is important for everyone to remember the social distancing rules to protect themselves from coronavirus.

A person in supported living can visit other people in their support bubble. They can:

- visit them
- have physical contact
- stay overnight.
A person in supported living cannot meet anybody who is not part of their support bubble.

**Self-isolating**

You need to **self-isolate** if:

- you have symptoms of coronavirus and are waiting for the results of a test
- you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- you have tested positive for coronavirus.

You do **not** need to **self-isolate** just because you have gone back to live in your supported living house.
If you, or anyone in your support bubble gets symptoms of coronavirus, everyone in your support bubble must:

- self-isolate

- take a coronavirus test.

This may mean that you will need to self-isolate in the home of your support bubble.
Decision making and thinking about risk

It is important that people in supported living and their families and carers are included in any decisions.

For example, in decisions about seeing friends and family during the coronavirus pandemic.

If there are any restrictions about visiting, it is important that everyone understands why.

When making decisions about the risk of spreading coronavirus, it is important to:

- respect people’s right to see family and friends
- keep people in supported living and the public safe from coronavirus.
People in supported living can usually make their own decisions about their lives.

But sometimes people cannot make decisions about coronavirus for themselves because they are **lacking capacity**.

Someone might be **lacking capacity** because of

- a disability or illness
- dementia
- a mental health problem

They might be unable to understand information about a decision.

Or they might be unable to communicate their decision.
If someone in supported living is lacking capacity, then the people helping them must only make decisions in their best interests. This could be family, friends, or staff.

**Best interests** mean that the decision must be what is best for the person in supported living, and not for anyone else.
People are individuals

It is important to remember that people are individuals with individual risks.

We should think about people who are especially vulnerable to coronavirus.

- They might be more vulnerable because of their age.

- Or because they are already ill.

People may also be at a higher risk of getting coronavirus if:

- They travel by public transport.

- They are inside a public place, like a shop or pub.
Test, Trace and Protect

People in supported living and care and support providers must keep a record of everyone who visits.

This includes staff, people in support bubbles and other visitors, like family and friends.

This record must include visitors’ names and contact details.

It is important that all visitors are told that their contact details are being collected.

Supported living providers will then warn visitors if someone they have been in contact with:

- gets coronavirus

- gets symptoms of coronavirus.
Visitors can then get a test and self-isolate at home to stop the spread of the virus.

**Stopping the spread of coronavirus**

If you have any of the symptoms of coronavirus you should take a test. The symptoms are:

- a new ongoing cough
- a high temperature
- loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste.
You can book a test online at:

https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

or by calling 119.

People with hearing or speech difficulties can call 18001119.
Hard words

Best interests
Best interests mean that the decision must be what is best for the person in supported living, and not for anyone else.

Support bubble
A single person living alone or a single parent can join up with one other household to form a support bubble. A household means one person living on their own or a group of people living in the same home. For example, a family.

Isolated
Isolated is when someone is cut off from other people.

Lacking capacity
Someone might be lacking capacity because of:
- a disability or illness
- dementia
- a mental health problem

They might be unable to understand information about a decision. Or they might be unable to communicate their decision.

Self-isolate
Self-isolate means staying at home because you have or might have coronavirus.

Social distancing
Social distancing means keeping 2 metres apart from someone. This is about 3 steps.