

COVID-19

Good Practice Resource Guide:

Engagement, Activity and Social Distancing

The challenge: How do we isolate people from each other to keep them well, without making them lonely?

This guide is grounded in the principles of person centred care and is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The emotional and physical wellbeing of those with care and support needs and those who care for them must be our absolute priority at this time. The provision of activity is not the sole responsibility of one person however, the whole home can be fully involved in an activity and engagement-based model of care.

The advice from government for anyone in any setting is to follow these main guidelines:

1. Follow current guidelines on self-isolation.
2. Wash hands more often than usual and for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose. Throw away tissues immediately after use, then wash hands or use hand sanitising gel.
3. Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing measures are steps we can take to reduce social interaction between people to help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) e.g.

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information
- Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Care Homes:

Approximately 400,000 older people in the UK live in care homes and a significant proportion of these are living with dementia, multiple health conditions, physical dependency and many are in their last years of life. Care home residents are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 as a consequence of their complex medical problems and advanced frailty. Care homes are required to have standard operating procedures for each resident with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 infection. Including appropriate infection control precautions to protect residents and staff. All care homes are required by law to notify their relevant public health authority regarding suspected cases of infectious disease, who will provide advice and guidance around infection, prevention and control.

NAPA members:

Approximately 3,000 of our members are care homes, they are facing unprecedented challenges as the Covid-19 outbreak continues to escalate. The government has applied measures to contain the virus and slow its spread.

One of the procedures introduced by the government is that of social distancing. Many of our members are now applying this principle. However, there are challenges to resident engagement and inclusion as well in maintaining safe staffing when care homes support people away from shared areas.

Making the decision to apply social distancing is difficult because it involves restricting people's movement around the home. Residents may be asked to spend their day and eat their meals in their rooms. Residents living with dementia might become distressed by this change; all staff should ensure that residents are engaged, encouraged and safe.

Government has advised that those who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- Aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- Under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds)
- Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- Diabetes

- Problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- Those who are pregnant

Note: there are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. NHS in England will directly contact those people with advice about the more stringent measures they should take in order to keep themselves and others safe.

People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:

- people who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- people with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- people with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

Applying the principle of social distancing in care homes – Guidance from NAPA

These measures - which we have developed for our members - are intended to protect people at greatest risk who are most likely to have to go to hospital.

The points listed below are NAPA's suggested ways of working, they are based on government guidance and best practice principles, they are not legal guidelines. They are intended to support the provision of activity and engagement should the principle of social distancing be applied in a care home.

Having something to do can make people feel useful and valued. Talking, laughing, singing and just being together can help improve wellbeing and reduce loneliness.

In the event of the principle of social distancing being applied, all opportunities for engagement are likely to be on a one to one basis.

1. Activity and care teams should use existing care and support plans in order to develop individual engagement plans for each resident in their care
2. The plans should include opportunities for activities over a 24-hour period and should not always depend on the presence of a member of staff to initiate engagement
3. The plans should be kept in each resident's room. This is for easy access by all staff members (do not share sensitive information)
4. Care home managers should identify a staff member to help maintain contact between residents and their loved ones
5. Activity and care teams should encourage family contact through the means of technology
6. Care home managers should enable the use of electronic devices to maintain contact between residents and their family and friends
7. All staff to offer support and encouragement through one to one interaction with residents, in accordance with the required COVID -19 restrictions. The provision of activity is not the sole responsibility of one person; the whole home can be fully involved in an activity and engagement-based model of care
8. Activity and care teams should properly discard or sanitise activity supplies according to the care home's Infection control policy
9. Activity and care teams should ensure items are not shared between residents
10. Activity and care staff should be enabled by care home managers to liaise with family members and or purchase necessary supplies for each resident's room, in order to promote one to one engagement and activity

We have been asked for examples of such supplies and some of our members have made the following suggestions:

- contact details of friends and loved ones
- a mobile phone or tablet
- decks of cards
- large print books
- spiral notebooks
- colouring pencils
- watercolours paints
- notice board for signs to connect with loved ones
- adult appropriate colouring
- craft supplies and kits
- word search and crosswords
- wool
- trivia books
- hand-held video games
- magazines
- newspapers
- stationary/pens for pen pals
- small pots of flowers
- life like dolls
- robotic pets
- aroma therapy
- essential oils and diffusers
- music tech
- headphones
- online access
- song sheets

100 Suggestions for one to one activities:

1. Use technological platforms to support residents to connect with loved ones
2. Ask relatives to send in photos of family & friends - from days gone by or recent snaps
3. Create a photo album, frame photos or make a collage together
4. Make a special scrapbook or a memory box of significant objects based on personal life history
5. Help write or record an autobiography
6. Share favourite stories and memories
7. Recreate holiday snaps, souvenirs, postcards, even maps and tales of your journey
8. Read newspapers and magazines aloud to keep the person in touch
9. Jointly look at magazines with large colourful pictures and invite opinions and comments on the contents whether it is fashion preferences or political views
10. Sew masks for residents and care staff
11. Read religious (where appropriate) or inspirational articles, magazines or books – a 'thought for the day' or 'hope for the week'
12. Read letters from family and friends
13. Keep a diary to share with loved ones on Skype, Zoom etc
14. Share recorded greetings from family and friends
15. Help with writing or typing letters and cards
16. Find a pen pal and help with keeping in touch
17. Create collage poster with pictures cut from magazines
18. Share articles related to the season or next holiday to talk about
19. Have an indoor picnic
20. Enjoy a favourite drink or food
21. If you play an instrument offer to do a private concert
22. Try teaching simple tunes on an instrument
23. Sing or hum together, Play 'name that tune' with CDs, tapes or music on the radio
24. Listen to music together
25. Play simple charades – e.g. miming an action to guess what it is
26. Wind wool together
27. Try drawing or painting together
28. Make simple gifts
29. Create a sewing basket, button box, sock drawer or toolbox to organise together
30. Paint a bird feeder or house to hang outside the window
31. Look at a book on bird watching together
32. Dust the bedroom together
33. Brush, comb or style hair
34. Pamper with make-up, perfume, aftershave or manicure
35. Ask for help planning your garden & look through a seed catalogue
36. Plant & look after an indoor windowsill garden
37. Create a terrarium (tabletop garden arrangement) together, which requires very little care
38. Play word games & trivia together
39. Play cards or table board games together

40. Do crosswords together
41. Do jigsaws together even if the person can only watch or pick up the pieces
42. Watch television together (even just a few minutes) and discuss the programme you have seen
43. Keep up with the Soaps that everyone watches and discuss the next day
44. Use an iPad to watch clips of an old favourite movie or musical on YouTube
45. Make a memory wall within the line of vision
46. Create a story from a picture e.g. looking at a photograph or piece of art
47. Have a session of 'retail therapy' and do some shopping online
48. Discuss recipes and share favourites
49. Take someone a treat
50. Put pins in a map of places travelled or would like to travel
51. Give a gentle hand massage using aromatherapy scented oils or hand cream
52. Share items to stimulate the sense of smell - spices, perfume or flowers
53. Show different textured fabrics to touch - silk, cashmere, velvet etc:
54. Take care of bedroom plants
55. Shine shoes
56. Share children's artwork sent to the home
57. Sort out drawers and wardrobes
58. Use a lap piano, name that tune and sing along
59. Use a tablet or iPad for karaoke
60. Toss a ball or balloon
61. Do seated physical activity together
62. Read a chapter of a novel, a short story or a few poems
63. Write poetry or a short story together
64. Look at and listen to an old-fashioned music box
65. Make a "joy box" (decorated shoe box) filled with fun and favourite things
66. Discuss seasonal changes looking out of the window
67. Keep a "window diary" of interesting things that happen outside
68. Keep a journal of interesting discussions and upcoming events
69. Make a potpourri together and hang it up to keep the room sweet smelling
70. Tell jokes to one another, look up jokes on the internet to make it fun
71. Google Earth National Park Tours - "Visit" national parks across the country and talk about those visited
72. Make a weather calendar
73. Take photos to send to friends & family
74. Make some soap
75. Have a chat about the theatre, opera or classical music
76. Take paintings down from other parts of the home and discuss the artwork
77. Make items for charity together
78. Bring the blender in and make a smoothie
79. Keep a track of favourite sports events or teams
80. Learn a new word or words whenever using a dictionary
81. Bring the toaster in and cook some toast
82. Play along with TV game shows or develop your own
83. Dance, or tap your feet, to favourite dance music

84. Look at a travel book or brochure & dream about a fantasy holiday
85. Use small rhythm instruments to make your own music
86. Read the astrology column in a daily paper and talk about it
87. Play noughts and crosses or similar games
88. Talk about local landmarks and how the community has changed
89. Make lists of their favourite foods, films, movie stars, music etc
90. Talk about what you would do if you won the lottery
91. Design & make your own Christmas & holiday cards to send
92. Toss cards into a hat
93. Hold hands and be a good listener
94. Try your hand at drawing each other portraits when possible
95. With closed eyes see if they can guess different flavours you supply
96. Talk about, recite or play nursery rhymes and songs from childhood
97. Work on a latch hook rug while you sit and talk
98. Introduce relaxation techniques or guided meditation
99. Create personalised wall and or ceiling decorations
100. Just be there

We have also been asked about **hall and doorway activities** many of our members have shared the following ideas:

- Any type of exercise, yoga, tai chi, noodles, scarf, stretchy band exercise
- Joke Hour - everyone takes turns telling prepared and printed jokes
- Remote control cars or devices in and out of the rooms
- Alexia/Dot: use for music, trivia, quiz
- Singing between staff and residents
- Worship via TV, radio, livestream or recorded, Prayer CDs
- Bread machine for aroma and then snacking
- Hallway choir
- Doorway bingo
- Doorway football

For FREE resources visit: <http://napa-activities.co.uk/membership/free-resources>

To subscribe to our FREE regular E-News and receive updates and NEW resources Email: project@napa-activities.co.uk

For FREE support and guidance contact the NAPA Helpline on 0207 0789375 or Email: helpline@napa-activities.co.uk

To become a NAPA member and receive our comprehensive benefits package Email: membership@napa-activities.co.uk

Helpful Resources – COVID-19:

- Age UK, 2019: Later Life in the United Kingdom, Available at: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/later_life_uk_factsheet.pdf
- <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/nhs-hospital-bed-numbers#hospital-beds-in-england-and-abroad>
- Gordon AL, Franklin M, Bradshaw L, et al. Health status of UK care home residents: a cohort study. *Age Ageing* 2014;43:97–103.
- Shah SM, Carey IM, Harris T, et al. Mortality in older care home residents in England and Wales. *Age Ageing* 2013;;afs174-.
- Public Health England. COVID: Guidance for Health Professionals: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/guidance-supply-use-of-ppe/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/HealthEducationEng/videos>
- <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/11951/behaviour-observation-sheets.pdf>
- Public Health England. COVID: Hospital Service Discharge Requirements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-discharge-service-requirements>
- <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/toolkits/palliative-and-end-of-life-care-toolkit.aspx>
- <https://em3.org.uk/foamed/24/4/2017/lightning-learning-clinical-frailty-scale>
- NICE Guidance on ICU admission for people with COVID: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng159>
- <http://napa-activities.co.uk/membership/free-resources>
- <https://www.bgs.org.uk/resources/covid-19-managing-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-care-homes>

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