

Written evidence from Anonymous (HCS0006)

My mother is in a nursing home and has been there since just before the pandemic started.

During the first lockdown she didn't have any visitors, then again during the second and third lockdown and various outbreaks she received no visitors. She actually went 5 whole months without receiving a visit, She had to ensure not seeing her husband of nearly 60 years during those times. Even when she was severely distressed and had to be sedated we were not allowed to visit her. The manager sent me an email telling my mum was stable, but he would ask the GP for permission for a compassionate visit. Basically unless she stopped eating it was not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Finally in March the government guidance said that residents could have an essential care giver if a risk assessment said they could benefit from it in terms of their health or wellbeing and be tested along with staff.

I was finally granted this status, after numerous requests, in May.

ECG should be allowed to visit during outbreaks etc just like staff.

In August the government guidance stated all residents should be given an ECG if they wanted one.

Unfortunately due to the nature of the guidance care homes have been left to make their own policies, which in many cases have been extremely cautious and visiting in some care homes has been very limited and not particularly meaningful. Some are refusing ECG status and/or restricting the number of visitors in the building or only allowing 30 minute visits in designated rooms instead of the resident's own room.

The separation we suffered as a family was horrific. We could understand at the beginning as very little was known about the virus, but after that it was not acceptable that we weren't allowed to visit even for an hour for months and months on end when the comparable risk to the time staff spend with residents was so small. The Government should never have allowed that to happen for so very long.

This breach of human rights should NEVER be allowed to happen again. Residents died from the isolation from their loved ones.

Care homes are having outbreaks and refusing ECG status so that residents are not receiving the visits they should be having during outbreaks right now.

Care homes can do this as the Government's guidance is exactly that, guidance.

The CQC have been very ineffective in dealing with these breaches in human rights and in fact don't really acknowledge there is much of a problem.

There is a campaign by RightsForResidents to enshrine the guidance into law, at least the ECG status element of it, but the government has so far been reluctant to do this.

So I would say that this needs to be done urgently to help families get the 'human' visiting rights their loved ones desperately need.

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