

Immediate release

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**Care home relatives need to be given key worker status says the R&RA  
#EndIsolationInCare campaign**

Following the launch of last week's Relatives & Residents Association (R&RA) #EndIsolationInCare campaign, we welcome the Winter Plan's recognition that it is *"important to allow care home residents to safely meet their loved ones, especially for those at the end of life"* and its encouragement to *"providers to find innovative ways of allowing safe contact between residents and their family members"*.

However, this is contradicted by then informing providers that this should be limited *'to a single constant visitor, with an absolute maximum of two per resident'*.

"The R&RA Helpline continues to hear residents ongoing heartbreaking experiences of separation from partners or children as the direct result of banned or restricted visits. Of course, safety is important but residents also need the love and support they rely on for a decent quality of life and the relationships which make their lives worth living. We need the Government to better support homes to ensure that decisions are made on a humane and individual basis as required by law, so that visits can go ahead as safely as possible."

**Supervision of visits ignores residents' rights**

Judy Downey goes on to say that the requirement for all visitors to be supervised at all times is demeaning and unacceptable and breaches both the Mental Capacity, Human Rights Acts and Equality Act, as well as other legislation.

"Regardless of age or disability, people must have a right to the dignity of being with family and friends in private. It seems an extraordinary measure and speaks volumes about how families and residents are viewed. We fervently hope that the Government will realise this and amend their guidance accordingly."

**Call for care home visitors to be classed as key workers**

In order to limit the risk of disease transmission and ensure high levels of safety for older people in care, their carers and visitors, and with winter coming on, the R&RA calls for visitors to care homes to be treated as key workers and given the same access to testing, PPE and other infection control procedures.

Judy Downey says: "We are delighted that our call for free PPE in July has been answered in the Winter Plan guidance and hope that the distribution mechanism will be effective to ensure that workers in care homes and in the community will finally be fully protected. Now we call for essential visitors to care homes to be given the same status as key workers to ensure safety remains at the highest levels inside homes."

Information about the R&RA here.....ENDS