

Gloucestershire County Council  
Shire Hall  
Westgate Street  
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**Date:** 20.10.20

Dear Family/Friend

**Take action now. Help slow the spread of Covid-19. Protect your loved ones.**

Cases of Covid-19 are continuing to rise in the county, and as a result, we have had to make the difficult, but necessary, decision to write to care homes and other care providers in the county, recommending that visiting is suspended at this time.

The new guidance is part of a number of steps that we are taking to slow the spread of the virus in Gloucestershire. The six step plan, announced yesterday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020, can be viewed here: (<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/our-six-step-plan/>).

This includes plans to write to those on the shielded list. If your loved one lives in a home but is also on the shielded list, they should defer to the advice in this letter.

We know this will be really hard on families, friends, and their loved ones and it's not a decision we have taken lightly but it is essential, if we are going to minimise the impact of Covid on those most at risk from it. We will continue to support the homes to explore and provide alternative ways for family and friends and their loved ones, to stay in touch. In cases where, sadly, residents are considered to be end of life, visiting arrangements will continue in a safe and managed way.

**Why do you need to stop all non essential care home visiting?**

- People in residential homes are at much greater risk of becoming very seriously ill and dying from COVID-19 if they get it
- If there are high levels of virus circulating in the community there is a much higher risk of it being carried into the care setting by visitors, however unintentionally.
- It is much easier to stop the virus getting into a home than it is to stop it spreading when it does get in
- Stopping COVID-19 from getting into care homes will save lives

**How can I keep in touch if I can't visit the care home?**

- Make sure the home has your up-to-date contact details and knows the best way to get hold of you
- Ask the home if you can use virtual means of visiting, such as using FaceTime or Skype. Whilst a virtual visit does not give you the same experience as an actual visit it is a safer way to make contact.

- If you aren't able to use these technologies, think about other ways you can keep in touch such as writing letters or posting family photos, which staff can then share and talk about with the person.

We will continue to closely monitor the levels of infection in the community so that you can get back to your loved ones as soon as it is safe to do so.

Together we can stop this virus. Together we can protect our loved ones.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Scott  
Director of Public Health



Kim Forey  
Director of Integration