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Approved by Tusla Crisis Management Team – COVID-19

COVID-19: Restriction on Access to Residential Centres

Introduction

Due to additional restrictions announced by decision of the Government on the 27th March 2020, arrangements for physical access for external visitors to residential centres will now change in order to ensure compliance with Government policy. These new arrangements will apply from 27th April 2020 until Tuesday 5th May 2020, and for as long thereafter that the “Stay at Home” requirements announced on 27th March 2020 remain in place should they be extended on 5th May April 2020. Where the Government requirements of the public change, the guidance will be revised or amended as appropriate.

Scope

This guidance applies to all residential care centres.

The term residential care applies to all residential centres including those operated by:

- Private Providers,
- Voluntary services
- Tusla centres.

Guidance

Any decisions made in relation to access of an external visitor to a residential centre will be made in the best interests of the child, while balancing the need to ensure compliance with the [public health guidelines](#).

Each proposed external physical visit into the centre will be risk-assessed by the multi-disciplinary professional group which has responsibility for the child’s care planning.

Where a decision is made to proceed with a proposed external physical visit into the centre, all necessary measures will be implemented to ensure compliance with public health guidelines.

Where a decision is made not to proceed with a proposed external physical visit into the centre, then all efforts will be made by the management of the residential centre to facilitate contact by that person with the child/young person. Please see Social Media and Use of Electronic Devices Guidance: Residential Care, COVID-19.

The rationale and risk assessment for each decision will be communicated in writing to the person and/or agency that has proposed the physical visit. All decisions will be recorded on the child case and care record and communicated to the allocated social worker. **If a visit is required and approval is given to proceed**

Where there is an essential requirement for a visit to the centre, following a risk assessment, the following guidance should be complied with. The visitor must be contacted by telephone in advance of the visit and the following questions asked:

- Do you know, or have you been in contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with Coronavirus (Covid-19)?
- Do you and everyone in your home, feel well?
- Do you or anyone in your home, have flulike symptoms / temperature / shortness of breath / cough?
- Has anyone in the house travelled recently from abroad?
- Do you, or anyone in your home, have a high temperature?
- Are you able to perform effective hand hygiene?
- Have you had contact with a GP by telephone for medical advice? If so, what is the advice?

If not symptomatic the risk is reduced.

During the Visit

While acknowledging measures must be taken to ensure the visit is comfortable and safe for all involved, the following measures need to be put in place:

- Try and keep distance –stay at least 6 ft./2m away.
- Ensure that the visitor only has contact with the young person/ staff members that they need to meet.
- Ask that other young people and staff remain in a different room.
- Is there a room in the unit that child could be spoken to alone?
- Clean your own hands regularly, and use alcohol gel if available.
- Avoid touching. If this is not possible remember to clean your hands afterwards.
- Do not touch your face.
- Do not provide tea/ coffee or share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, knives, forms, spoons, towels.

After the Visit

- Everyone who was part of the visit should wash their hands thoroughly in line with HSE guidance.
- Thoroughly clean any items used during the visit with soap and water or antibacterial spray / wipes.

You can get more information on www.hse.ie