

HSE social care stakeholder bulletin

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has extended its programme of spot checks to include care homes. A spot check is a phone call to review the measures being taken to minimise spread of coronavirus in the care home and to protect workers whilst they are caring for residents.

We know through liaison with the Care Quality Commission and Care Inspectorates for Wales and Scotland that several care homes have recently been inspected. We have removed those from the contact list to avoid duplication.

During the call a series of questions will be asked to evaluate the care home's knowledge, awareness and implementation of the suite of guidance produced to enable them to operate safely.

Where the initial call raises concerns about the measures being taken, the care home will receive a telephone call to explore the issues in more detail. If, after the second call, the care home has not provided sufficient assurance about their control measures, a further intervention will be required which may include a visit to the care home. This will be on a suitable date and time arranged in collaboration with the care homes.

At the visit we will check that a suitable and sufficient COVID risk assessment has been carried out and that the necessary control measures in line with current guidance are in place.

We appreciate that guidance is being updated regularly, and care homes are working hard to respond to the changes. HSE inspectors and visiting officers are experienced at applying professional judgement and discretion and will seek to take a proportionate approach, focussing on what is reasonable and achievable in each situation.

Experience from the HSE spot check programme indicates that the telephone calls are best dealt with by the person who is familiar with the risk assessment in place for COVID-19. You may wish to plan who will answer the call beforehand.

We know that care homes want to do the right thing and are working extremely hard to put in place safety measures. Most of the time we anticipate that advice will be enough to resolve the issues that we find, but if serious risks are encountered, enforcement action can be taken to ensure people's health and safety is protected. We will share the outcome of the spot checks and any follow up action with the relevant care regulator.

HSE has produced specific guidance on how to manage risks associated with the coronavirus on its [website](#) including - [Social distancing to make your workplace COVID-secure](#).

HSE has also produced a helpful [video](#) about the spot check and inspection process.