

## Covid Crisis Special Report 14

By Eileen Chubb ©

Since Our last report, our helpline has received concerns from **111** family's regarding care home lock downs.

Family's being unable to spend time with their loved ones is causing serious distress to all those affected and when a loved one is elderly then time spent with family is all the more precious.

Our stance on this issue is that care homes should have opened up to family's visits long ago, after all relatives visiting their loved ones are **more** likely to take all precautions.

We should not forget that care homes were accepting patients discharged from hospitals who were Covid positive at the same time that families were being locked out.

The issues raised during Covid are indictive of a wider issue we have dealt with over time, banning relatives from care homes. This charity was the first to expose this issue see for example [evictions and visiting restrictions](#)

The events during Covid have made it easy for care homes to close their doors but the real problem is getting them to open up again.

The layout of **most** care homes could with thought allow for safe visits to take place, there are some very small homes where this may be more difficult. However, care homes will have at least two entrances and an entry and exit route could be organised.

Pubs and restaurants have been open to the public for some time and we have seen many examples of excellent Covid awareness. If pubs and restaurants can open to the public safely there is no reason why care homes cannot.

How would I have tackled this issue? The manager's office is usually sited at the front of a home, this space could have been utilised for staggered visits throughout the day and evening, the phone, equipment and paperwork could have been relocated elsewhere in the home and it would only take a couple of

hours. The government could easily have paid a home for an empty bedroom to be used as an office but instead the government stance continues to be one of fill empty beds at any cost.

Good care is about quality of life, the right to see your family should be an integral part of this. Of course, a pandemic is an extraordinary event, and many mistakes were made at the start; but instead of learning from those mistakes and trying to find solutions, the same mistakes are being continually repeated. This includes denying family's care home visits.

Think how millions have entered pubs and restaurants safely and ask why the same could not happen in care homes?

Those in care homes were not kept safe during this pandemic and it is just perverse that the right to family life has all too easily been denied to those in care as a reaction to other failures and this speaks of a wider culture and attitude. Every care home should open to family visits and look and learn from pubs and restaurants.

Eileen Chubb

Please be assured this charity will continue to expose the facts and challenge Government, regulators, care industry and all those who deny human rights to the most vulnerable and we will do so in straight forward plain English.