

1.4 Home Visits/Care at Home

People who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 are also being advised by the local Health Protection Team to self-isolate. People who are self-isolating and have no symptoms do not pose a risk to others. They are self-isolating to allow closer monitoring in order to identify early symptoms, and to enable prompt medical action if required.

If an individual is in self-isolation, health and social care staff should ascertain if the individual has symptoms prior to their visit. It may become necessary to defer some home visits and alternative arrangements must be put in place to maintain contact (e.g. telephone liaison). Health and social care staff performing non-deferrable essential visits (for example, personal or nursing care) to households where there is an individual self-isolating, should follow the guidance below:

If during a domiciliary visit it is thought that COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed, then:

Staff

Staff must comply with all infection control procedures as set out in this guidance and the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) which is best practice for all health and care settings.

The use of bank or agency staff should be avoided wherever possible. Staff attending to care for someone who is possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 should not, where possible, attend to care for further people who are not self-isolating due to COVID-19. If this can't be avoided, consider caring for these individuals at the end of caseloads.

Only essential staff should enter the care area, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

Staff who are pregnant or otherwise immunosuppressed should not provide direct care for a person with possible or confirmed COVID-19. Any deviation from this should be a local decision. Pregnant staff or staff who are immunosuppressed should seek advice from the Occupational Health Department.

Hand Hygiene

This is essential before and after all contact with the individual being cared for, following removal of protective clothing and cleaning of equipment and the environment.

Wash hands with soap and water following [Best Practice How to Hand Wash Appendix 2](#). **Alcohol-based hand rub can be used if hands are not visibly dirty or soiled. Alcohol based hand rub stocks will be prioritised for acute care settings and these should not be stock piled.** Washing effectively with soap and water is sufficient. Use disposable paper towels to dry hands and place in waste.