

COVID-19 VISITOR PROCEDURE

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Introduction:

The purpose of this procedure is to provide key consideration around visitation and activities either indoor or in public spaces with people supported in 24hr locations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This procedure was created around the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Congregate Care Guidelines.

Community Living Windsor reserves the right to amend this procedure at anytime as deemed necessary by the Executive Director or designate.

Key Considerations

- Community Living Windsor has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all people supported, employees, and volunteers.
- Community Living Windsor's responsibility to ensure the safety of employees is a legislative requirement of the Occupation Health and Safety Act.
- Specific consideration must be given to Windsor's geography in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including local statistics and experience.
- Ethical, legal, personal, workplace, local, and values considerations must be balanced.
- Individual circumstances must be considered, including, but not limited to:

- the current health status of the person supported and any people that may share a residence with the person. Additional restrictions, as may be deemed appropriate by Community Living Windsor, will be put in place for people supported who live with someone with compromised health conditions.
- the emotional wellbeing of people supported who are unable to meet the requirements outlined below. Working with the person supported, their family and/or support circle, Community Living Windsor will continue to support the development of alternative ways for people we support to stay connected with their loved ones to help mitigate further strain on their emotional health.
- The prevailing guidance from health and legal authorities, along with sector trends and local information, will be monitored continuously and Community Living Windsor will ensure that visitation and activities in public space practices can return to normal as soon as safely possible.

Guiding Principles:

All visitations and activities either indoor or in public spaces with people supported in 24hr locations should be guided by the following principles.

- **Safety:** When planning, consideration must be given to the health and safety needs of all people supported including those not directly involved in the visit or activity, staff, members of the public, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.
- **Emotional Well-Being:** Accommodating visitors and activities in public spaces is intended to support the emotional well-being of people supported and their families/friends by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.
- **Equitable Access:** Anyone seeking to visit a person supported will be given equitable visitation access, consistent with the preference of the person supported and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard the people supported, visitors, and staff. Any person supported wishing to participate in activities within public spaces shall be given every opportunity to plan those activities if they are able to adhere to restrictions, defined below, that safeguard themselves, their housemates, staff, and members of the public.
- **Flexibility:** COVID-19 spread in the community and the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, staffing availability, and the current status of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) levels for staff and people supported must be considered before each visit or activity can take place.

General Visitor Requirements

The following requirements apply to visits unless stated otherwise within the procedure for that type of visit.

Provincial Definition of Fully Immunized Person

A person who has received the total required number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g. both doses of a two-dose vaccine series)

And

At least 14 days have passed since they have received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

No Outbreaks at the Support Location

No visitors or activities in public places of any kind will be permitted in cases where there is an active “outbreak” at the support location. This includes instances where symptomatic staff or people supported are being referred for testing, are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or where the situation has not yet been deemed “cleared” by senior management. Note that the term “Outbreak” in this context includes any instance of positive COVID-19 for someone connected with the support location, any instance of testing, or the presence of any symptoms that have not yet been cleared.

Person Specific Visitor Requirements

All people supported in 24 hour support locations will have a COVID-19 Support Strategy approved and uploaded to AIMS. This support strategy will capture all requirements for PPE, visits and outings the person is able to participate in.

Ensuring the person supported understand requirements and guidelines.

Visitor Screening Requirements

Using the **COVID-19 Visitor Tool Formstack** an advance phone screening will be completed with the Manager, Support within 72hrs before the visit/community activity to ensure the visitor is free of infection with no symptoms or fever present (along with all other symptoms published by Public Health). All Indoor visitors are required to be **fully vaccinated** and must submit **written proof** to the Manager ahead of the intended visit. The Manager may keep the information on file for future reference.

The **COVID-19 Family/Friend Agreement Formstack** can be completed at this point, or in person when the visitor arrives.

If the visitor passes the initial screening and is asked to come to the home, a second in-person screening using the **COVID-19 Visitor Tool Formstack** will occur, led by the Support Coordinator or senior staff member at the location, upon arrival and before entering the home.

The following procedure will apply during in-person screening:

- The screening must occur **outside** the support location.
- The visitor’s **temperature will be checked** and recorded using a forehead scanner.
- The visitor will be **asked specific screening questions** the visit/community activity can only take place if the screening is passed.
- The visitor will complete and sign a **Family/Friend Agreement** via iPad, if this was not done during the advanced phone screening with the Manager, Support.
- The visitor will **sanitize their hands** before entry using 65% (or greater) alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- The **iPad will be disinfected**.

If the visitor does not pass either of the screenings the visit/community activity cannot take place.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio or alternate Rapid Antigen Test)

“Panbio” shall be deemed to include all approved Rapid Antigen Tests.

All visitors regardless of vaccination status must consent to and complete the Panbio rapid screening test and receive a “Negative” result before being permitted any form of visitation **at Community Living Windsor support homes or other CLW locations**. This will require that the visitor waits 15-minutes between specimen collection and the test results before the visit can proceed. Visitors should plan accordingly. Accommodations can be considered for any visitor who so requires based on any protected ground (for example, if they have a medical exemption from their doctor).

Visitors will be required to use a small nasal swab to self-collect a specimen for Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) (to be completed outdoors or in the garage with the big door(s) open). In order to be eligible to do this, visitors will need to coordinate with a Manager in advance to receive training. The training requires reading training material, watching a video, having a discussion with the Manager, and signing a document. The visitor must receive written approval by a Manager to be designated as eligible to self-collect a specimen.

Visitors must be supervised by trained staff while self-collecting their specimen for testing. If more than one visitor is present, a trained visitor can collect a specimen from another visitor from the same household. If a visitor cannot complete the training successfully, the Manager will appoint a staff member to collect a specimen from the visitor upon arrival. In all cases, a trained CLW employee shall be the person to complete all elements of the Panbio test except specimen collection, unless prior written approval has been provided by the Director or designate.

No visitors **to CLW support homes or other CLW locations are exempt from Panbio testing.**

Staff Presence During Visits

Support staff must be present to supervise any visits to the 24 hour support location to ensure safety guidelines are maintained.

Upon Completion of the Visit

The visitor will:

- Perform hand hygiene
- Remove the surgical/procedure mask, by removing the loops from behind the ears
- Discard the mask into the garbage
- Perform hand hygiene

Everyone involved in the visit will complete appropriate hand hygiene.

Upon departure, temperature is rechecked for anyone who has been in the location for longer than 2 hours.

High touch areas, personal equipment, and any areas the visitor attended are disinfected by staff, in addition to all regular preventative and disinfection protocols.

Non-adherence to Rules

Non-adherence to any part of this procedure by any party must be documented on an incident report and will result in the immediate termination of the visit, subsequent visits to be cancelled pending review approval by the Director or designate.

If there is refusal to agree to any of the rules implemented, then the visit will not occur.

Alternatives

Alternatives will be considered for approval by the Director (or designate) if the established procedures cannot work for the person or family. All such alternatives must incorporate factors such as each person's cognitive, emotional, and physical considerations, including those of any affected roommates, staffing levels, access to equipment, knowledge of the person's supports, factors like washroom use, or factors but not limited to all other individualized circumstances. All such alternatives must be fully detailed and approved in the person's support strategy.

Essential Visitor Designation

The agency may deem a visitor as essential if exceptional circumstances exist that include an immediate decline and well being of person supported. In such cases, an individualized protocol may be established at the discretion of the Director or designate, which may include permitting the visitor inside the supported home.

Where **exceptional circumstances** exist that include an immediate decline to the person supported where that person is at serious risk of harm to self or others, and;

Support staff and management have exhausted all avenues of supporting the individual in coping with the situation and uncontrolled self-harming actions or aggression to others is continuing and/or increasing. Consultation with all appropriate members of the multidisciplinary team have exhausted all strategies to assist the individual and a further decline has been witnessed. All usual modes of dealing with expression of emotions and changes in physical and mental health have not made a difference with the individual. The individual is now at risk of mental and/or physical health deterioration now and/or in the future, and;

- A consultation with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit has taken place and a determination has been reached that the risk of in-person visits to the person supported and others is acceptable, and;
- The Executive Director or designate has given approval for an exemption after balancing all prevailing factors.
- Exemptions may also be provided in cases where end of life circumstances exist and the Executive Director or designate has provided approval for in-person visits.

A clear plan must be created as to what the outcome of the visit is to be and the purpose of the visit.

Community Living Windsor recognizes the vital role family and friends play in a person's life. However, only in exceptional circumstances will exemptions be made to the above definition of an essential visitor.

Considerations for Mask-Wearing by People Supported in 24hr Residences

In March 2022 the Province eliminated most masking requirements, rendering the wearing of

masks in public spaces a personal choice issue. Despite the Provincial shift, it remains evident through data that case counts of COVID-19 are still very high and that the virus is still very much present in our community. Personal choice, in the context of people who live in group settings, greatly affects the other people who also reside in a home. Additionally, many of the people we support are medically fragile or otherwise particularly at risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19, should they contract the virus. At the same time, our agency is one that values choice and we regularly promote that people we support ought to have the same rights as all other citizens.

With the considerations above, and more, our approach to requiring people supported (who reside in 24hr group living settings) to wear masks in the community at this time is as follows:

- At a Minimum, standards set by the Provincial government for all citizens must be maintained, as changed from time-to-time.
- The Manager, Support for each 24hr support location shall lead discussions that involve all people supported and/or their substitute decision-makers in an effort to establish norms with the people who live in that particular support location.
- Ultimately, each group of people living in their own home should be able to make choices about masking in public, however those choices must include the following considerations:
 - Whether others who live in the home are at high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.
 - The types of activities people take part in.
 - The fact that one person's actions affect all others in the home.
 - Each person's wishes.
- The Manager shall be responsible to document the conversation and the outcomes, and to lead updates from time-to-time as well.
- Where there is consensus among people supported, the group's wishes shall carry related to requirements for masking in public spaces.
- Where consensus is not established, further discussions should include the Director, Support and may incorporate a Risk Assessment and further consultation.

Overall, the intent of this direction is to place as much control as possible in the hands of the people we support who are affected, while still acknowledging that there is serious risk and that congregate settings carry a different set of considerations based on groups of people living together.

A – Procedure for Visits to 24 Hour Support Locations

Virtual

Virtual visits are the safest and easiest to accommodate and schedule.

Visits should be **prearranged** with Direct Support Professionals working with the person supported and the virtual visitor(s) to ensure support/devices/adequate time are available to facilitate the virtual visit.

Drive Up/Window

Drive By/Window visits are an alternative to virtual visits that allow people supported to see family and friends in person when circumstances may not allow an outdoor or indoor visit.

Visitor Screening requirements above do apply to drive up/window visits.

Visits need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) is required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status, based on the requirements outlined above.

Outdoor

Outdoor visits allow people supported to visit with family/friends in person with lower risk and more freedom than indoor visits.

Visitor Screening Requirements apply to all outdoor visits.

Visits need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) is required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status, based on the requirements outlined above.

Masking, eye protection, and physical distancing are required for all visits, regardless of location on the property, or vaccination status

Brief physical contact (**a hug**) is permitted.

Visit must be in **designated area**, no access to other areas of the support location/property.

Outdoor visits are limited to 3 visitors unless the Manager has approved an alternative based on the circumstances and the physical space available. No exceptions can be made in cases where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Indoor

Pending a location-specific risk assessment, indoor visits are permitted and allow opportunity for visits to take place when outdoor visits are not an option. However, these visits pose the highest risk, and these risks should be considered prior to any indoor visit.

Only **FULLY vaccinated** visitors are permitted indoors unless a written exception has been provided by the Executive Director or designate. Such exception shall consider any request for accommodation based on protected grounds.

Visitor Screening Requirements apply to all indoor visits.

Visits need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) is required for all visitors, regardless of vaccination status, based on the requirements outlined above.

Masking (surgical), eye protection, and physical distancing are required at all times.

Brief physical contact (**a hug**) is permitted.

Visit must be in **designated area** that allows for physical distancing and disinfecting, no access to other areas of the support location/property.

No visitors are exempt from Panbio testing, regardless of vaccination status

Indoor visits are limited to 2 visitors at a time, subject to appropriate space available to maintain social distance and privacy. Additional visitors may be approved by the Director or designate in cases where they are required and physical space allows for same.

B – Procedure for Short Stay (Same Day) Absences

Outings in the Community

Outings in the community include essential absences (ie. work, school, medical appointment, physical exercise) and recreational outings (ie. activities for pleasure)

People supported are able to **participate in activities and outings** in alignment with the [Roadmap to Reopen](#)

People supported will be encouraged/reminded to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette at all times and to **physically distance and mask** in alignment with the [Roadmap to Reopen](#)

When returning from an outing/activity people supported will be required to complete the **COVID-19 Symptom Check for People Supported**. At any time a person supported has close contact with a family member, friend, or member(s) of the public, regardless of vaccination status, they are required to perform a Panbio test at three dates: upon return, 3 days after, 7 days after. Where a person is having regular visits/outings, they may elect to test twice per week on an ongoing basis.

Outings in the Community with Family/Friend or Visit to Family/Friend Home

People supported are able to participate in outings/activities in the community with family/friend(s) or visit a family/friend home.

People supported are able to **participate in activities and outings** in alignment with the [Roadmap to Reopen](#)

People supported will be encouraged/reminded to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette at all times and to **physically distance and mask** in alignment with the [Roadmap to Reopen](#)

Visitor Screening Requirements apply to all outings/visits that include a family/friend.

Outings/Visits need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio): ~~is required based on the requirements outlined above.~~

At any time a person supported has close contact with a family member, friend, or member(s) of the public, regardless of vaccination status, they are required to perform a Panbio test at three dates: upon return, 3 days after, 7 days after. Where a person is having regular visits/outings, they may elect to test twice per week on an ongoing basis.

Brief physical contact (**a hug**) is permitted.

Number of visitors is limited to the social gathering limits outlined in the [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

When returning from an outing/activity people supported will be required to complete the **COVID-19 Symptom Check for People Supported**. **Additionally, they must complete Panbio testing as described above.**

C- Procedure for Overnight Absences (General/Essential)

General/Essential Overnight Absence

People supported are able to participate in overnight absences to family/friend homes for both **general**, in alignment with the [Roadmap to Reopen](#) and **essential** (to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or legal rights of the person supported) purposes.

People supported will be encouraged/reminded to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette at all times and to **physically distance and mask** in alignment with the [Roadmap to](#)

[Reopen](#)

Visitor Screening Requirements apply to all overnight absences.

Overnight absences need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) is required for returning people supported as follows:

- **For absences 2 nights or less** on days 3 and 7 from the day the person left their home
- **For absences 3 nights or more** upon return and on day 4 following their return.
- If a person leaves for a subsequent overnight absence within those 7 days, a new 7-day period should be started when they return to their home.

Brief physical contact (**a hug**) is permitted.

Number of visitors is limited to the social gathering limits outlined in the [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

When a person supported returns from an overnight absence they will be required to complete the **COVID-19 Symptom Check for People Supported**. Additionally, they are required to perform a Panbio test at three dates: upon return, 3 days after, 7 days after. Where a person is having regular visits/outings, they may elect to test twice per week on an ongoing basis.

When a person supported that is **not fully immunized** returns from an overnight absence they will be required to complete the **COVID-19 Symptom Check for People Supported** AND the following for 14 days (or 5-7 days after the visit they may take an optional COVID-19 PCR test, a negative result from that test would end the precautions listed below):

- o Monitor for symptoms.
- o Avoid using common areas; however, if a common area cannot be avoided, the resident must use a surgical/procedure mask if tolerated.
- o Limit contact with other residents.
- o Only participate in group activities if physical distancing is maintained (i.e., 2 metres) and a surgical/procedure mask is used for the duration of the activity.
- o Practice proper hand hygiene by washing their hands often (using soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- o Adhere to respiratory etiquette.
- o Panbio test at three dates: upon return, 3 days after, 7 days after. Where a person is having regular visits/outings, they may elect to test twice per week on an ongoing basis.

D – Procedure for Essential Visitors

Contractor

Screening requirements apply to all contractor visits.

Any external contractors must be **arranged in advance** through Maintenance/Property (or designate).

All contractors are required to **wear a mask (surgical) and eye protection** (face shield/goggles) at all times during the visit.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) does **not apply** to contractors.

Refusal to wear PPE, or improper use of PPE, should be reported to Manager and the contractor should not be allowed to enter or continue the visit.

Managers

In person **Screening requirements** apply to all Manager visits (Phone prescreening is not required, Managers will self-screen before the visit as well).

Managers are required to **wear a mask (surgical) and eye protection** (face shield/goggles) at all times during the visit.

In person (at the support location) **Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio)** does **not apply** to Managers (they complete two tests per week if required).

Maintenance Staff

Screening requirements do **not apply** to maintenance staff (they complete a self-screening on formstack when arriving on site).

Maintenance staff are required to **wear a mask (surgical) and eye protection** (face shield/goggles) at all times during the visit.

Essential Family/Friend Visitors

An essential family/friend visitor is a person whose physical presence is deemed essential by a service agency to maintain the health, wellness, and safety of a person supported.

Essential Visitor Designation must be obtained following the guidelines stated above.

Visitor Screening Requirements apply to all essential family/friend visitors.

Essential family/friend visits need to be **arranged in advance** with the Manager, Support.

Rapid Antigen Testing (Panbio) is required based on the requirements outlined above.

Masking (surgical) and physical distancing are required at all times. Eye protection (face shield, goggles) are required when providing direct care (within 2 metres).

Brief physical contact (**a hug**) is permitted.

APPENDICIES 1 & 2

- a. Advance Phone Screening for Visitors
- b. In-Person Screening for Visitors & Visitor Agreement

Each of the above-noted documents must be completed on FormStack using the following links:

https://clw.formstack.com/forms/covid19_visitor_tool

https://clw.formstack.com/forms/covid19_familiy_friend_agreement