



<b>Policy / Procedure Details</b>	Title:	<b>Visitors Policy</b>		
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## **1. The Policy**

This policy is aimed at those who are supported to live in Association Services.

We wish people to feel they have a place to call home; somewhere they feel a sense of ownership and belonging. We also believe that maintaining personal relationships and developing new ones are important parts of helping people to feel a sense of belonging and a sense of home. As an expression of this belief, we value the contact between people we support and their families, friends and neighbours.

We encourage contact and communication of all sorts between people and those who matter most in their lives. The nature and frequency of this contact will vary as people's circumstances differ due to many factors such as age, the presence and proximity of family, relatives, friends, etc. People can use phone, email, Skype, etc. to communicate or stay in touch with others. However, direct face to face contact is very important and we do our utmost to promote this through encouraging visits.

Visits are arranged to the family home or to the homes of others that are important to the person. Visits to the home where the person is supported to live are also promoted.

We understand that people will have different opportunities to be involved in visiting, however, we really encourage family and friends to visit on special personal occasions and at times of the year that are special to all.

We try to keep an open door policy for visitors and encourage family and friends to drop by. In many cases, people who visit have a good knowledge of the times people are likely to be home and will feel free to drop by. We advise that people intending to visit and who have to travel some distance make contact first in case, by chance, that the person they hope to visit may be gone out. Generally, we like to keep these arrangements as low key and informal as possible so that people feel free to visit.

We will provide as much privacy as we can to help people feel free to receive visitors. We acknowledge this may not always be easy if there are a number of people sharing a typical house in the community together. However, if visitors have any concerns about the need for privacy, we would ask them to discuss this with our staff and they will try to make appropriate accommodations.

We ask that visitors are considerate of the fact that these are shared living arrangements and that they are respectful of the needs of others who live there. At times, people who share living arrangements may have a bad day. If this is the case, we would ask visitors to take on board any requests from staff regarding the wellbeing of others.

We ask that visitors would take on board any requests staff make in relation to health and safety issues that might arise. This might include requirements around smoking. If there are any particular requirements for infection control in place such as hand sanitisers, we would ask that visitors follow the advice of staff.

Staff should treat visitors with all due courtesy and should make them feel as welcome as possible. We understand that it is not always easy to be a visitor in an environment where there are a number of people sharing accommodation.

It can be difficult also when staff seem to have a better knowledge of the person being visited than the visitors. This is often more so when the person does not communicate with words. Staff should help visitors to feel at ease and show awareness and sensitivity to any difficulty during a visit.

Many families, both extended and across the generations, have long standing connections with a particular home where their family member is living. They will tend to know the staff and the other people living there and often know the families of other residents. There is a rich history of connections that have deep roots. It is essential that new staff become familiar with these so they can become part of the tradition of welcome. Managers need to ensure new staff are introduced to family members and other visitors who are important to the person. Having a sense of the person's connections is very important for reassuring families that strong traditions of welcome will continue.

When new people come into the life of someone who is supported, staff should be welcoming and respectful. Normal levels of vigilance should apply. A balance must be struck between proper safeguards and placing barriers to building new relationships in the life of people supported. Staff should use the policy on Natural Supports and Volunteering to obtain guidance on a balanced approach.