

“I’m concerned about my loved one, as they have dementia”

If your loved one has dementia, it is likely that you will have some specific concerns and questions about the new visiting guidelines.

We have tried to answer the most likely queries here, but if you have any other questions, don't hesitate to let us know.

“Will my loved one still remember me?”

For many people, the worry of a loved one no longer recognising them can be overwhelming. It is important to stress that despite time spent apart, many people living with dementia will remember their relatives and friends. However, some people may struggle at first.

If this is the case, try not to worry and give your loved one time to remember. It may take more than one visit for their memories to be reconnected to you.

“What if they want to cuddle or touch me?”

Not everyone living with dementia will understand the need to maintain physical distance and may want to greet you with physical contact. This response is understandable, so we will be considering different options for each individual resident, their understanding, needs and rights.

If it is a concern, we will talk this through with you before your visit and agree a safe approach before you arrive.



Tips from our teams:

- Re-introduce yourself and remind them of your relationship.
- Consider taking an object with you that would remind them of you. (This will need to be easy to sanitise, so please discuss with our team before your arrival).
- Talk about the distant past, rather than recent months. Your loved one will be more likely to feel at ease, as they are more likely to recall long-term memories.
- Even if your relative doesn't recognise you, remember that their emotions remain. They will still benefit from seeing your friendly face, hearing your voice and enjoying your company.
- Think about taking some photographs when you visit. These can be shown to your loved one as a reminder.
- Don't be surprised if you feel emotional after the visit. It's an understandable response after all you have been through.

“What if my loved one’s dementia has worsened?”

It is possible that your loved one’s dementia may have changed. It is worth recognising that these changes may be a result of what they have been through. All of us have been affected by the lockdown and this is equally true of people living with dementia.

For some people living with dementia, there will have been a cognitive decline. Please don’t feel guilty about this. There is nothing you could have done to prevent this and these changes are part of their dementia journey.

If your loved one’s dementia has worsened, you may need to adopt some different approaches and communication techniques. They may need longer to respond to questions or need help to do things. Maintaining the relationship with your relative is just as important now as it was before the pandemic.

Try to ensure that you have someone to talk to after your meeting.

It’s likely that you will feel very emotional – a normal response to an unusual situation.

When you agree a time and date for your next visit, think about asking the team to record this for your loved one. It will give them a focus and act as a reminder.

“Will it be too upsetting for my loved one?”

When you see your relative or friend again, it’s likely to be a very emotional time for you both. Try not to be too upset if your relative doesn’t seem happy to see you. They may not be aware that they haven’t seen you for such a long time. Dementia affects a person’s perception of time, so in their reality, they might have only seen you this morning.

Try not to worry about showing your emotions in front of your loved one. They will probably sense that strong emotions are being evoked as a result of the reunion. Just explain that it’s because you love them and it’s good to see them.