

## Summer 2021-When can visits happen?

*The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been far reaching and restrictive, curtailing the movements of every citizen within Irish society and beyond; but has been particularly restrictive for people who reside in residential houses and for their families. Service users and their families have shown overwhelming courage during this time.*

*As a degree of normality is returning with the easing of restrictions imposed during the pandemic, we are becoming a step closer to precious moments we previously enjoyed including meeting with family and friends. The following provides a snapshot of when visiting can resume.*

### **National Guidance on Visiting Private Homes**

From 10 May 2021, indoor visiting is permitted in private homes **without masks or social distancing for:**

- Fully vaccinated people from one household with other fully vaccinated people ( for up to 3 households gathering)
- Fully vaccinated people can meet indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household, provided that they are not at risk of severe illness and no more than 3 households are present e.g. 2 vaccinated households can meet with 1 other unvaccinated household.
- From 7<sup>th</sup> June, visiting indoors in private homes is permitted for visitors from one other household.

### **Visiting Residential Houses in St Michaels House**

*During the Covid-19 pandemic we turned to technology to keep in touch. We will continue to develop technology options within St Michaels House so that a wider access to technology can be enjoyed by all. Nonetheless, residential houses for people with disabilities are the home environments of individuals residing there and as such the importance of maintaining face-to-face family connections with loved ones must not be underestimated.*

*The vaccination status of prospective visitors is also relevant to assessing the risks associated with visiting to residential houses.*

*Although there is uncertainty regarding the impact of the vaccine on transmission; there is clear evidence of reduction of harm and given the burden of visiting restrictions on residents, it is appropriate to begin cautiously to ease restrictions on visiting in the context of a high level of completion of vaccination in a Residential Care Facilities for people with disabilities.*

- When 4 out of 6 people (staff and residents) in a SMH house have their second vaccination they will be permitted to have up to 4 visits per week from **2 weeks** after they are fully vaccinated (up to 2 visitors).
- Visits will continue under specific conditions to ensure the safety and welfare of the residents, however further public health guidance will follow in the coming weeks in relation to the easing of restrictions.