



INTERNATIONAL
LONG TERM CARE
POLICY NETWORK

Jordan: Managing COVID-19 and protecting care homes

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Corrections and comments are welcome at jblack@nico.org.uk. This document was last updated on 26 July 2020 and may be subject to revision.

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1. Key actions taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Jordan

1.1. Country wide actions

- Travel bans, international travel with all flights to and from the country suspended since 17 March and travel limitations across the country with no cars being allowed on the road and restrictions on movement across Governorates.
- Businesses have been closed temporarily particularly restaurants and other entertainment venues such as cinemas and children's play activity centres.
- Curfews on a daily basis applied rigorously as well as occasional complete curfews lasting either 24 or 48 hours.
- Quarantine arrangements, with no option to either 'agree' to stay at home or sign a commitment to do so, with designated places, generally hotels, where you are required to stay for a minimum of two weeks.
- Medical and nursing staff working with those who are hospitalised with COVID-19, work a two week 'shift' in the hospital, without going home at all. They then go into strict quarantine for two weeks before returning to work their next two week 'shift' in the hospital.
- Random testing for COVID-19 in areas where an infection has been confirmed.
- Social distancing in place for everyone.

1.2. Long term care facilities - specific actions

- A ban on all but absolutely essential family and other visitors to the homes with the exceptions being health visits by GPs and MoSD senior officials.
- Staff at one long-term residential care centre working in three distinct teams and each team spends a full week working and actually living in the centre. The three teams then alternate week about with each also then having two weeks off from work. The same system being applied across all residential care facilities across the country.
- Daily monitoring of both residents and staff takes place routinely to check on their health condition.
- Safe hygiene practices being applied thoroughly and guidance strictly followed by all those working at the care homes.

2. Introduction

When the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Jordan the Government declared that its priority was to protect the lives of all its citizens. The measures taken nationally and specifically in residential care facilities including those for older people; those persons with a disability;

orphanages and services for juveniles have resulted in no coronavirus infections being identified in any of these services.

Whilst there have been tight restrictions applied by the Government, residential facilities have continued to provide care and support to some of the most vulnerable in Jordanian society.

Eid festival arrangements in May and July

During the Eid Al Fitr holiday period at the end of May, a large number of residents from the long-term residential facilities were able to spend time with their family. This necessitated very clear guidelines being put in place to manage the collection from the residential care centres of those going home to stay with their family and arrangements being put in place to safeguard those returning from their family home and those who had remained in the centre from any impact of COVID-19.

Up until the start of the Eid holiday no visitors had been permitted to the long term care homes other than official and health visits by General Practitioners (GPs) and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) senior officials and inspectors.

In preparation for residents returning to their family home, certain strict requirements were applied, including:

- No more than one person travelling to the centre to collect their relative
- The person collecting their relative was required to wear a face mask and gloves when entering the home
- There was a designated area in the home where the relative and resident could meet and staff ensured any belongings the resident was taking with them were brought to this area
- The collection of each resident was at a specific time to ensure the area used could subsequently be thoroughly cleaned
- The relative collecting the resident was also advised to bring their own pen for signing the necessary discharge forms.

On returning to the centre with the resident the same procedures were followed and in addition:

- Residents returning to the centre were kept isolated from the other residents in a designated area of the home for a 14 day period
- Those returning had their temperature checked every two hours; with temperature checks on the other residents and staff of the home maintained three times a day
- Safe hygiene practices continue to be applied thoroughly and guidance strictly followed by all those working at the care homes.

As the Eid Al Adha holiday approaches the same arrangements will be in place to ensure that those residents visiting their family home will be kept as safe as possible from the impact of the COVID-19 virus.

The measures taken in residential care facilities including those for older people; those persons with a disability; orphanages and services for juveniles resulted in there still being no coronavirus infections identified in any of these services.

3. Impact of COVID19 on long-term care users and staff so far

Staff working at one of the centres that accommodates approximately 160 young men and men with a range of disabilities work in three distinct teams and each team spends a full week working and actually living in the centre. The three teams then alternate week about with each also then having two weeks off from work. The idea of this being that information regarding the incubation period of the virus meant that if someone not working develops it, they will have symptoms.

No visitors have been permitted to the homes other than official and health visits by GPs and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) senior officials and inspectors. Monitoring of both residents and staff takes place routinely to check on their health condition.

The same arrangements pertain in the other four Ministry run centres and also in the private (27) and voluntary (4) care homes for persons with a disability. Similar arrangements are in place in the orphanages as well as homes for the elderly and the juvenile detention centres. The arrangements in such centres have included:

- A ban on all but absolutely essential family and other visitors to the homes with the exceptions being health visits by GPs and MoSD senior officials.
- Staff at the centre working in three distinct teams and each team spends a full week working and actually living in the centre. The three teams then alternate week about with each also then having two weeks off from work.
- Daily monitoring of both residents and staff takes place routinely to check on their health condition.
- Safe hygiene practices being applied thoroughly and guidance strictly followed by all those working at the care homes.
- No admissions to any residential facility from either hospital or the community.

It is also worth noting that monitoring of all the residential care centres has continued during this time with MoSD officials and inspectors continuing to make visits to residential care centres to ensure safe care practices are being maintained.

3.1. Number of positive cases in population and deaths

The news on Coronavirus cases in Jordan on 26 July 2020 (Petra News website¹), states that in total there have been 1,146 cases of Covid-19 in the country.

¹ <https://petra.gov.jo/>

In total, since the infection was identified here in the second week of March, there have sadly been 11 deaths from the virus.

The arrangements for the medical and nursing staff working with those who are infected is that they work a two week 'shift' in the hospital, without going home at all. They then go into strict quarantine for two weeks before then returning to work their next two week 'shift' in the hospital – they do not even get home to be with their family.

3.2. Population level measures to contain spread of COVID-19

The restrictions applied by Government for the whole population have included:

- Travel bans, international travel with all flights to and from the country suspended since 17 March and across the country with limitations on cars being allowed on the road and travel restrictions across Governorates.
- Businesses have been closed temporarily particularly restaurants and other entertainment venues such as cinemas and children's play activity centres.
- Curfews on a daily basis applied rigorously as well as occasional complete curfews lasting either 24 or 48 hours.
- Quarantine arrangements with no option to either 'agree' to stay at home or sign a commitment to do so, there are designated places, generally hotels, where you are required to stay.
- Social distancing in place for everyone.

Whilst restrictions have been relaxed in recent weeks the daily curfew from 1.00 to 6.00 continues and breaches of the existing restrictions are still dealt with swiftly and expediently. The Government provides a daily update on any relaxation of restrictions through local news channels and any decisions are reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that they are able to continue.

The restrictions applied by Government for the whole population have decreased in recent weeks however, a number remain in place and include:

- Travel bans, international travel with all flights to and from the country remain suspended since 17 March however, they are likely to resume to and from a list of so-called 'green' countries in early August
- Strict quarantine arrangements remain in place with designated places for those either returning to or visiting Jordan with routine testing in the designated quarantine centres
- Social distancing remains in place for everyone and limitations on the number of people who can gather in one place is set at 20 with a clear instruction from government that this will be strictly enforced.

Arrangements for the return of Jordanian citizens – mainly those studying and working overseas - have been put in place with those returning to Jordan subject to a strict two week quarantine.

As the month of Ramadan came to an end in May, the Government declared a full three day curfew would apply and this impacted directly on the start of the Eid Al Fitr celebrations marking the end of Ramadan. There are no indications of the same being applied for the upcoming Eid Al Adha holidays.

3.3. Rates of infection and mortality among long-term care users and staff

There have been no cases of COVID-19 infection affecting either long-term care users or staff in any residential care facilities in Jordan.

4. Next steps

It will be interesting to observe how the residential, long-term care services manage the transition to being open again to visitors and new admissions as the country as a whole returns to some normality. Safeguarding the most vulnerable in Jordanian society from the impact of COVID-19 has been a priority for the Government and MoSD. Whilst these efforts and the specific efforts of the staff working in such services continue to prove successful, it will be important that future responses are appropriate and continue to protect those receiving care.

The efforts of those monitoring and working in such services will hopefully continue to prove successful in protecting those receiving care from the Covid-19 virus.