



## Supporting our patients: open visiting guidelines

We aim to deliver the best possible care for our patients and we know carers, family and friends can play a key role in caring for and supporting their relatives/friends during a hospital stay. 'Open visiting' is about what we aim to do for as many patients as possible, but please understand that there are certain wards, certain diagnoses and certain patients where our professional judgement may be that more privacy, more rest, or less visitors are needed. This would be a clinical evaluation and should be respected for the wellbeing of the patient.

These simple guidelines will help us to ensure that the needs of every patient are met. We ask all visitors to work with us to make this a success for everyone.

### For visitors

Please inform a member of the nursing staff who you have come to visit when you arrive.

### **We aim to complete personal care by 11am and most ward rounds will take place in the morning.**

A ward round can be enhanced by having a key person present who can be involved in discussions, give information and help the patient and their wider family understand what has been discussed. If the nominated person would like to be present for the weekday ward round they would be welcome. Also, most doctors can give an appointment at set times in their working week for longer discussions with other family members and a member of the nursing team can arrange this for you.

If you would like to help your relative/friend to get ready for the day then do please visit in the morning.

If you are not planning to be involved in either of these then visiting after 11am will reduce the likelihood of being asked to leave the bay whilst we attend to patients.

It may not be a patient's regular doctor who cares for them at **weekends**. At the weekend doctors will make every effort to answer questions but it may be that input is needed from the specialist team. The ward team can arrange for you to speak to a doctor in the week.

It's vital our staff are fully focussed on key tasks so we politely ask you not to interrupt them when they are in the middle of either **ward or drugs rounds**, or are attending other patients, unless it is an emergency.

**We start to settle patients for the night from 8pm** - we ask you to respect the need for all our patients to sleep. We are unable to accommodate overnight visits unless the circumstances are exceptional, so if you wish to stay later than 8pm please discuss this with the nurse in charge. **We may politely ask visitors to leave if our staff feel that it is in the best interests of the patients in the ward.**

Days can feel very long when you are in hospital and it will help patients to recover if they remain active, both mentally and physically. Visitors can help in lots of different ways so when you come to visit please consider doing some of the following:

- ✓ Help with your relative/friend's daily routine like washing and dressing
  - ✓ Eat together – bring your own sandwiches or get a takeaway from our restaurant or on-site shops (do not bring in fast food takeaways)
  - ✓ Bring in games to play – cards, puzzles, board games
  - ✓ Read books and newspapers together
  - ✓ Discuss local and national news
  - ✓ Go for a stroll around the hospital
  - ✓ Sit outside together in one of our courtyard gardens
- Rest during the day is important to a patient's recovery and some specialist wards provide intense therapy sessions which can be tiring, so allow the person you have come to see the opportunity to rest and **check with them that you are not there for too long**. Don't feel that you need to stay for extended periods of time, this can be tiring for both of you.
  - If you're visiting at mealtimes and your relative/friend needs help to eat it would be helpful if you assisted them, if you felt you were able to. Patients often like this familiarity
  - Do not come to visit if you are feeling unwell, for example with a cough or cold. If you have had diarrhoea or vomiting please allow 48 hours after your last episode before you resume visiting
  - Please use alcohol rub or soap and water on your hands when you arrive and leave the ward and respect visiting restrictions if they need to be introduced for the purpose of infection control
  - High standards of cleanliness are important so a housekeeper may ask you to move to allow thorough cleaning around the patient's bed. They will also alert you to any wet floors to ensure your personal safety
  - The confidentiality, privacy and dignity of all our patients must be respected so a member of staff may ask you to leave the bay for a short time. Unfortunately not all wards have a relatives' room, so you may have to wait in a corridor
  - Please also appreciate that providing you with patient information will always be subject to the patient giving consent
  - Please use the chairs provided rather than sitting or lying on the bed
  - Please speak to the nurse in charge if you are planning to bring children to visit a specialist area such as coronary care, this helps us to support both you and them
  - Children need to be supervised at all times and must not be allowed to run around

#### For the benefit of all our patients, please:

- Show the same respect and consideration to others that you would wish to see given to the person you are visiting
- Limit visitors to no more than **two people** (including children) at a time
- Keep noise levels as low as possible to avoid disturbing other patients who may be resting or sleeping when you are visiting

#### For patients

You will need time to rest, so we suggest that you do not ask people to visit or stay for the whole day. Ask your visitors to leave if you want to rest or do not wish them to be present while you are receiving treatment or nursing care.

#### For carers

If you are the main carer for the person you are visiting please ask the nurse in charge about our Carer's Passport.

**Thank you for your support in helping us to put our patients first.**