



**Addendum to the Trust Visiting Policy
Revised Visiting Guidance - Supporting Family Presence &
Participation with patients and/or residents during COVID
25 September 2020**

**Update Version – 25 September
2020**

Changes to Our Visiting Policy:

Trust Facilities Visiting Guidance - Supporting Family Presence & Participation with patients and/or residents during COVID 19.

The Department of Health issued its updated 'COVID-19: REGIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR VISITING IN CARE SETTINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND' on 22 September 2020, with an implementation date of 23 September 2020, dependent on local arrangements being in place to safely facilitate the resumption of visiting. Specific Guidance will be issued for Nursing and Residential Care Homes.

Set out below is the Western Trust's Updated Visiting Guidance which will be kept under review and updated to reflect the Regional Surge Level Position.

The Trust will adhere as close as possible to the regional guidance, unless specific circumstances dictates otherwise.

Introduction

This guidance will be issued as an addendum to the WHSCT '**Hospital Visiting Policy – Supporting Family Presence & Participation**' – April 2017. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our patients, communities and individuals and teams remain our absolute priority.

This Visiting Guidance has been developed to facilitate visiting while the Trust is in a Pre or Low Surge during Covid 19 (evidence of community spread and/or increasing numbers of hospital admissions). The Guidance is subject to change should any individual Ward or Facility have two or more confirmed or suspected cases in either patients/residents or staff of Covid 19, in which case all visiting will cease. Our priority is to safeguard and protect people who are receiving care and protect our Health Care Workers so that they are able to care for patients and families.

The Trust will consider special circumstances relating to visiting, for example, people receiving End of Life care.

Particular considerations to support visiting

- The decision to permit visitors into Trust facilities will on a day to day basis, lie with the nurse-in-charge, in hospital settings, and the home manager in trust residential home settings. This will depend on the ability to ensure social distancing and safety of both patients/residents and the visitor. This Guidance will be reviewed and updated as the journey of the surge level of the Pandemic (virus) changes.

- Where possible virtual visiting remains the preferred option, to support this all areas will continue to facilitate virtual visiting.
- Before visiting, the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse/Home Manager/admitting nurse will advise the nominated visitors of the arrangements for visiting.
- The nominated visitor must be informed that they must not attend if they have had any symptoms consistent with COVID 19, are a close contact of a positive case or have travelled from a country not exempted from the safe travel corridor and have been advised to self-quarantine
- On admission, each patient/resident will be asked to name one person as their nominated visitor.
- It is important that each nominated visitor is risk assessed at each visit to establish if they have and COVID19 related symptoms. Visitors who indicate that they have any symptoms consistent with Covid-19 they will not be permitted to visit. The visitors contact details (Name, phone number) will be recorded in the visiting book to assist with contact tracing if required. *See attached template at **Appendix One**. Based on PHE Guidance, these details will be retained for a period of up to 21 days*
- If nominated visitors show, any of the symptoms of coronavirus or indeed, who feels unwell must not visit, even if these symptoms are mild or unconfirmed, due to the risk they pose to others. This is important for infection prevention and control.
- In certain circumstances, it may be possible to change the name of the nominated visitor due to changing personal or work commitment; this will be at the discretion of Ward sister/charge nurse, home manager. In the event that the names of the nominated visitor change, it is important that the contact tracing details be recorded for the newly nominated visitor.
- **The number of visitors at the bedside is limited to ONE nominated person, to visit for a maximum of ONE hour, for no more than ONE visit per week.**
- In multi-bedded bays and/or rooms, there will be a maximum of two visitors allowed to visit at a time and this will be factored in when organising the visiting times for the day (e.g. this means a maximum of two visitors for four patients in an open bay area).
- Visitors will be informed in advance about what to expect when they see the patient and, be given practical advice about social distancing, wearing personal protective equipment if appropriate, hand washing and risks associated i.e. the removal of gloves to hold hands.
- An information leaflet and Poster will be available detailing the Do's and Don'ts of visiting within Western Trust facilities. *See attached Poster at **Appendix Two**.*
- The nominated visitor will be informed of the time slot allocated to them by the Ward/Facility. There may be local negotiation with staff and families to ensure the time suits the nominated person to visit and ensure that visiting numbers are spread across the visiting times as possible.
- All people visiting Health and Social Care Settings and Care Home settings will be required to wear face coverings for the foreseeable future, and to ensure they keep their face covering in place throughout their visit to the ward to facility. People will be required to supply their own face covering, and will not be permitted to enter the facility without it. *See attached advice on Wearing a Face Covering at **Appendix Three**.*

- In circumstances where a visitor claims exemption from wearing a face covering, the social distancing measure of 2 meters must be strictly observed and adhered too.
- Should a nominated visitor feel unwell or showing any symptoms consistent with COVID 19, have been a close contact of a positive case or have travelled from a country not exempted from the safe travel corridor and have been advised to self-quarantine MUST not visit
- Visitors may not be permitted to Wards in certain circumstances, and where this applies local guidance and information will be available at Ward level. Patients and relatives will be informed of the reasons for a “No Visiting approach”.
- Patients requiring special assistance with communication, for e.g., interpreters and social care may have a carer attend while they are in hospital – this person does not count as a visitor. This person will be required to be risk assessed and leave their contact details for all wards that they are required to visit, for contact tracing if required. They will be required to practice social distancing and to wear appropriate PPE that enables the patient to lip read via the provision of a special mask.
- No children (up to 16 years) will be allowed to visit until further notice.
- People attending for clinic appointments will be required to wear face coverings for the duration of their visit to the clinic or as otherwise directed by clinical staff. Instructions will be provided in Appointment Letters.
- If the nominated visitor has a hearing impairment they must inform the Ward sister/ charge nurse or home manager and alternative arrangements will be put in place to facilitate a visit where the patient and or the visitor relies on lip reading to communicate.

We appreciate your assistance and understanding as we endeavour to protect patients and visitors during this pandemic and equally to protect our Health Care workers.

Visiting Arrangements

Visiting times whilst restricted will vary to assist the Trust to manage footfall of people in hospital and community facilities, and to maintain a safe environment for our patients and health care workers. The nominated visitor will be provided with a designated to visit.

Duration of visiting time – Strictly up to a maximum duration of One Hour, once per week and to one patient.

Acute Hospitals

Visiting times whilst restricted will vary from 2pm to 8pm each day, excluding Maternity whose times are noted below.

- **Inpatient wards** - One nominated visitor per patient, for up to one hour, once a week.
- **Intensive Care Units** - One nominated visitor per patient, for up to one hour, once a week. Visiting will be more flexible in exceptional circumstances.

- **Emergency Department** – We encourage people to attend alone, however, one person only to accompany patient where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
- **Outpatient Appointments** - Where necessary for a patient to attend face-to-face appointment only one person to accompany where patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
- **Radiology Department** (Including Breast Screening appointments) - Patients are encouraged to attend on their own due to limited space within departments, exceptions are in the following circumstances:
 - Patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff,
 - Patient requires physical or emotional assistance beyond that which Radiology staff can provide.
 - Patient is a child, so must be accompanied by a parent or chaperone. In these cases one person only to accompany patient.
- **Fetal Anomaly scanning** - Women attending for Anomaly scanning may be accompanied by one nominated person.
- **Any patient developing Covid symptoms prior to their appointment should contact their local Radiology Department for rescheduling advice**
- For all attendances at Radiology a face covering must be worn.
- **Cancer/Burns/Renal Units** – One visitor only per patient at any one time, for one hour once per week where the environment is Covid-19 secure. This is subject to change due to the vulnerability of the patients being cared for in these units.
- **Day Procedure Units** – One person only to accompany patient where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
- **Maternity** - Birth partner/nominated person will be facilitated to accompany the pregnant woman to the dating scan. Women must attend all other scan appointments in Ante Natal Clinic, Gynae Ward 43 and Fetal Assessment Unit on their own.
 - Ante Natal and Post Natal Wards – nominated visitor can visit for up to one hour once per week.
 - Labour Ward/ MLU - Birth partner/nominated person can remain with the woman during active labour and birth and for up to one hour post-delivery.
- **Children's and neo-natal wards** – One of two nominated parents/caregivers can accompany at any given time for the duration of the child's stay. Parent/caregiver will be required to wear a face covering when not at the child's bedside.

Trust Residential Homes – Only one nominated visitor for one hour per week will be permitted access to visit at any one time where this can be accommodated within social distancing.

Community hospitals and Intermediate care facilities – One nominated visitor per patient for one hour once per week

Mental Health/ Older People Mental Health - One nominated visitor per patient for one hour once per week, or more where deemed necessary to support the mental

and well-being of the patient as agreed with ward sister/manager and where this can be accommodated within social distancing.

Learning Disability - One nominated visitor per patient for one hour once per week, or more where deemed necessary to support the mental and well-being of the patient as agreed with ward sister/manager and where this can be accommodated within social distancing.

Physical Disability - One nominated visitor per patient for one hour once per week, or more where deemed necessary to support the mental and well-being of the patient as agreed with ward sister/manager and where this can be accommodated within social distancing.

Hospital Chaplains - are members of the multi-disciplinary teams providing pastoral care to patients/residents and are not counted in the number of nominated visitors. Chaplains will visit a patient once throughout the duration of their stay in hospital and only visit one patient per visit. For all other contact, they will use the mobile devices that have been provided to them at individual wards/facilities. Chaplains will continue to adhere to the Trust IP&C and PPE guidance at all times.

Communication – In the event that a Ward or Facility has to cease visiting to protect their patients and staff, this decision must be communicated via line management to the Communications Team. This includes during out of hours periods.

During Visiting

- Prior to visiting, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser as supplied at hospital /ward/ residential homes /community facilities at the entrance and on exiting facilities. Decontaminate your personal devices like phones with wipes before and after ward/community care facility visit.
- Follow Social distancing rules when you visit with respect to other patients/residents/visitors/staff. The Trust's Hospitals have adopted a 'keep left' policy and visitors will be asked to follow signage and adhere to it. Be mindful of social distancing when queueing at entrances to the hospital/ward or other care setting.
- Visitors must be assessed if they have had any symptoms consistent with COVID 19, are a close contact of a positive case or have travelled from a country not exempted from the safe travel corridor and have been advised to self-quarantine. If any of these are the case the visitor must be asked to leave the ward/department and contact 111 or their GP if they are unwell
- Visitors are asked to remain at the bedside at a distance of two meters from the patient/resident throughout the visit, at all times wearing their face covering, unless directed by your clinical team. A chair will be provided and visitors are not permitted to sit on the bed.
- Visitors are discouraged from bringing anything, other than essential items, for the patient/resident, flowers are not permitted.
- Visitors who do not follow the hospital visiting Guidance will not be permitted to remain in the Ward/facility, as the arrangements put in place by the Trust are to protect patients/visitors/health care workers and the wider public. Failure to follow this Guidance may result in the Trust reviewing a person's right to visit.

- The Trust recognises its responsibilities to provide a secure environment that protects patients, clients, staff and visitors and their property. This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the Trust's 'ZERO TOLERANCE AND SECURITY POLICY', January 2018.
- Contact the ward/department if you test positive for COVID 19 and have visited our health and social care facilities anytime from 2 days before your symptoms developed and up to 7 days from onset

Trust Staff

- **Trust staff engaged in clinical activity must wear ALL appropriate PPE, this includes gloves, apron/gown and face mask and wear a minimum FRSM or of an appropriate standard if engaged in an aerosol generating procedure.**
- **Trust staff who are present or working in non-clinical areas must wear a face covering when in open spaces or public thoroughfares.**

APPENDIX ONE

Template for Recording Visitor contact Details:



Template for
recording visitor cor

APPENDIX TWO

Trust Facility Entrance – New Visiting Guidelines Poster



Visiting Poster - 25
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APPENDIX THREE

Wearing a Face Covering (including poster)



Wearing a face
covering.docx