

Welcome Ward

Information about Visiting

NHS Grampian believes that patients and families play an important role as part of the care team. This means that visiting arrangements will be flexible to meet the needs of each patient. We are often asked similar questions from patients, families and staff, with this in mind we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions. This page provides details of Welcome Ward and Person Centred Visiting within NHS Grampian.

We encourage and support people to stay connected to those who matter most in their lives while they are in hospital. Person Centred Visiting is less about set visiting times and more about staff, friends and family members and carers working together to support those in hospital in the best way possible, so that care is in line with the following core principles:

- Welcoming – We welcome and encourage the involvement of those that matter to the people we are caring for. We welcome you to visit the ward as much as your friend or family member would like you to while being respectful of other patients and staff.
- Person Centred – Visiting is flexible in line with the needs of the individual and that we welcome anyone with a caring role to participate in care, as long as it is safe, agreed with both the patient and the staff, and respectful to other patients
- Partnership – We work in partnership with the people who matter to patients, to ensure that the Equal Partner in Care (EPiC) approach is successful. We encourage staff to prioritise an open and honest conversation with patients and families about how can work together to make a positive difference to the experiences of everyone involved.
- Flexibility – We have no set visiting times, there are times of the day that are busier than others such as times when there are clinical procedures and investigations. We recognise that carers and families and friends play an important role in recovery. We will ensure that there are times of the day when we leave people to rest and relax with their family and friends.
- Respect – We respect people's individual needs and act on an individual basis to ensure the safety, privacy and dignity of all patients. This means there may be times when we need to ask people to step outside a clinical area for a short time, this helps us to maintain confidentiality. We will keep you informed, we will always try to make sure a member of staff is available to speak with you, sometimes they may be caught up caring for other patients, at these times, we would be grateful for your patience.

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I visit?

Please speak to the person you are visiting and the ward staff about when would be good for you to visit.

Eating can be a social occasion and therapeutic – family, friends and carers are welcome to visit at mealtimes to offer encouragement, this may not be the case for everyone and we ask you to respect individual wishes.

How many people can visit?

In most circumstances we ask that the number of visitors at any one time is two (these visitors can change). This is to help make the environment as restful as possible, and to minimise the risk of infection. However, there may be times when it would be appropriate for more than two people to visit at a time, the nurse in charge will be happy to discuss this with you.

Children are welcome; they do need to be supervised at all times. Please remember that new-borns have not had time to develop their immune system, so they are at higher risk for developing infection from both bacteria and viruses.

Can I phone the ward to find out how a relative or friend is doing?

Yes. If possible, it helps enormously if one family member is identified to be the key hospital contact and then takes responsibility to share information with other family and friends as appropriate.

Please note there is a limit to what information we can give over the phone, and who we can give this information to.

What safety measures do I need to follow?

- Please use the hand gel provided when coming into and leaving the ward.
- Please do not visit if you are unwell. For example, if you have cold or flu, vomiting or diarrhoea, or an upset stomach.
- Please use the toilets for the public (not for patients or staff) where you can.
- Visiting may take place at a bedside or communal area. In all instances chairs provided for visiting should be used. If visiting at a bedside, you should avoid sitting on the bed, as this can spread infection.
- If your relative/ friend is being isolated or if the ward is temporarily closed, please follow the advice provided by staff as there may be additional safety measures to follow.

What visiting arrangements are in place in outpatient areas or emergency departments?

Person Centred Visiting is in place across NHS Grampian, including outpatient areas and emergency departments.

Where possible, we would ask that children are not brought along to maternity services scan appointments. It is important the clinical environment is as calm and distraction-free as possible for both yourself and our sonographers, as well as other patients.

My family member or friend is particularly vulnerable to the risk of infection; what visiting arrangements are in place for them?

Patients where there is a particularly high risk of infection will continue to have visiting arrangements discussed as part of their individual risk assessments. Ward and department staff will be happy to discuss these with you.

My family member or friend has an infection; can I visit them?

If your family member/ friend is being isolated, please follow the advice provided by staff in the specific area that your family member/ friend is being cared for, as there may be additional safety measures to follow.

A ward is closed due to an outbreak of an infection; what visiting arrangements are in place there?

If the ward is temporarily closed, please follow the advice provided by staff, as there may be additional safety measures to follow.

When Essential Visiting is put in place

Wards with an outbreak of infection

Essential visiting may be temporarily introduced in wards where an outbreak of infection is being managed. This is to protect patients, family members and staff until the situation is resolved.

We understand the vital support that family and friends provide and are sorry for how this will affect you. Ward iPads are available to support people to stay in touch with friends and family virtually, for further information, please ask staff. [Virtual visiting information guide](#).

What is an 'essential visit'?

The following are examples of where an 'essential visit' will be supported for family members:

- when someone is reaching the end of their life
- if someone has dementia/ delirium and needs family support
- support for someone with a learning disability
- a family member who has caring responsibilities
- parents of a child in hospital
- support during pregnancy and childbirth, including outpatient appointments, ante-natal and post-natal care
- situations where someone is receiving life-changing information.

We will take as flexible, person-centred and compassionate approach as possible based on your individual needs. We will try to facilitate family support in any situation where it is important for family to be involved for ethical, safety or other reasons.

How will I keep in touch with my relative/ friend?

We are offering 'virtual visiting' (video calls) for all inpatients.

All wards have iPads specially set up to make video calls. This lets you see and talk to the people who matter to you.

If you have your own mobile phone, tablet or laptop we can also help you to do this using your equipment if you are not able to do this yourself.

What if I have any questions?

Please do not hesitate to speak to any of the ward staff if you have any questions. We are all happy to help and thank you for your patience and understanding.

Can I visit during mealtimes?

Please speak to the person you are visiting and the ward staff about when would be good for you to visit.

Eating can be a social occasion and therapeutic – family, friends and carers are welcome to visit at mealtimes to offer encouragement, this may not be the case for everyone and we ask you to respect individual wishes.

Are children welcome?

In most circumstances we ask that there are no more than 2 visitors at a time (these visitors can change). This is to help make the environment as restful as possible, and to minimise the risk of infection. There may be times when it would be appropriate for more than two people to visit at a time, the nurse in charge will be happy to discuss this with you.

Children are welcome; they do need to be supervised at all times. Please remember that new-borns have not had time to develop their immune system, so they are at higher risk for developing infection from both bacteria and viruses.

If I am not able to visit, are there other ways that I can stay in touch?

We are offering 'virtual visiting' (video calls) for all patients. All wards have iPads specially set up to make video calls. This lets you see and talk to the people who matter to you. If you have your own mobile phone, tablet or laptop we can also help you to do this using your equipment if you are not able to do this yourself.

To help people maintain contact with each other we offer Person Centred Virtual Visiting. This service helps patients to keep in touch with their relatives and friends using video calls. The technology is available on devices most people have, such as an Apple or Android mobile, laptop or computer.

All wards have iPads specially set up to enable 'virtual visits' (video call). This allows patients to see and talk to the people who matter to them. [Virtual visiting information guide](#).

The iPads are available across NHSG and for assistance in relation to alternative communication methods this can be discussed with the senior charge nurse/ midwife of the ward.

Virtual Visiting FAQs

How do I arrange a 'virtual visit' (video call)?

Please speak to ward staff to arrange a virtual visit.

What happens if my family member/ friend does not have a mobile phone or tablet?

All our inpatient wards have a least one iPad for patients to take part in 'virtual visits' (video call) to contact relatives and friends during their stay in hospital. If your family member/ friend does not have a mobile phone or tablet of their own they are welcome to use a hospital iPad to see and talk to the people who matter to them.

What happens when my family member/ friend needs help to make a 'virtual visit' (video call)?

If your family member/ friend is unfamiliar with using iPads to set up calls or are unable to do this independently, staff will always try to facilitate these calls where possible.

Can I request a 'virtual visit' (video call) for a specific time of day?

Where possible ward staff will try to arrange a time to suit you as well as your family member/ friend you want to contact. However, it may not always be possible to give an exact time or day when a video call or telephone call can be guaranteed. We are sorry for any distress this may cause and of course, staff will always try to facilitate these calls where possible, however we ask for your understanding.

Is it possible to record the call?

For the majority of situations in our wards it will not be appropriate for you to record the call. No-one is permitted to make unauthorised pictures, videos or audio recordings in healthcare settings that feature other service users, visitors or staff without their consent. If you are unsure, please speak to ward staff first for advice.

Can the hospital iPad or my own device be used to speak to a healthcare chaplain?

Healthcare chaplains are available to offer support and a listening service Monday to Thursday, 9.00am – 5.00pm and at weekends from Friday to Sunday, 9.00am – 10.00pm. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please ask a member of ward staff to contact switchboard and ask for the on-call chaplain.

What if I am looking for information or a progress update on the care of my family member or friend?

To obtain an update on the progress and plan of care for your family member/ friend, you should contact the ward directly and ask to speak to the nurse or doctor looking after them.

Providing Feedback

If you wish to share your experience of virtual visiting, please share your story on [Care Opinion](#).

Additional Information

For patients

If you would like to make a 'virtual visit' (video call) to your family or friends, please ask to speak to the nurse in charge of the ward or the nurse looking after you to arrange this. The ward staff will also be happy to help you to use your own phone or tablet or the hospital iPad if necessary.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Patient Information Leaflets (PILs) are now available for staff and patients to access via the ward iPads. These can be accessed by using the IPC icon on the home screen, which links directly to the PILs on the IPC Intranet page.