

## NHS Grampian Visiting Guidance

In line with guidance from the Scottish Government, from 26<sup>th</sup> April, all patients will have the opportunity to nominate a minimum of one family member or friend to visit and provide support for the duration of their stay or to accompany them to hospital appointments, if this is required. As we move beyond the pandemic and towards fully person centred visiting the number of visitors may increase but should not reduce. The exceptions which may affect this would be:

- If there was a local outbreak
- If the area had patients who are COVID positive (or suspected)
- If a higher risk of transmission has been identified and the COVID cases are increasing

In these circumstances we would discuss with the patient and their nominated visitor / family support.

Visiting may not look the same in all areas and it is important to be mindful of this at all times. For example specific guidance is available for [Neonatal & maternity](#).

Throughout this guide we have used the words family and visitor in the broadest sense possible. Family means different things to different people and we use it here to represent the people who matter most. We also recognise the people who matter most are not visitors in someone's life but provide fundamental support which has a positive effect on nutrition, healing recovery and overall quality of care. It is vitally important we work with patients and families, and continue with safeguards to keep our hospitals, and those in them, including visitors as safe as possible. An increase in the number of people within our hospitals, may increase risk of COVID-19 transmission and it is therefore important we ask visitors to:

- Observe physical distancing in all communal areas of the hospital, such as corridors, waiting rooms, concourse areas
- Wear a face covering, which covers the mouth and nose for the visit duration, or use one of the face masks which are readily available at all our entrances.
- Use the alcohol hand gel provided on site, and as guided by staff locally
- Provide contact details, so we can monitor and record who we have on site
- Remind visitors that if they become unwell or have symptoms of COVID19 or any other infectious disease, no visit should take place.

Family support should be a fundamental part of the care of a person in hospital and we ask that a flexible approach to visiting is applied. At the heart of each visiting arrangement there should be a compassionate conversation.

Please keep an eye on our website for any local updates and NHS Grampian visiting resources. [Visiting \(nhsgrampian.org\)](https://www.nhs.uk/visiting)

## What's changed?

Essential visits, between 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were restricted to birthing partners, one parent, end of life, and situations where a visitor not being present could cause distress. All patients should now have the opportunity to identify who they would like to support them during their stay or when accompanying them to hospital appointments, if required. This should be discussed on admission, or prior to a planned admission, and will be reviewed on a regular basis by the clinical team to ensure patient's needs are being met. Patients may choose not to have a visitor and this is fine too.

Where the person providing support needs to be accompanied by another person, eg. a child visiting a parent or sibling, or are with a frail person who cannot attend independently, the presence of the additional person will be facilitated and shouldn't prevent the visit taking place.

There will be times when the person providing support will need to change – this may be to meet the patient's individual needs or to provide respite for the nominated visitor. Where possible this should be discussed in advance of the new visitor arriving to ensure relevant visitor information is shared.

At bedsides we understand that close contact such as hand holding can provide comfort to both the patient and their family member and risk assessments will be altered to accommodate this.

| Strategic Framework Level | Level Zero                                                             | Level One                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Level Two                        | Level Three                      | Level Four                       |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Visiting                  | Full person-centred visiting subject to local health protection advice | Support from at least two people from the same household at the same time<br><br><i>If not from the same household and physical distancing cannot be maintained, visits can take place separately</i><br><br>Preparations put in place for return to full person-centred visiting | Support from at least one person | Support from at least one person | Support from at least one person |

Click on the links below to view further information from the Scottish Government:

[Visiting Guidance](#)

[Strategic Framework Level for your local area](#)

[Timetable for easing restrictions](#)

## **What stays the same?**

### **Who can visit?**

Once family support is identified, a staff member from the care team will be in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time to visit. We recommend this person be the link to other family & friends.

### **When can visits take place?**

It is essential that visits take place at pre-arranged times. These will be jointly arranged between the patient, family support and staff. We ask that visitors do not come to the hospital without a pre-arranged appointment.

Set ward visiting hours will not be reintroduced, however visiting slots may be arranged to stagger footfall and enable other patients to spend time with their families. Please respect everyone's need for space, privacy and support.

Each clinical area will have their own arrangements in place to accommodate visitors. If a patient moves to a different area the possibility of a change in visiting arrangements should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the nominated visitor.

### **Will visiting look the same in all areas?**

No, there will be some variance between sites and there are many factors that can cause the times and frequency of visits in each area to differ, such as ward size and layout, the number and vulnerability of patients, or visitor travel implications.

Flexibility will be required from staff, patients and families in a number of circumstances including:

- To enable care staff to provide care for a patient. Visitors may be asked to delay a visit, leave the area at short notice or to relocate temporarily
- In clinical areas where Aerosol Generating Procedures take place
- Areas with high patient flow may encourage virtual visiting in the first instance to keep footfall to a minimum.
- At End of Life where we will remain as flexible and compassionate as possible, within the context of each person's individual circumstances and the Visiting at End of Life Guidance.

There may be times where additional Personal Protective Equipment is required and this will be discussed when arranging a visit.

Thorough risk assessments will help to determine what is achievable & supported locally.

**Other ways to visit:**

While these restrictions are in place, not everyone who would wish to visit will be able to, and some patients may prefer other means of staying in touch. This may be due to geographical distance, limiting health conditions, if family are isolating or personal choice.

Virtual Visiting continues to be available to anyone who would benefit from having access to a shared NHS Grampian device (Virtual Visiting iPad) to contact their family or friends. Patients are also encouraged to use their own devices to stay connected, but there may also be times when using the Virtual Visiting iPad is preferable to a patient's own device due to sound issues or screen size. An initial conversation around Virtual Visiting will establish preference and if patients wish to alternate both virtual and face-to-face visits.

For further support or information please contact: [gram.virtualwardvisit@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.virtualwardvisit@nhs.scot).

**Please encourage patients and families to tell us about their experiences safely and anonymously at: <https://www.careopinion.org.uk/>**

This publication also available in other formats / languages on request. Please call Equality and Diversity on 01224 551116 or email [gram.communications@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.communications@nhs.scot)