

# Visiting someone in hospital

**i** Information for patients and visitors  
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals



In hospital and in the community

*proud to make a difference*

This leaflet is for visitors to the Northern General, Royal Hallamshire, Jessop Wing and Weston Park Hospitals. It also applies to those visiting patients at Beech Hill Rehabilitation Unit.

For most patients, having family and friends to visit is the highlight of their day. We know that visitors can make a huge difference to a patient's recovery and can lift their mood. However, a constant flow of visitors can be tiring for patients and for other patients in the bay, and this is something we ask you to consider when planning to visit.

We recognise the valuable role that visitors have in supporting patients and respect the patient's needs to involve carers as partners in their care. However, we have to balance this with a need to ensure patients get the vital rest that they need. We also need to enable our hospitals to better control the spread of infections.

## Visiting hours

The hospitals' core visiting hours are:

- **2.00pm - 3.30pm**, and
- **6.00pm - 8.00pm**

However, some wards have different visiting times to suit the needs of their patients.

Information about visiting times for the ward is displayed at or near to the ward entrance. If you are unsure please speak to the nurse in charge.

Outside the normal ward visiting times, visiting may be possible if it is agreed with the ward staff in advance.

**Please note: you may be asked to take a seat in the dayroom or outside of the bed area whilst personal care is delivered to the patient whom you are visiting or to others in the same room. This is in order to preserve their dignity.**

## Can I visit outside normal visiting hours?

There are situations in which you need to visit out of hours. Some examples of these may be:

- Where you are assisting patients with specific care needs, for example helping with feeding / nutritional needs.
- Where the patient is receiving palliative care and specific support and care is required.
- In other individual, exceptional and specific circumstances, for instance, where a patient is particularly vulnerable, or to minimise prolonged travelling.
- In circumstances where the patient has learning or behavioural difficulties.
- Where the patient is very unwell.
- Where the patient is under 18 years of age.

If you would like to speak to anyone about this, please contact the Ward Sister / Charge Nurse or Nurse in Charge.

## Can I stay overnight?

There may be exceptional circumstances in which, in the interests of the patient, you may wish to stay overnight. Please speak to the Nurse in Charge.

When considering if a family member / carer can stay overnight, the Nurse in Charge will also consider the privacy, dignity and comfort of other patients in close proximity.

## Can pets visit?

To minimise the risk to patients in hospital, pets are not allowed on the hospital premises.

The only exceptions to this rule are guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf, dogs trained to help people with conditions such as epilepsy and autism and dogs and cats which belong to the Pets as Therapy (PAT) scheme. These animals are not excluded from the hospital premises because they are recognised as providing substantial benefits for patients.

When patients are receiving palliative or end of life care, clinical staff may feel that it would be beneficial to a patient's psychological wellbeing if they were allowed access to their pet dog or cat. In these circumstances the Nurse in Charge will contact the infection control team to agree the visit and any particular measures which may be required to ensure the safety of other patients.

If you have any queries, please speak to the Nurse in Charge.

## The Visitors' Code

Following feedback from patients and visitors, we have introduced a Visitors' Code. This sets out some guidelines which will help the friend or relative that you are visiting.

All visitors are asked to help hospital staff to help those in our care by following the simple rules below. Please:

- Only visit at the agreed visiting times.  
If you wish to visit outside of normal visiting times, you should seek special permission beforehand from the Sister / Charge Nurse. If they consider that your request is in the patient's best interest, and does not affect the care of other patients, they are likely to approve your request. \*

- Do not exceed the number of visitors allowed. This is 2 visitors at the bedside at any time, unless special permission is granted by the Sister / Charge Nurse.
- Only visit if you are well. If you are unwell, or have been unwell, you should only visit if you have been free of any symptoms for 48 hours before coming to the ward. This includes coughs, colds, vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Use the hand rub provided.
- Only sit on the chairs provided for visitors. Do not sit on the patient's bed or chair.
- Use toilets designated for visitors instead of patients' toilets. Wash and dry your hands after visiting the toilet.
- Avoid sharing your relative's toiletries, tissues etc or items of hospital equipment with other patients unless it has been approved by a member of the nursing team.
- Do not eat food provided to the patient by the hospital.
- In the interest of other patients, children under the age of 12 should not visit the hospital. We do allow children to visit the Jessop Wing. However, in our other hospitals we will only consider requests under special circumstances. Such requests must be made to the Sister / Charge Nurse / Nurse in Charge beforehand and limited visiting will only be approved if it is considered that the visit is in the patient's or child's best interest. \*
- Avoid touching your relative's or friend's wound or any devices such as drips or catheters, as this could cause infections.

Please talk to the Nurse in Charge or ask to see the Matron if you have any concerns.

\* We will always take into consideration the individual needs of patients. If you need help with visiting outside of the guidelines given in the Visitors' Code, please speak with the ward manager.

## Other ways you can help

If you are involved in giving care to a patient, please speak with the ward staff about how you can continue to do this whilst they are in hospital.

## Travel to hospital

Parking at our hospitals is very limited. It is best to travel by public transport if at all possible. Patients / visitors who are attending the hospital for longer than three weeks may be eligible for concessionary parking. Please ask the ward staff for details.

For travel information contact Traveline on: **01709 51 51 51**

Or visit their website at: **[www.travelsouthyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.co.uk)**

Disabled parking spaces are available at all of our hospital sites.

## Violence and aggression towards hospital staff

Violence and aggression towards staff, patients or members of the public will not be tolerated. Assault is a crime and is illegal. The hospitals operate a zero tolerance policy and will seek the maximum penalties available in law for anyone behaving in this way.

## Further information

Visit our website for more information at: **[www.sth.nhs.uk](http://www.sth.nhs.uk)**





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