

Keeping in touch with patients in hospital and visiting during COVID-19 pandemic

Patient Experience

Information for Families, Carers & Friends

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Introduction

Due to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions we have reviewed our arrangements to allow hospital visits in a limited, careful and COVID secure way.

We know that not being able to visit a family member or friend when they are unwell and receiving care and treatment in hospital is very difficult.

With the current changes to visiting in place, we know that being kept informed on the condition and progress of a patient is important to families, carers and friends. Staff are aware that this can be of great concern to families who want to be kept up-to-date on the health and wellbeing of their loved one whilst in hospital.

This leaflet has been produced to:

- support families, carers and friends keep in touch with patients and keep up-to-date about their care and treatment (with the patient's consent) during a hospital stay.
- provide information about exceptions to the current visiting restrictions where only 1 visitor (a family member or friend) is allowed to visit.
- help those who are allowed to visit, to do so as safely as possible, to protect patients, staff and themselves.

Please do not visit our hospitals if you have COVID-19 symptoms, have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and advised to self isolate, or if you have had sickness or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.



Family, Carers and Friends Charter

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Keeping in touch with patients when you are not able to visit

Personal mobile devices:

The easiest way to speak to a family member or friend whilst they are in hospital is to contact them on their personal mobile device, if they are well enough and have access to a mobile phone/tablet. Where possible, please do not call after 9pm to allow patients to rest.

Hospital staff are happy to help patients keep devices charged and help them to use a mobile device if needed.

Patients using a mobile device within the hospital should be mindful of others and keep the ring tone volume low or on silent.

Free Wi-Fi is available within our hospitals which will allow the use of apps like FaceTime, Skype and WhatsApp.

Calling the ward:

You may want to call the ward your relative/ friend is on to ask for updates if you have not been able to contact them on their personal mobile. If you need to telephone the ward for an update, please nominate a single family member to make the call. This will help keep phone lines free for other patients and their families. The ward may give you a password to confirm your identity when you call. This helps us to keep patient confidentiality and check we are speaking to, and sharing information with the right person.

Staff on our wards always try to answer the ward telephone as quickly as possible. Sometimes there may be a delay in answering the phone. There may be times the person you need to speak to is not available if they are involved in patient care. If this is the case, please call back later. Alternatively, you can call our Patient Information and Liaison Service; details of this service are on the next page.

e-Greetings:

If you would like to send a personal message to someone in our hospitals, our e-Greeting system allows you to choose an image and add a personal message that we will print and deliver to patients. Follow this link to the e-Greeting page on Leicester's Hospitals website:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patient-and-visitor-services/online-greetings/send-a-message/>

Patients are also able to send e-Greetings home to family and friends during their stay. Our Volunteer Services team will print the e-Greeting as a postcard and put it in the post.

A range of free postcards are also available on wards for patients to send personal messages to friends and family. Patients can ask a member of staff if they can choose a postcard and staff will make sure it is posted.

Posters can be seen on wards to promote these services and help will be available for anyone needing assistance.

FaceTime and Skype:

For patients who do not have access or are not able to use a personal device, there will be iPads/ tablets available on some of our wards to allow them to make video calls to a nominated relative with the help of our ward staff.

Please speak to a member of staff on the ward who will be able to arrange these calls for patients if a hospital iPad/ tablet is available.

To make use of this service with your relative/ friend in hospital, you will need to enable FaceTime on your Apple device or sign up to a free Skype account, and then call the ward for further information.

Contacting our Patient Information and Liaison Service for any concerns:

If you cannot call the ward your loved one is on directly, and you want to talk to someone about any concerns about their care, you can call our Patient Information and Liaison Service (PILS) on Tel: **0808 178 8337** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm).

Our PILS team can help to arrange for you to get a call back from someone to discuss any concerns you may have about the medical treatment or care for your loved one.

The PILS team will need to be able to identify you as a next of kin and you will need to provide a patient password.

Dropping of items for a patient staying in hospital

Relatives or friends can make a single drop-off of items for a loved one currently staying in hospital at any of our 3 sites. Items can include toiletries, letters, cards, photographs or clothing for when they are discharged and travelling home. Please do not include night clothes, food/ drink, alcohol, illegal medication/drugs or valuable items.

Items should be in a sealed, disposable bag, no larger than a supermarket carrier bag. The bag should be labelled with the patient's name, date of birth and ward. The drop-off points are at the main reception desks at Leicester General or Glenfield Hospital, or Windsor Reception for Leicester Royal Infirmary - **Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm.**

Only a single person who does not have any COVID-19 like symptoms should make the drop-off.

Unfortunately we will not be able to tell you the bag has been received and cannot accept liability for this service. Unlabelled bags and property that do not reach the patient will be taken to Lost Property.

What are the current visiting restrictions?

All visits will need to be arranged beforehand with the ward or department where your relative/friend is being cared for. **Visiting times are limited to 1 hour only between 1pm to 5.30pm.** This allows us to maintain social distancing to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep patients, staff and visitors safe.

Currently we can only allow 1 visitor, following careful COVID secure measures, for the following patients:

- A family member or carer to support an adult patient who has a learning disability, autism, mental health problem or who is cognitively impaired (such as dementia/ delirium).
- Patients who have communication difficulties or who are struggling to meet their emotional, religious or spiritual care needs.
- A family member or carer for an adult patient who has a complex discharge plan where family involvement would be beneficial.
- Patients receiving end of life care (2 family members at the bedside at any one time).
- Patients receiving bad news.
- Patients who have been in hospital for 14 days or longer.

If at any time medical staff feel that it is not safe for a patient to have a visitor, this will be discussed with you.

To keep patients, staff and visitors safe we are not yet able to reintroduce visiting for all of our adult patients at this time. We will review this regularly as new guidance becomes available.

Other visiting restrictions:

- For patients under 18 years old, please refer to leaflet number 974 'Visiting Leicester Children's Hospital during COVID-19'.
- For pregnant women, your midwife will be able to provide further details about visiting.
- For patients in intensive care (ICU/ ITU), please discuss visiting with the team caring for your loved one.
- Patients attending an outpatient service, can be accompanied by **1** person if they are in the groups detailed above, and if the clinic has space to allow social distancing to be maintained. Please discuss this with the clinic you are attending.
- Patients attending the Emergency Department can be accompanied by **1** person if they are in the groups detailed above, to help maintain social distancing.
- **Hospital shops, restaurants and café areas are currently closed to all visitors.**

What checks will be made before you allow someone to visit?

Each patient's situation will be looked at individually. If you are allowed to visit the ward/ unit, staff will first ask you questions to check your risk as a visitor, for example:

- If have you been shielding.
- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- if you have a new continuous cough, high temperature, loss or changes to taste/ smell or cold/ flu like symptoms.
- if you have just entered/ returned to the UK from abroad in the last 10 days.
- If you have been asked to self-isolate for 10 days after being in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

All information will be treated confidentially and will only be used to help decide whether you can visit your loved one.

How to visit Leicester's hospitals safely

Please remember that you will need to arrange your visit in advance with the ward.

- If your visit is agreed, staff will tell you how long you can stay for and who to ask for on arrival. On arrival please report to main reception, so they can direct you to the ward by the quickest route.
- Only visit at the exact time agreed with the ward/ unit.
- All visitors must wear a face covering when coming into our hospitals and follow on-site safety guidance including washing/ sanitising your hands and social distancing rules.
- Please wash your hands and use the hand sanitisers that are available throughout the hospital.
- When moving about the hospital please keep to the left.
- The number of people able to use a lift, at any one time, is limited. There are stickers on lift floors showing you where to stand. If you are able to and want to use the stairs, please keep to the left.
- Only bring essential belongings when you visit the hospital.
- When you arrive at the ward please speak to a member of staff who will be able to take you to the bedside of the person you are visiting. Staff will help you with any additional personal protective equipment (PPE) that you may need to wear during your visit e.g. we will ask you to change your face covering to a face mask provided by the ward.
- Ward staff will ask you again if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or been in contact with someone who has. If you answer yes your visit will need to be postponed.

- Ward staff will leave you with a call bell, so you can call for any assistance and to let them know when you are leaving.
- During your visit, you should stay at the bedside of the person you are visiting. If you have arranged to speak with someone caring for your loved one, they will come to you.
- You must take off all additional PPE, except your face covering, and wash your hands before you leave the ward.
- You should go directly home from the hospital. We would recommend you do not use public transport if possible, when you are going home. You will not need to self-isolate after leaving the hospital.
- This guidance applies across all our hospitals site.

**Please help us protect patients, staff and visitors.
Do not attend our hospitals without prior agreement; this includes
hospital grounds.**

Where can I get guidance for specific departments?

Specific guidance for departments such as attending the Emergency Department, visiting children and visiting patients at the end of life are available on our website:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/covid-19-information-hub/guidance-on-our-new-visiting-restrictions/>

Where can I get the most up-to-date information?

As guidance changes, updates on visiting restrictions at Leicester's hospitals will be available on our website: <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/>

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਸਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk