

Guidance for people visiting patients who are approaching the last days of their life in hospital during the COVID 19 pandemic

These measures relate to visits to people who are close to the end of their lives recognising this can be difficult to assess with accuracy.

When visiting patients who are approaching the end of their life in hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic the following steps will be taken:

1. Communicate with patients and families to help patients and families make the decision to visit or stay at home. The use of technology will be encouraged to help maintain contact.
2. One visitor will be permitted at the bed side. However, where it is possible to maintain social distancing throughout a visit, a second additional visitor could be permitted. This is after discussion with the ward manager/nurse in charge about the risks and how these are mitigated. The length of the visit will be agreed with the ward manager/nurse in charge.
3. The number of visitors will be restricted to one or two individuals per patient.
Encourage families to agree amongst themselves which one family member will visit, making it clear that only one visitor will be permitted.
4. The Visitor will follow the infection prevention and control requirements. This includes; please wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds before and after visit, minimise personal belongings, adhere to wearing the appropriate PPE provided by the ward and avoid having a drink or going to the toilet during the visit. .
5. In order to minimise contact with other people and meet the requirements for 2 metre social distancing:
 - The visitor will be asked to come directly to the ward and not to visit other areas in the Trust. Please avoid touching any surfaces.
 - A visitor will be advised not to have contact with other patients on the ward
 - The visitor needs to leave the hospital immediately, return directly home and on returning home, shower and wash their clothes. If during the visit the 2 metre rule has been breached or the PPE has been incorrectly worn, we would advocate isolating for a 2 week period.