

# VIP VISITS PROCEDURE

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## PROCEDURE SUMMARY

This procedure is written to outline the arrangements for visiting for approved visitors and is written in light of operation Yew Tree and is designed to put additional safeguards in place to protect patients and others. The aim of the policy and associated procedure will be to ensure that processes are in place to manage approved visitors to the Trust

## The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this procedure in the following ways:

This procedure is monitored by the Compliance Team through an External Visits database which provides regular reports to the Quality Committee on any external visits undertaken in the Trust. The monitoring of actions is the responsibility of local reporting arrangements

Services	Applicable	Comments
Trustwide	✓	

**The Director responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy is  
Chief Executive Officer**

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**VIP VISITS PROCEDURE**

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## VIP VISITS PROCEDURE

### Assurance Statement

This procedure and associated policy is written is to outline the arrangements for visiting for approved visitors and is written in light of operation Yew Tree and is designed to put additional safeguards in place to protect patients and others. The aim of the policy and associated procedure will be to ensure that processes are in place to manage approved visitors to the Trust.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. There are occasions when a VIP might visit a Trust service or premises. VIPs might include members of the Royal family, senior politicians (e.g. Secretary of State, Ministers), representatives from national bodies such as the Department of Health, celebrities and sportspeople etc.
- 1.2. Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust will arrange visits by VIP's and celebrities on rare occasions and may also arrange for media crews to access departments and services. This is to promote services and enhance the patients' experience and raise the profile of the services the Trust provides.
- 1.3. It may also arise from media coverage of specific events at the Trust or across the NHS more generally.
- 1.4. The Trust recognises it has a responsibility to protect the safety and security as well as the privacy and dignity of patients, families and staff. As a Trust we recognise the need to ensure that such visits do not have a detrimental effect on the clinical care of patients and always endeavour to minimise any disruption.
- 1.5. This policy and associated procedure recognises that the visits are organised as one off events so that standard safeguarding arrangements such as DBS checks may not be appropriate. However, it also covers circumstances where certain groups or individuals have long term or on-going relationships with the Trust, such as dedicated fund raisers or campaigners, or charity patrons or documentary film crews.
- 1.6. This document explains the procedure that must be followed around a VIP visit to a Trust service or premises.
- 1.7. All visits to the Trust by official visitors must be organised and managed in accordance with this procedure and associated policy.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. To ensure that the correct procedures are followed when a VIP visits a Trust service or premises
- 2.2. For the purposes of this procedure approved visitors are defined as individuals or groups who are invited or who have approval to be on hospital premises for an official purpose for the benefit of the patients, staff, the Trust or the NHS. These may include :
  - **VIP's** - key stakeholders including Ministers, elected representatives, overseas dignitaries, members of the Royal Family.

- **Celebrities - famous/high profile figures** who may be well known to the public and therefore to patients and their families, this may include costumed characters.
- **Media - journalists or other representatives of print or broadcast media organisations.** This category may also include associated technical personnel such as camera crew or sound technicians, or photographers.
- **Fundraisers** - people who are supporting the business of the Trust to generate financial support or present funds raised for the benefit of the Trust.

### 3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. The procedure requires that one-off or very short term approved official visitors are always accompanied throughout their visit to the Trust where there is a possibility of contact with lone staff of vulnerable patients/visitors.
- 3.2. Appropriate checks and authorisation will be needed for approved official visitors who are in the Trust for extended periods of time and they are likely to be unaccompanied, such as documentary film crews, or those who are here on repeated occasions, such as a charity patron or celebrity linked with a particular service.
- 3.3. If staff feel in any way coerced by a VIP or celebrity (including approved, without notice or visiting a friend or relative) or concerned regarding behaviour at any time they should notify the Trust's Safeguarding Team.
- 3.4. Arrival on Trust premises  
Upon arrival any approved official visitor will be met by a member of the communication team or local clinical lead. Approved visitors should be met at a main reception and escorted to the pre-arranged area where the visit will take place.

### 4. VIP VISITS PROCEDURE

#### 4.1. Getting agreement for a VIP visit

- 4.1.1. Before inviting a VIP to visit a Trust service or premises (or, if approached, before agreeing to a VIP visit), staff should first approach their service director. The service director will discuss the suggestion with the relevant Executive Director and Communications Team to ensure that the visit is appropriate.
- 4.1.2. Before giving agreement for the visit, the executive director will discuss with the Communications Team. This is to ensure that the visit does not clash with any other Trust events, and to consider any conflict of interest the visit might highlight (e.g. political, such as purdah restrictions; PR, such as a celebrity who is known for reasons that may clash with organisational values, etc.)
- 4.1.3. Agreement will also be sought from the Trust Chair and Chief Executive.

#### 4.2. Planning a VIP visit

- 4.2.1. Once a visit has been agreed, the visit host (i.e. the executive director / service director / service manager as appropriate) will work with the Communications Team to arrange the visit. These arrangements will include:
  - Drafting a programme for the visit, including timings and tour routes (if appropriate);
  - Conducting a risk assessment to identify and mitigate any possible issues around privacy and dignity, safeguarding and confidentiality, to ensure that the VIP visit does not in any way compromise patient care, unduly inconvenience staff or patients, or breach patient confidentiality;

- Informing relevant EPUT colleagues of the visit;
- Arranging how the VIP will be welcomed and accompanied at all times whilst on Trust premises, and by whom;
- Working with other organisations regarding the visit arrangements, such as the ministerial visits office etc.;
- Informing other organisations as appropriate (e.g. local CCGs, local authorities etc.)
- Discussing hospitality arrangements;
- Advising on an appropriate invitation list;
- Identifying service users/patients to be involved in the visit where appropriate, and gaining their consent to be involved – the consent process will include an explanation of the nature of the visit, and what to expect;
- Arranging photographs and media activity (if appropriate).
- If the wards are struggling to host a visit on the basis of patient safety and/or compromising clinical care, the external visitors should be asked to postpone the visit and/or offer an alternative ward in agreement with the Service Director/Manager as appropriate.

#### 4.3. During a VIP visit

4.3.1. During a VIP visit the following must be adhered to:

- The VIP must be accompanied at all times by their identified chaperone;
- The agreed programme should be adhered to as closely as possible (for certain VIPs this will be essential for security reasons);
- When entering a patient area the VIP should be asked to adhere to the infection control procedures appropriate to that area, which may include hand washing, wearing of PPE 'bare below the elbow' etc.;
- Consent must be gained before taking photographs, using the Trust photograph consent form – this will be provided by the Communications Team. The consent process will include an explanation of how and where the photographs will be used;
- A member of the Communications Team will accompany the media at all times while on Trust premises. Only a member of the Communications Team or an identified Trust spokesperson who has been briefed in advance should speak with any attending media.

#### 4.4. Following a VIP visit

4.4.1. Following a visit from a VIP:

- The Communications Team will send out a media, social media release (if appropriate), and monitor the media for any coverage of the visit;
- The visit host will draft a letter of thanks to the VIP for their visit. This will be shared with the relevant executive director (and the Chief Executive and Chair if appropriate) and the Communications Team before being sent;
- The Communications Team will hold a quick debrief with the visit host to identify what went well and what could be improved, for future visits.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1. Staff will be made aware of this procedure via Trust Today, Weekly Brief and the Intranet.
- 5.2. All senior managers/heads of service/team leaders need to ensure new policies and procedures are placed on team meeting agendas for discussion. There is an expectation that the senior managers/heads of service/team leaders will develop local

systems to ensure their staff are instructed to read all relevant policies/procedures and to identify any outstanding training deficits.

**6. REFERENCE TO OTHER TRUST POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

- Media Policy
- Social Media Policy / Procedure
- Volunteer Policy / Procedure

**END**

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