

Managing visiting within EPUT inpatient and care home settings

Update: V13 – to commence 3rd October 2022

Visitors to inpatient wards and those accompanying out patients are encouraged to wear a face mask. Visiting during outbreaks will be risk assessed and will require mask wearing.

Visitors to care homes should be encouraged to wear a face mask.

Inpatients in healthcare settings can be more vulnerable to severe illness because of coronavirus. All providers are expected to facilitate visits in a risk managed way.

All areas should keep records of visitors and should include the person and/or people they interact with, for example if a person visits their loved one who is also visited by a chaplain in the course of the visit.

It is important to recognise the contribution that visiting makes to the wellbeing and the person-centred care of patients; lack of access to visitors causes distress to them and their families.

The principles set out below should also be applied to patients receiving outpatient and diagnostic services if they wish/ need to be accompanied by somebody important to them

Where a face-to-face visit is not practical then virtual visits should continue to be supported and facilitated.

Visiting should now return to pre pandemic visiting. There may be variants ,according to local risk factors, in how visiting is managed.

During a ward closure due to an outbreak, visitors will only be allowed following risk assessment and all relatives/ visitors must be kept fully informed.

Practical considerations to support visiting

Visitors should be informed in advance about what to expect when they see the patient and be given practical advice about wearing personal protective equipment and, handwashing, if they have been asked to wear them.

Before visiting, the visitors should:

- contact the clinical area to discuss appropriate local arrangements,
- be informed about what to expect when they see the patient and be given practical advice about wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and

handwashing.

- Ensure the visitor cleans their hands.
- Please confirm on arrival that they are not symptomatic (high temperature or fever, new, continuous cough and a loss or alteration to taste or smell, Shortness of breath, Feeling tired or Exhausted, an aching body, Headache, Sore throat, Blocked or runny nose, Loss of appetite, Diarrhoea, Feeling Sick or Being Sick, Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus or generally feeling unwell should not visit, even if these symptoms are mild or intermittent, due to the risk they pose to others.. The number of visitors at any one time that can be safely managed will need to be risk assessed by the MDT team of that ward/facility.

Visiting in Care Homes:

Visiting at our nursing homes must be managed in accordance with current Government guidelines around Care Home visiting.

There should not normally be any restrictions to visits into or out of the care home. Where visiting is modified during an outbreak of COVID-19 or where a care home resident has confirmed COVID.

Contact with relatives and friends is fundamental to care home residents' health and wellbeing and visiting should be encouraged. There should not normally be any restrictions to visits into or out of the care home. The right to private and family life is a human right protected in law (Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights). Where visiting is modified during an outbreak of COVID-19 or where a care home resident has confirmed COVID-19, every resident should be enabled to continue to receive one visitor at a time inside the care home. End-of-life visiting should always be supported, and testing is not required in any circumstances for an end-of-life visit.

Visitors should be encouraged to wear a face mask when visiting a care home, particularly when moving through the home. Individual approaches may be needed as the wearing of face masks may cause distress to some residents. Any removal of masks needs to be carefully risk assessed and other mitigations considered, including limiting close contact, increased ventilation (while maintaining a comfortable temperature) and transparent face masks.

Visitors should not enter the care home if they are feeling unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19, are fully vaccinated and have received their booster. Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to care home residents as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest other transmissible viruses and infections, such as cough,

high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid the care home until at least 5 days after they feel better.

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-next-steps-for-living-with-covid>

[COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resource for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-supplement-to-the-infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care)