



# Extended Visiting

## Guidance for families and visitors

Person centred care, such as extended visiting, aims to ensure each person is an equal partner in their health care. This guidance aims to make Western Isles hospitals more person centred and dementia friendly by giving families and carers the chance to spend more time with their relatives and take an active role in their care while they are in hospital, where appropriate.

It is widely recognised that support from family and friends, in the form of hospital visits, is an integral part of any patient's recovery and this is why extended visiting, from 2pm to 8pm, seven days a week, has been introduced by NHS Western Isles. Some exceptions do apply within Maternity and the Acute Psychiatric Unit.

### Protected Mealtimes

Protected Mealtimes ensure patients are not disturbed by clinicians. Family members and carers are welcome during protected mealtimes to assist or encourage eating. The following times are approximate, please check times on the ward patient information board: breakfast (8am-9am), main meal (12 noon-1pm), evening meal (5pm-6pm).

Family and carers are viewed as patient advocates and NHS Western Isles actively encourages active patient and carer involvement in decision-making.

**Please note:** We aim to be flexible, and should you need to visit a patient outside of these hours, this can also be pre-arranged with the Senior Charge Nurse on each ward, where possible.

### Children in Hospital

We all know how important visitors are in helping patients recover. Being in hospital can be stressful and visitors can really help lift spirits and aid recovery. At the same time, it is crucial for us to maintain a healing and calming environment, and minimise the chances of any infection coming into the hospital.

All medical and nursing staff will make every attempt to ensure that patients, whatever their age and their family, feel as involved as possible in decisions about care.

- 24/7 visitation is open to parents.
- Two visitors, not including parents, are allowed at the bedside at a time.
- Visitation from siblings is encouraged. Children under 12 should be supervised by parents.
- Friends of patients are welcome. Children and young people (under 16 years of age) wishing to visit should at all times be accompanied by an adult.

### Dementia Friendly Open Visiting and Personalised Visiting

This guidance also forms part of NHS Western Isles' aim to make our hospitals more dementia friendly by giving carers the chance to spend more time with their relatives and have an active role in their care while they are in hospital.

NHS Western Isles recognises that there may be times, particularly with vulnerable individuals, where it will be helpful for a carer or other family member to be present outwith set visiting times. To provide a dementia friendly environment, we do not follow standardised visiting hours for patients with a diagnosis of dementia. Instead, patients and carers are empowered to work with their Senior Charge Nurse/Dementia Champion to set a personalised visitation schedule that works best for them. This approach to flexible visiting aims to minimise anxiety for the patient and their family. Personalised patient visitation allows those who are important to the patient to be present when the patient needs them.

## **Our commitment to carers and visitors**

### **We will create a healing restful environment**

- Patients' families are always welcome and play an important role in healing and recovery.
- We are aware that hospital wards can be busy, noisy places. We will try to keep this noise to a minimum, especially during the night.
- Some times of the day tend to be busier than others. There is often a lot of activity in the mornings and often certain procedures and investigations will be pre-planned for specific times. Please speak to the nurse in charge for advice.
- Patient therapy takes place throughout the day. It may be necessary for your relative to be seen when you are visiting.
- We will endeavour to make time in the day when we leave people to rest and relax with their family.

### **Visitors can help by creating a restful environment**

- We need to make sure that the environment is as restful as possible and that there is room for the staff to care for your family member. For this reason, we ask that there are no more than 2 visitors at a time.
- We recognise that there are times when more than 2 people might need to be in attendance. We are more than happy to discuss this: please just speak to the Senior Charge Nurse.
- Please think of others. The people in our wards are ill and need to rest, so it is important to keep noise to a minimum.
- Please respect other patients' and visitors' need for privacy.
- Some people can find it difficult to spend long periods in a hospital environment. If you would like to make more frequent shorter visits, that's fine with us.
- It's important to make sure you look after yourself and get plenty of rest!
- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.

### **You can help us to keep our patients safe**

- Please wash your hands or use alcohol hand rub on entering and leaving all wards and departments.
- Speak to the nurse in charge before entering a room that has an isolation sign.
- In the event of an outbreak of infection, it may be necessary to control/stop visiting to protect your family member and other patients.
- Please don't touch a patient's wounds or any medical equipment, such as drips or catheters. This can cause infections.
- Please use the chairs provided. Please do not sit on the patient's bed.
- Please don't use the patients' toilets. The ward staff will be happy to direct you to the nearest public toilet.
- Please don't share property between patients, such as toiletries, tissues or items of hospital equipment.

It should be noted that, if you are spending an extended time in a clinical area, there is a possibility

that you may come into contact with another patient's surroundings. Should this occur, you should wash your hands, or use the alcohol hand rub before returning to your relative's bedside.

### **We will keep you informed**

- We will always try to make sure that a member of staff is available to speak with you. Sometimes we may be caught up caring for other patients. At these times we would be grateful for your patience.
- With your relative's permission, we will involve you with planning care and setting goals.
- In order to protect privacy, we only give out general information over the phone and not specific medical details.
- We will not share patient sensitive information without the patient's consent.

### **We will keep you involved**

- By asking your relative who they would like to be involved with their care.
- We recognise that being together at meal times is an important social activity and can enhance recovery; we encourage family and carers to be around at meal times to help the patient if they need assistance.
- We protect mealtimes from unnecessary activity to ensure that the environment is calm and undisturbed.

### **Help us to keep you involved**

- Please inform us of any specific needs that your relative has.
- Let us know if you would like to assist with providing care (this obviously needs to be with the agreement of your relative).
- Please bring in any medication.
- Please bring in toiletries, dentures, glasses, suitable day and night time clothing and footwear to help ensure the patient's comfort.

Further information can be found on our website at: [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/i-am-a-visitor/welcome/](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/i-am-a-visitor/welcome/)

### **Visitors Charter**

To help people understand our expectations of visitors, a Visitors Charter has been developed, which will be displayed at the front reception area and outside individual wards. Our Visitors Charter sets out what visitors can expect of us and what is expected of them.

<b>What can we do for you?</b>		<b>What you can do for us:</b>
We will ask the patient who they would like to be involved in their care.	➔	Please advise us at the earliest opportunity if you are the patient's named carer, informing us of any specific needs that they may have. Please identify one family member to be the main contact between ward staff, family and friends.
We will keep the named carer, family member or next of kin (as authorised by the patient) informed of any information which the patient wishes them to know.	➔ ➔ ➔	We expect you to understand and respect the fact that no information can be given without the patient's consent. In order to protect confidentiality we can only give out general information over the phone and not specific medical details. Any information provided can only be provided with the express consent of the patient.

We aim to be flexible in our visiting times and try to meet all our patients' needs.	<p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>If the person you wish to visit is not a close family relative, please report to the nurse in charge to check if they are in a position to receive visitors.</p> <p>The person you have come to see needs some quiet time to recover and rehabilitate. Please ensure you do not overtire them by over extending your visit. Please make sure that no more than two people visit any patient at any one time.</p>
We will provide a warm, welcoming clean environment.	<p>→</p>	<p>We prioritise protecting our patients from infection. To do this staff may ask you to leave the ward for a period of time to allow cleaning in and around the ward area to take place.</p>
We have policies and procedures in place to combat cross transmission of infection.	<p>→</p>	<p>Please do not visit if you are unwell or have been unwell within the last 48 hours. Please ensure you follow guidance on the infection prevention and control precautions displayed on the ward. We expect you to perform hand hygiene on entering and leaving each ward and bay. Do not sit on patients' beds.</p>
We will ensure patient confidentiality at all times.	<p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>When ward rounds are taking place, you will be asked to step outside for a short time; this helps us maintain patient confidentiality. Patients and their visitors are asked to please respect the privacy of other patients and their families.</p> <p>Under data protection laws you are not allowed to look at any patient's record.</p>
We may need to ask you to leave for a short time while we deliver care to your relative/friend or to another patient on the ward.	<p>→</p>	<p>We realise that any request to leave the area during your planned visit is an interruption. We will only do this when absolutely necessary. We ask that you respect this request and wait until we tell you that you can return to the bedside.</p>
We try to create a calm environment to help our patients to recover. We will give your relative or friend all the care they need, but we must make sure that the needs of all patients are met.	<p>→</p>	<p>We ask that you help keep noise levels as low as possible. Children must be accompanied and supervised at all times and for safety reasons must not be allowed to run around or climb on beds. Please speak to the Nurse in Charge if you are planning on bringing young children.</p>
We will be polite and courteous to you.	<p>→</p>	<p>We expect visitors to show the same courtesy to all patients, other visitors and staff.</p>
We aim to make sure that meal times are at approximately the same time each day.	<p>→</p>	<p>Patient mealtimes are protected. Unless you normally support or encourage a patient to eat, as agreed with the Senior Charge Nurse, the only people on the ward routinely at mealtimes should be nursing and domestic staff.</p>
We aim to discharge our patients as soon as they are clinically fit for discharge.	<p>→</p>	<p>Please provide the patient with their day clothes (as well as night clothes) to allow them to be up dressed and mobilised as part of their rehabilitation.</p>

## Restrictions to visiting

By opening up visiting times, we also need all visitors to be mindful that patients also need rest to help them get well as soon as possible. It can be hard to achieve a balance between extended visiting and the needs of our patients to have a quiet, restful and safe environment.

For the wellbeing of patients, there may be times when NHS Western Isles needs to temporarily limit/stop visitation, when this occurs steps will be taken to inform visitors and patients.

Information will be clearly posted within the main hospital reception, information boards and at the entrance to each ward affected. Information will also be shared via NHS Western Isles communication channels including twitter, facebook and NHS Western Isles website. Further information entitled 'Extended Visiting: Guidance for Families and Visitors' can be found at: [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk).

## We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback) or share your story at: [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or 0800 122 31 35
- Tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236) Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.



### Disclaimer

The content of this factsheet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.