



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

For the attention of Nurse Directors
Cc: Board Chief Executives
Board Chairs

30 June 2020

Publication of updated guidance on reinstating person-centred visiting in NHS Scotland

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting and protecting people in our hospitals throughout the COVID pandemic. Following our letter of March 24 suspending hospital visiting, we are now writing to you to advise you of the publication of updated guidance to enable visiting at all hospitals to resume safely on a phased basis.

These principles are designed to be evidence-based, consistent and compassionate, recognising that the presence of family and loved ones is a clinical intervention of vital importance to recovery and wellbeing.

The next phase of this guidance will take effect on **July 13**, so you should prepare to welcome visitors back to hospitals as set out below on this date. From this date, patients in hospitals will be able to have a visit from one designated visitor, in addition to the essential visitors already permitted currently.

I fully appreciate that the necessary restrictions placed on hospitals, and the pause on normal activities and routines such as visiting, have been challenging for people in hospital, their loved ones, and the staff. The decision to restrict visitors was taken extremely reluctantly, and was informed by scientific advice in order to minimise the spread of infection.

I appreciate the efforts you have made to permit families to visit loved ones in their final days and in the other exceptional circumstances already permitted and it is important that this continues. I am also aware of some of the many innovations that many hospitals have put in place to support people's wellbeing and contact with family and friends during these last few months.

Significant progress has been made and we are continuing to see improvements with the number of cases of COVID19 reducing. With this in mind, the plan published today confirms that the next stage of visiting will include visits with a single nominated visitor, arranged in advance. If the scientific advice is that it is safe to do so, the next stage would be followed by

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visits by two key visitors visiting at the same time. The final stage will be the implementation of a four-week local plan to fully implement a return to person-centred visiting. You will be asked to submit this plan to the Scottish Government in advance and officials will be in touch to request this at the appropriate point.

I know many of you have, for some time, been planning for this moment. The guidance will support you as you continue to prepare and it includes strategies on ways to facilitate safe visiting.

The guidance along with supporting materials can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-visiting-guidance/>

Thank you again for all your ongoing efforts. We know that you will recognise the importance of reinstating visiting, which as you know will be hugely welcomed by patients and their loved ones.

Should you require any further advice or support please contact Shaun Maher, Strategic Advisor for Person-Centred Care and Improvement (shaun.maher@nes.scot.nhs.uk) or Ruth Jays, Unit Head, Person-Centred and Participation Team (ruth.jays@gov.scot).

We will provide updates on dates for moving to subsequent stages of this guidance.

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Personal Data

Fiona McQueen
Chief Nursing Officer

Personal Data

Professor Jason Leitch
National Clinical Director

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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