

Chief Nurse Directorate

VISITING & VISITORS POLICY

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Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust actively seeks to promote equality of opportunity. The Trust seeks to ensure that no employee, service user, or member of the public is unlawfully discriminated against for any reason, including the "protected characteristics" as defined in the Equality Act 2010. These principles will be expected to be upheld by all who act on behalf of the Trust, with respect to all aspects of Equality.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust is committed to working to meet the needs of patients and their visitors whilst also promoting safety, privacy and dignity. Visiting provides valuable support for patients and allows communication with families, friends and carers for the staff as well. The Trust seeks to promote the emotional well-being of patients through access to visiting. This policy is to enable a positive patient experience, in balance with periods of rest, access to good nutrition and a safe clean environment.
- 1.2 This policy is supported by a visitor information leaflet which is available via the Trust web site and through various formats across wards and departments which emphasise key information. The policy is to support staff to in the care of their patients.

2.0 Area

This policy will apply to all inpatient areas of the Trust, across all sites except the following specialised areas due to the specific needs of the patients in these areas:

- Coronary Care Units
- Medical Assessment/Clinical Decision Units
- Intensive Care Units and High Dependency Areas
- Children's Wards
- Neonatal Intensive Care Units
- Maternity Wards

3.0 Duties

- 3.1 It will be the responsibility of the Matrons to ensure the successful implementation of this policy, with the support of Operational Group Teams.
- 3.2 Staff with responsibility for the application of this policy are:
- All Nursing and Midwifery Staff
 - All ward-based Patient Administration Staff

4.0 Key Principles

4.1 Promoting a Positive Visitor Experience

It is widely known that visiting from family, carers and friends impacts positively on patients and their recovery. The following principles support ensuring visiting is not disruptive or tiring:

- All areas to display visiting times
- Ward sisters/staff in charge to be accommodating to those visitors attending outside of visiting, especially those with caring responsibilities, those who have travelled some distance and those who find visiting within designated times difficult
- Minimise disruption to patients
- Recognise the role of Carers, and accommodate them into the care environment
- Use the visiting period to facilitate good communication between patients, staff, carers and families

4.2 Visiting Times

4.2.1 Visiting times are consistent across the Trust to minimise confusion for patients and their visitors.

4.2.2 In most areas, other than the specialised areas noted in 2.0 , they are:

- **1-8 pm daily**

5.0 Carers

As part of actively promoting “John’s Campaign” the Trust welcomes carers and encourages all areas to agree flexible arrangements to meet the needs of the person they care for. They should be able to attend at whatever time meets the needs of the patient they carer for. Ward sisters should work together with carers to promote a positive working relationship and regularly discuss how this is working.

6.0 Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding women may feed their babies wherever they choose but if they require a private space then the ward sister or matron will support this request.

7.0 Pets

In circumstances where it is deemed in the best interest of the patient, and infection control advice has been sought pets may be brought in to clinical areas. The ward sister/staff in charge must use their discretion and seek advice from their matron/site manger if they unsure.

8.0 Visitor Code

8.1 This supports the Trust Policy on the Involvement of Carers in Patient Care Provided in Hospital.

8.2 All visitors are asked to help the hospital staff to help those in our care by adhering to the following guidance:

- **Please observe the visiting times indicated for each ward**
- **Adhere to the maximum numbers of visitors allowed. This is 2 visitors at the bedside at any time, unless special permission is granted by the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse or Midwife in Charge**
- **Please note that if a clinical procedure or personal care needs to be undertaken in a ward area visitors may be asked to leave the ward temporarily; but may return following this. The ward sister/staff in charge will explain this to visitors at the time**
- **Utilise our hand hygiene facilities provided across the Trust before and after visiting to minimise infection risks**
- **The Trust will provide communication across the Trust about not visiting if visitors have had symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting within the last 72 hours**
- **The ward will provide information on any outbreaks which may impact on visiting requirements, such as handwashing with soap and water**
- **Staff may ask visitors to leave the patient area if they visit wearing uniforms worn from other health care settings, such as residential homes. This may put our patients at risk**
- **Use of mobile phones or other devices for filming or photography of our staff or other patients without consent is not permitted and visitors will be asked to remove any unauthorised images as per our Trust policy**
- **The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients and giving consideration to the needs of their visitors. However, all patients and visitors are advised that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:**
 - **Swearing**
 - **Threatening/Abusive Behaviour**
 - **Verbal/Physical Abuse**
- **The Trust reserves the right to withdraw visiting rights from patients who are threatening/abusive/violent and will ensure the removal of those persons from the premises**

- **All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately**
- **Please respect that if you turn up outside of visiting hours you may not be able visit. Please always make these arrangements with the ward staff**
- **We ask that visitors are mindful that any actions which may lead to staff, patients or other member of the public feeling vulnerable will be dealt with according to Trust policies and procedures**

8.2.1 An Easy Read Version of this Code can be found in Appendix A.

9.0 Visitor Pledge

9.1.1 We want the visiting experience to be a positive experience for all and to support that what staff will do for visitors is:

- **We will introduce ourselves, treating all with respect and politeness**
- **We will give our names so people know who they have spoken to**
- **We will strive to answer any questions they may have, in a way that they can understand, whilst always respecting the confidentiality of our patients**
- **We will offer a private place to talk if you wish, wherever possible**
- **We will always try to be flexible if visitors have special visiting needs**
- **We will always strive to deal with any issues that in an appropriate and timely manner but ask that visitors speak to the ward or department as the first point of contact**
- **Work with you to prevent any cross infection**

9.1.2 An Easy Read Version of this pledge can be found in Appendix B.

10.0 Children

Patients' children/grandchildren may visit following discussion with the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse or Midwife in Charge and subject to the following conditions:

- that they are supervised by a responsible adult at all times, acknowledging that they will, politely, be asked to leave if they roam the ward or disturb other patients
- that the patient/parent accepts that there may be times, due to unforeseen ward activity, that visiting by children may be not be allowed e.g. during emergencies
- Please do not change baby's nappies on the wards. Nappy changing facilities are available in visitors toilets

11.0 Chaplaincy

- 11.1 Chaplains are employed by the Trust and work in the hospital alongside other members of the clinical team to ensure that patients' stays in hospital are as positive as possible. Chaplains are available for all people, whether they have a faith or not.
- 11.2 Chaplains are also there to support visitors to the hospitals. Sometimes having a friend or loved one in hospital can be a worrying time, the Chaplains are happy to meet with visitors and can be contacted through ward staff or by asking the hospital switchboard to contact the Chaplaincy Office. The Chapels in our hospitals are also open for all to use, and we encourage visitors to make use of these quiet and peaceful spaces.
- 11.3 The Trust Chaplaincy Office can be contacted on (01724) 203474.

12.0 Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- 12.1 To ensure compliance at Ward level, Matrons will receive feedback on the application of the policy from Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses. This will include the effect on patients, and on the ability of visitors to comply with Infection Control Policies and Procedures.
- 12.2 A measure of the effectiveness of this policy will be a review of the number of PALS concerns and Formal Complaints made to the Trust in relation to visiting arrangements, or arising from the implementation of this policy, to be reported to the Matrons Forum each quarter. The views of patients as reflected in their responses to questionnaires, inpatient surveys etc. will be considered.
- 12.3 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis, or sooner, based on the needs of the Trust.

13.0 Associated Documents

NL&G Information for Visitors (IFP-0320)

14.0 References

- 14.1 NL&G Policy on the Involvement of Carers in Patient Care Provided in Hospital (DCP244).

15.0 Definitions

None.

16.0 Consultation

This policy has been widely circulated throughout all Clinical Operational Groups. Consideration has been given to the comments received from the Patient Visiting Questionnaire carried out in 2006. Input was sought from Operational Groups Clinical Governance Committees, the Matron's and via the Trust Intranet Document Consultation page.

17.0 Dissemination

This document will be readily available throughout the Trust via the intranet site, and will be brought to the attention of all Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses and their staff through their Matron. The policy and the Visitor Code will be more widely publicised via the Trust Internet site, and, on occasions, through the local Press and included in the Patient Bedside Folder.

18.0 Equality Act (2010)

- 18.1** Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust is committed to promoting a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality which supports and encourages an inclusive culture which values diversity.
- 18.2** The Trust is committed to building a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the community it serves, allowing the Trust to deliver the best possible healthcare service to the community. In doing so, the Trust will enable all staff to achieve their full potential in an environment characterised by dignity and mutual respect.
- 18.3** The Trust aims to design and provide services, implement policies and make decisions that meet the diverse needs of our patients and their carers the general population we serve and our workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage.
- 18.4** We therefore strive to ensure that in both employment and service provision no individual is discriminated against or treated less favourably by reason of age, disability, gender, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender (Equality Act 2010).

19.0 Freedom to Speak Up

Where a member of staff has a safety or other concern about any arrangements or practices undertaken in accordance with this policy, please speak in the first instance to your line manager. Guidance on raising concerns is also available by referring to the Trust's 'Speaking Out Policy' (Freedom to Speak Up Policy and Procedure (DCP126)) or by contacting the Human Resources Department. Staff can raise concerns verbally, by letter, email or by completing an incident form. Staff can also contact the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up Guardian in confidence by email to nlq.tr.ftsuguardian@nhs.net or by phoning 304141. More details about how to raise concerns with the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up Guardian or with one of the Associate Guardians can be found on the Trust's intranet site.

**The electronic master copy of this document is held by Document Control,
Trust Secretary, NL&G NHS Foundation Trust.**

Appendix A

Easy Read Version Visitors Code



Visit between 1 pm – 8pm.



2 visitors to a patient.



We may ask you to wait outside the ward.
This is to keep patient dignity.



Please wash your hands before and after you visit.



Please don't visit if you are unwell.



Please don't wear carer's uniform on the wards.



Please don't film without consent.



Please speak kindly.

Appendix B

Easy Read Version Visitors Pledge



**Introduce ourselves.
Be respectful and polite.**



**Answer your questions.
Help you understand.**



**Offer a private place to talk.
Respect your privacy.**



Chaplains are here to talk.

Telephone: 01724 203474



**Be flexible if visitors have
special visiting needs**



**Always try to deal with any
issues quickly.**



**Work with you to prevent
infection.**