



Virtual Visiting: NHS Western Isles offers Virtual Visiting which can be an alternative to visiting in person. If you would like to video call your friend or family member, or for further information, please telephone 01851 708205.

Hospital Visiting

All hospitals in the Western Isles

NHS Western Isles is continuing to support people to visit patients in hospital. However, people who are unwell in hospital are vulnerable and at higher risk from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) than people who are well. Therefore, visits will need to be managed carefully.

We hope this infosheet will address any questions or concerns you may have. If you want more advice, please contact the hospital team providing care for your friend/relative and they will be able to help you.

What Visiting is permitted in the Western Isles?

There are two types of visitors: **Designated Visitors and Essential Visitors.**

DESIGNATED VISITOR

At the current time, we have considered that it is safe to allow **one Designated Visitor for every inpatient** for the duration of their stay in hospital. The Designated Visitor must remain the same person throughout the person's stay in hospital.

For patients who have gone into hospital for surgery, the Designated Visitor in this instance **must** be from the **same** household (or extended household) as the patient who has been isolating.

At present, in Maternity, only the birthing partner will be permitted.

ESSENTIAL VISITOR

Some people require an Essential Visitor and may require a number of visits each day to support them whilst in hospital, whereas others might be able to get by with less frequent visits, perhaps daily or less often (see our Frequently Asked Questions section). An Essential Visitor is permitted, for example, for children; or for someone who is:

- end of life,
- has a learning disability,
- has mental health issues, dementia, a learning disability or autism.

Someone who is on the road to recovery might be able to cope with fewer visits. It is important to think about these things when planning your visits.

COVID-19 areas (also known as red pathways) will remain as Essential Visiting only. (i.e. Designated Visiting is not permitted).

Please note that only the Executive Manager on Call can authorise a change in Designated or Essential Visitor, in exceptional circumstances. Ward Staff are unable to change the Designated or Essential Visitor for an inpatient.

What should I know?

Visiting will be arranged via the Ward. **Visits will be made by pre-arranged appointments** to ensure the number of people in the clinical area at any one time is limited to maintain a safe physical distance. We aim to be person-centred, however we cannot guarantee you will be provided with your personal choice of visiting time.

Please do not bring in cards, food parcels, flowers, helium balloons or similar items.

You may be asked to limit your visit to a set amount of time to allow other visitors to visit other patients, allow for cleaning between visitors and allow staff to manage numbers of people in any one area at a time.

What do I need to do when I visit?

It is very important for the health and wellbeing of your friend/relative that you **do not visit if you have been feeling unwell in any way**. There is a checklist below to help you be sure about this.

Checklist before visiting hospital

If you are feeling unwell, you should not attend the hospital (see checklist below). You should contact the Ward Nurse in Charge who will advise the patient that you are unable to attend.

- Are you feeling unwell?
- Do you have a new/continuous cough or breathlessness?
- Have you had any sickness or diarrhoea within the last 48 hours?
- Have you noticed a change in your temperature?
- Have you noticed a change to your normal sense of taste or smell?
- Are you self-isolating because you have, or have been in contact with, someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

In addition, you may be asked a series of questions by the staff - this is normal in the current situation and is intended to try and make sure that everyone stays safe.

For all visits it is essential that you:

- arrive at your allocated time at the hospital main entrance. There you will be met by a member of hospital staff who will escort or direct you to the ward and support you through the process of accessing the ward area
- NHS Western Isles Board policy is that you will not be permitted to wear your own face mask or face covering in our hospital premises. You must use the face mask provided on entry to the hospital (unless you are exempt and have a Scottish Government Exemption Card). You **will** be refused entry if you do not adhere to hospital protocol. **You must keep your face mask on at all times.**
- use hand gel on arrival **at the hospital**
- use hand gel again on **arrival at the ward** or department and ensure use hand gel **frequently** during the time you are in the ward, especially if you touch anything or anyone (we ask that you avoid any unnecessary contacts and respect physical distancing)
- maintain the recommended physical distance (2 metres) wherever possible even if the person has previously been in your household or social bubble. Chairs will be placed within the ward area please do not move chairs from their designated location. We fully understand this will be difficult for both you and your friend/relative, however it is a critical protective factor for both you, your friend/relative, staff and the wider community.
- if you cough or sneeze, make sure you follow good hygiene practice
- Only remove your face mask when leaving the hospital. Please follow safe disposal guidance on the removal of your face mask. You must use hand gel at the main exit prior to leaving the hospital, and wash your hands when you arrive home.

Part of the process of being a visitor for someone in hospital includes being asked to provide your contact details; this is normal in the current circumstances and is to assist Public Health, Test and Protect colleagues should there be a need to contact you.

Consent will be asked to share your contact details with Public Health in the event of a Covid positive contact. Following your last visit, your details will be held in a secure location for a period of 21 days and then they will be destroyed.

What next?

At each stage, when guided by the Scottish Government, these restrictions will be revised and altered dependent on the outbreak status of the virus, the Protection Level applied to the Western Isles, and any outbreak within the hospital and local community.

Frequently asked questions

What if I'm anxious about visiting a hospital setting?

NHS Western Isles offers Virtual Visiting which can be an alternative solution for those who are anxious or may experience other issues e.g. transport difficulties, work/family commitments, etc. We ask that, where possible, the patient is provided with a laptop/tablet or mobile phone. However, there are range of devices available and Virtual Visiting can be arranged by ward staff.

If you would like to video call your friend or family member, or for further information, please telephone 01851 708205.

What is an Essential Visitor?

Essential Visiting describes situations when it is very important for a relative/friend to be allowed to see a patient. Examples of this include:

- a parent accompanying a child
- in maternity settings, partners or birth partners being able to attend ante-natal, clinic or scan appointments with their partner
- when someone has reached the end of their life, has a life-threatening illness, when someone is receiving difficult news, or similar situations
- when people have a mental health issue; or dementia, autism or learning disabilities.

What if my relative wants to cuddle or touch me?

One of the hardest aspects of the COVID-19 situation is the need for physical distancing. Unfortunately, when someone comes into hospital you will need to maintain physical distancing wherever possible even if the person has previously been in your household or part of your social bubble.

When patients are in hospital they are more susceptible to picking up infections from the community so it is imperative that we work together to protect patients whilst in hospital.

What if my relative wants to walk around with me or go to the hospital cafe?

At the current time we would request that you do not move around different areas of the hospital or try to visit other people in the hospital.

What if I don't feel able to visit my relative?

Feeling anxious or nervous about coming into a hospital is a normal response to recent events. Speak to the care team if you are worried and they will be able to advise you.

What's the position in Maternity?

Partners only will be able to visit in the department. Partners can also attend dating and anomaly scans and any emergency appointments but we are not currently permitting partners to routine clinic appointments or routine growth scans.

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.

Strategic Framework Tier	Tier Zero	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three	Tier Four
Visiting	<p>Essential Visits And</p> <p>Two designated visitors at the same time observing physical distancing</p> <p><i>Or, if it is not possible to maintain physical distancing for two visitors at the same time:</i></p> <p>Two designated visitors each day, each one visiting separately</p>	<p>Essential Visits And</p> <p>Two designated visitors at the same time observing physical distancing</p> <p><i>Or, if it is not possible to maintain physical distancing for two visitors at the same time:</i></p> <p>Two designated visitors each day, each one visiting separately</p>	<p>Essential Visits And</p> <p>One designated visitor observing physical distancing</p>	<p>Essential Visits (End of Life, birth partners, children, patients with mental health issues including dementia, learning disabilities, autism)</p> <p>One designated visitor observing physical distancing</p>	<p>Essential Visits only (End of Life, birth partners, children, patients with mental health issues including dementia, learning disabilities, autism)</p>
Required	<p>Visitors must maintain physical distancing wherever possible</p> <p>Visitors must wear face coverings;</p> <p>Visitors must have access to hand hygiene facilities</p> <p>Restricted movement to other areas of hospital unless of part of care for patient – i.e. birth partner attending scan, parent accompanying child or other similar situation</p>				
Settings	<p>Hospitals/ wards with no COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Essential visits can still take place to COVID-19 areas (now known as red pathways). COVID-19 areas should remain at essential visitors only.</p>				