

NHS Lothian stops all hospital visiting from today

NHS Lothian has just announced that visiting will be suspended to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and to protect vulnerable patients, as well as staff.

This move will come into effect from today.

Professor Alex McMahon, Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Healthcare Professionals, NHS Lothian said: "Across NHS Lothian, Scotland and the UK, we are experiencing profound changes in our daily lives as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). Now, more than ever, we need to work together. To our patients and their families, I would urge you to help us by respecting this difficult decision."

Visiting will continue in specific circumstances; for example patients receiving end-of-life care, for inpatients in our children's services and those accompanying partners during childbirth. Visiting arrangements for these groups should only take place following discussions with senior charge nurses or midwives.

Professor Alex McMahon added: "I understand that not being able to visit family members while they are in hospital may be upsetting and I would like to assure the public that this decision has not been taken lightly.

"All across the UK, people are being urged to stay at home where they can and to limit social interactions, instead using phone and video calls to stay in touch with family and

friends.

“The decision to suspend visiting may be unpopular with some patients and their families, but it has been made to help protect the safety of your loved ones and our staff.”

To stay up to date with the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) advice, visit [NHS Inform](#)

A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice. This can be accessed by calling 0800 028 2816. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 8:00am –10:00pm, Saturday and Sunday, 8:00am – 6:00pm.

The NHS say that they understand that the public may have questions in relation to this. They have prepared some FAQs.

Why can't I visit?

Social distancing is really important to try and limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Last night new measures were introduced across the UK, urging people to stay at home. We need to 'shield' certain people who are at higher risk than others and this includes those who are already unwell.

By suspending visiting, we hope to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) helping to protect your loved ones and our staff.

Can I get personal items like clothes, nightclothes, toiletries to my loved one?

We understand that having personal items such as clothes and your own toiletries if you are in hospital is really important. If relatives need to bring personal items to their loved ones, they can still do this, but are expected to leave the items with the ward staff and not enter the ward.

If I want to give my loved one a phone or an iPad to

communicate with me can I hand this in?

Yes, but like handing in clothes or toiletries you will be expected to leave the items with the ward staff and not enter the ward.

What if my child is in an adult ward, can I visit them?

If your child (up to the age of 18) happens to be in an adult ward, the nurse in charge will be able to advise when to visit and any constraints that may be placed around the visit. We would remind families, that if they have any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) such as a high temperature and/or a new persistent cough, they should remain at home.

My partner is due to give birth, will I still be able to attend?

At present, birthing partners are permitted to attend, however we ask that this is limited to just one person. The midwife in charge will be able to advise of any restraints that may be placed around the visit. We would remind birthing partners, that if they have any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) such as a high temperature and/or a new persistent cough, they should remain at home.