

Hospital visiting suspended by NHS Lothian

NHS Lothian has today announced that, in line with Scottish Government guidance, visiting across sites will be suspended unless for essential visits only.

This move is designed to help protect patients and staff by limiting the spread of coronavirus and comes into effect from today.

Fiona Ireland, Deputy Director of Nursing, NHS Lothian said: "Across Lothian, Scotland and the UK, we are seeing rising levels of Covid-19 within the community.

"We have taken the difficult decision to suspend visiting across our sites to help minimise the risk of transmission, to protect patients, our staff and the wider community, and to manage the increasing pressure on our acute and community sites.

"Where possible, ward staff have been contacting relatives, who had previously been identified as designated visitors, to advise them of the new arrangements and to provide more information."

Under the current guidance, some essential visits are still permitted; for example patients receiving end-of-life care, for patients with mental health issues including dementia, 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.

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

"With higher levels of Covid-19 cases within the community, there is an increased risk that visitors could inadvertently bring Covid-19 into our hospital sites, especially if they are not showing any symptoms.

"This decision will help manage the increasing risks of Covid-19 transmission and protect the safety of your loved ones, our staff and the wider community. I would urge our patients and families to help us by respecting this difficult decision."

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

NHS Lothian have prepared some FAQs:

Why can't I visit?

Cases of Covid-19 within the community have been rising. With more people potentially exposed to the virus, there is a real risk that visitors to our sites may be infectious, but not displaying any symptoms. By suspending visiting, we hope to limit the spread of Covid-19 and in doing so help to protect those individuals, including your loved ones, who may be more at risk.

What is classified as an essential visit?

As per The Scottish Government guidance, essential visits include the following –

For patients receiving end of life care

For patients with mental health issues including dementia

For patients with learning disabilities

For patients with autism For birthing partners

For children

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

If you are in hospital, we understand how important it is to have personal items such as clothes and your own toiletries. 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 such as a high temperature and/or a new persistent cough, they should remain at home. Similarly if you have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) you should remain at home for the required isolation period, which is currently 14 days.

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

attend?

At present, birth 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. We would remind birth partners, that if they have any symptoms of coronavirus, such as a high temperature and/or a new persistent cough, they should remain at home.

Similarly if you have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus you should remain at home for the required isolation period, which is currently 14 days.