

NHS Lothian welcomes visitors back to hospitals

Visitors are being welcomed back into hospitals in the NHS Lothian area, in line with the relaxation of national Covid-19 restrictions.

Up to two visitors at a time will be able to return to inpatients' bedsides, but they are being urged to remember **three things**

- don't come if you're unwell
- wash your hands and
- wear a mask

The health board say this will help help protect loved ones when they are most vulnerable. The falling rates of infection across communities in Scotland, means that visiting restrictions are being eased across all hospitals.

Gillian McAuley, Interim Nurse Director, NHS Lothian, said: "We have been monitoring the situation very closely and we are really pleased to be in the position where we can welcome more visitors back into our wards.

"We know that visiting plays an important role in patient recovery and indeed in overall outcomes.

"The rates of COVID-19 transmission are falling, however we are still asking people to be mindful of themselves and others.

"Please don't visit a loved one in hospital if you feel unwell; remember and wash your hands and use hand gel and

finally wear a mask.

“These small things are hugely important. They will protect the person you are visiting, at a time when they are unwell and therefore most susceptible to infection, and also the other patients they may share space with in the ward.”

Up to two people only are asked to visit a relative in hospital to help avoid larger groups and overcrowding at the bedside. However numbers will be flexible in circumstances, such as end of life care, where more visitors might be required.

The restrictions around the number of birth partners have been removed.

Adult outpatients will be able to be accompanied by a one person, unless in exceptional circumstances and by prior arrangement with the department; while two people can accompany a child.

If a particular ward is managing a Covid-19 outbreak, essential visiting may still be reintroduced on a temporary basis and family members will be informed.