

Castle Hill

Changes to visiting at Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is changing visiting arrangements for wards at Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill in response to Covid-19.

The trust is lifting some restrictions to help patients and their families after NHS England announced the cancelling of all hospital visiting in March to prevent the spread of the infection.

However, changes must be gradual to prevent the virus spreading among patients and staff if members of the public crowd in reception areas, lift halls, wards or corridors.

From this week, up to two people will be able to visit a patient receiving end of life care at either Hull Royal Infirmary or Castle Hill Hospital. A patient with dementia or learning difficulties can receive one visitor.

For children coming into hospital, one parent can visit. In our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, one parent can be present at all times.

Women are already able to have their partners with them during labour but partners will now be able to come to the post natal ward for short visits after their baby is born.

Chief Nurse Beverley Geary said: "These actions are taken in the best interests of our patients, their loved ones and our staff. When it's safe and we are certain no one will be in danger, we will do everything we can to lift all restrictions on visiting. But we are not at that point yet.

"Covid-19 is still a real threat to all of us. We've already lost more than 180 lives in our hospital, including two of our own staff.

"We understand how hard it is for you not to see your loved ones when they come into hospital or have them with you after you've had your baby or undergone your procedure or operation.

"Please be patient and understand we're not doing this because we want to make life difficult, awkward or upsetting for you. We're doing it because we need to keep you, all of our patients and our staff safe from this dreadful disease which continues to claim so many lives."

Relatives must agree and follow instructions around visiting times to ensure our staff can maintain social distancing and avoid crowding in public areas.

In addition, all ward areas will be issued with iPads so families can communicate with their loved ones as part of our plan to extend virtual visiting, already operating in our Intensive Care Units.

To meet the Government requirement, all visitors must cover their mouths and noses with a mask, bandana, buff/snood or scarf as soon as they enter a hospital building. They should wash their hands thoroughly when they walk into a ward, use hand sanitizer when they leave their relative's bedside and wash their hands for at least 20 seconds as they leave the ward.

Restrictions have to remain in place in other hospital areas including the Emergency Department at Hull Royal but they will be kept under review and relaxed when it is safe to do so.

Despite the new arrangements, people should not visit any part of Hull Royal Infirmary or Castle Hill Hospital, including wards, diagnostic areas, clinics or outpatient departments, if they are

• unwell, especially if they have a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or have experienced a loss of sense of smell or taste

• vulnerable as a result of their medication, a chronic illness or they are over 70 years of age

Anyone admitted to hospital with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will not receive visitors except in exceptional circumstances.