# Welcome

We are pleased to advise **from Monday 9 August 2021** hospital visiting arrangements will change across NHSGGC to support patients to have:

* support in hospital from the people who matter to them. This no longer needs to be limited to the same two people visiting; however, we may sometimes need to limit the numbers of family members who can visit at any one time, so physical distancing rules can be followed.
* Conversations with the patient and family will take place on admission and throughout the hospital stay to discuss who they would like to visit and when.
* Family support at times when patients wish the presence, help and support of the people who matter to them. For example at mealtimes, rehabilitation sessions, discharge planning and during Multi-disciplinary Team conversations.

While COVID-19 is still with us, to maintain the safety of patients, family providing support and staff, visiting needs to continue to be carefully managed and to limit numbers of people visiting at any one time. If you wish to visit anyone in these hospitals, please contact the ward to arrange a visit in advance, so we can be sure our wards and hospital sites do not become overcrowded and allow everyone to follow the physical distancing rules. A list of telephone numbers can be found for all wards and departments on the [NHSGGC website](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-issues/covid-19-coronavirus/for-patients-the-public/patients-hospital-appointments-visiting/hospital-visiting/).

We welcome support from family and friends in hospital; we know that this is a vital support to patients, not least with nutrition, healing, recovery, and overall quality of care.

# Who can visit?

From Monday 9 August 2021, all patients (where possible) will be able to benefit from support of any two people of their choosing each day – this no longer needs to be the same two people visiting. However, we may sometimes need to limit the numbers of family members who can visit at any one time, so physical distancing rules can be followed.

Visiting arrangements will be organised as flexibly as possible to ensure the safety of patients, family, and staff.

There may be situations where staff may have to ask you to step outside the ward temporarily or to leave the ward during your visit. We will always explain when this is necessary. Your support and understanding when this is necessary is appreciated to ensure everyone’s safety and privacy.

# How do I arrange a visit?

If you wish to visit, please contact the ward to arrange a visit in advance.

It is important that we continue to limit the number of people present in the ward at any one time. To help manage this there are maximum numbers of people permitted in a room at any one time to ensure we can all follow physical distancing rules.

A list of telephone numbers can be found for all wards and departments on the [NHSGGC website](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/) or alternatively contact the hospital switchboard.

# Can other people visit with me?

We understand in some cases, family chosen to visit may need to be accompanied by another person, for example a child visiting a parent or sibling, or a frail elderly person who cannot attend the hospital independently. The presence of this additional person will be facilitated – ward staff will explain how this will be supported.

# Why might I not be able to visit?

COVID-19 is still with us and can be transmitted easily. To reduce risks careful attention to infection prevention and control measures around family support still need to be maintained.

There are many vulnerable patients in our hospital wards and in particular, some types of illness and types of treatments where we need to proceed with extreme caution, ensure a risk assessment is undertaken appropriately, and reassessed as and when circumstances change.

A consultant led, multi-disciplinary team (MDT) individual risk assessment is advised for high-risk patients to aid decision making to determine whether visits can be safely supported or not. Some examples of patients who would require this review would be those undergoing surgery or patients with low immunity.

If a visit is not possible, we will provide you with an explanation why this is necessary. We will keep this under review where possible and will reassess as circumstances change.

# If visiting is restricted, are there situations when a visit is possible?

If there is a need to restrict visiting to a particular ward or area for example due to an outbreak of COVID-19 or rapidly increasing community transmission, **essential visits will continue.**

Examples of the type of situations where “essential visiting” is possible are as follows:

* a birth partner supporting a woman during hospital visits.
* a person receiving end-of-life care – we expect this to be defined as flexibly and compassionately as possible, to support patients at the end of life spending meaningful time with their loved ones in their final days, weeks, or months.
* to support someone with a mental health issue, or dementia, or a learning disability or autism, where not being present would cause the patient to be distressed.
* to accompany a child in hospital.

# What if I or another family and friends cannot visit?

If you cannot visit in person, please use technology such as social media and phone calls to stay in touch. If you would like to arrange a 'virtual visit' (video call) with a friend or family member in one of our hospitals, please contact the ward directly or use the form available on the [Person-Centred Virtual Visiting Webpage](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/patients-and-visitors/person-centred-visiting/person-centred-virtual-visiting/) and we will arrange with the ward for a call to be organised.

All wards have iPads specially set up to enable 'virtual visits' (video call) allowing patients to see and talk to the people who matter to them using FaceTime, Skype, Zoom or NHS Near Me.

# What do I need to do before I visit?

To help keep everyone safe, we strongly recommend that all visitors undertake **voluntary lateral flow testing** prior to visiting. It is then recommended you undertake the test **twice per week** for as long as you are visiting someone in hospital.

This is optional - if you do not wish to have a test or are not able to test this will not be an obstacle to a visit.

# How do I arrange to have a voluntary lateral flow test?

Information on how to order Lateral Flow Tests is on the [Scottish Government’s website](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms/).

Tests can also be collected from the COVID-19 testing centres in the afternoon or early evening.

You can also book/arrange a test at the **asymptomatic test facilities** across NHSGGC. There is a list of where these facilities are at the end of this leaflet. These can also be found on the [NHSGGC Website](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-issues/covid-19-coronavirus/for-patients-the-public/asymptomatic-test-facilities/).

# What must I do when I visit?

It is important for your safety and for the safety of patients and staff that you do the following:

* **F**ace covering/mask must be always worn unless there is a reason you cannot.
* **A**void communal gatherings in public areas of the hospital. Take the stairs, if possible, to avoid congregating in lift lobbies. Your movement around other areas of the hospital must be limited as much as is reasonably possible.
* **C**lean your hands using the hand sanitiser before and after you leave the ward or department and when you touch anything.
* **T**wo metres distance should be maintained from others.
* **S**elf-isolate - You **MUST NOT** attend if you are unwell, if you are a household contact or have otherwise been informed that you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 and have been advised to self-isolate or must self-isolate for another reason.

**Respiratory hygiene** also remains important, covering the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping, or blowing the nose. These should be disposed of immediately in the bin and hand washing performed immediately afterwards.

# Will I need to use any personal protective equipment (PPE) during the visit?

There might be situations where staff will need to ask you to use **PPE – such as a face mask, apron, gloves etc.** If this is required, the staff will help you to put this on correctly and to dispose of it before you leave.

If you are a family member or carer for the person, you are visiting and helping to support aspects of their care such as supporting nutritional intake at mealtimes, or other personal care you will be provided with necessary PPE to undertake this activity.

# Will I be able to touch my relative or friend during the visit?

Ability to touch the person’s hand without wearing gloves to provide comfort and reassurance when stressed or distressed **is permitted with discretion. You must follow strict hand hygiene measures before and after contact between you and the patient.**

# Can I go out of the ward for a walk with my relative or friend if able?

Please check with the ward staff first. It may be possible to go a walk to the main communal areas of the hospital or hospital grounds if social distancing measures and the wearing of a face covering is adhered to.

# Will I be asked for test and protect information?

You will not usually be asked for your contact details for Test and Protect purposes. However, there may be some circumstances where this is required – staff will tell you if this is the case.

On your arrival at the ward and every time you visit the ward, you will be asked some questions about your health to make sure it is safe for you to visit. They will ask you the following questions:

* Are you feeling unwell?
* Do you have new/continuous cough?
* 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 in your normal sense of taste or smell?
* Are you self-isolating because you have been in contact with anyone suspected as having, or has tested positive for COVID-19, in the past 14 days?

You will **not be allowed to visit** if you do not pass this safety check.

**It is essential you do not visit if you have a persistent cough, loss of taste or smell, flu like symptoms or fever.**

# What other safety measures are in place?

Security arrangements are in placeat all our hospitals to ensure entry is restricted to people with authorisation for a visit only and to assist us to adhere to the guidelines. When you arrive at a hospital site, please explain to security staff that you are there to visit someone, and your visit has been arranged with the ward in advance.

# Will I be able to use the facilities in the hospital?

Retail outlets and hospital dining facilities are open on all our hospital sites. If using any of these facilities, you must make sure you take all the necessary safety measures required – wear you face mask, maintain a 2-metre social distance, apply hand sanitiser on entry and when leaving the facility etc.

Where possible you should use the toilet, facilities provided for members of the public. It is preferred that you do not use patient and staff toilets unless there is no other option available.

# Where can I find further information?

Further information about the new visiting arrangements is available on the [NHSGGC Website](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-issues/covid-19-coronavirus/for-patients-the-public/patients-hospital-appointments-visiting/hospital-visiting/).

**Thank you so much for your cooperation. We look forward to welcoming family members and friends back into hospitals to support patients.**