

VISITORS POLICY

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Policy Holder:	QUIPS Committee
Policy Author:	CQC Registered Manager

1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to identify the benefits of having an open and welcoming relationship with all visitors to the hospice. This means creating and maintaining a welcoming atmosphere. The organisation also identifies that there must be proper regard given to the health and safety of the staff, volunteers, and patients always. This policy is to ensure that staff can always maintain a secure environment for all in the hospice.

COVID-19 Addendum (April 2022): During the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated government protocols regarding social distancing and enhanced infection control procedures, it is necessary to continue to place some restrictions on visiting the ward to minimize the risk to the patient, relatives, hospice staff/volunteers and the wider community.

These enhanced procedures are:

- Patients are restricted to **two visitors** at any one time indoors. There may be exceptions to this for those in the final days of life or those who require care to be delivered by a family member. Please discuss with the senior nurse or doctor on duty
- All visitors to the inpatient unit **should wear a medical grade face mask for the entirety of their visit**, unless medically exempt. If you do not have one, Rowcroft can provide one. Please ask our Reception Team for assistance or another member of staff who will be pleased to assist
- Visits are not limited in length of time, but we do ask you to enable gaps in visiting to allow for additional cleaning of the ward to meet infection prevention guidance.
- **Children under 5 should visit their relative outside in the gardens** (except in exceptional circumstances - please discuss with a senior member of the clinical team). Children over 5, like adults, may visit inside the building providing they wear a facemask. Babies are not counted in this number.
- Visitors attending in a professional capacity such as solicitors, NHS specialist nurses etc. do not count within the patient's allocated 2 visitors at a time. These professionals must work to the same infection control requirements as Rowcroft

Hospice team members. Patients may have up to 6 visitors when they are **outside**, maintaining a 2-meter distance, wherever possible. Visitors should wash and sanitize their hands regularly, and **at least upon entering and before exiting the building**.

- Patients own pets may visit by prior arrangement; however, like humans they ideally need to be kept 2 meters distance for all other patients, visitors, and staff.
- Use of video communications technology wherever possible, such as Facetime, Skype or Zoom to assist in communication with the hospice and, if requested, patients.
- For patients thought to be in the last hours or short days of life, we will aim to offer a side room. When this is possible, they may have more than 2 visitors at the bedside and can stay up to 24hrs a day if appropriate (please speak to ward nursing or medical staff first). All visitors should wear face masks and must do so when staff are attending the patient, or they will be asked to temporarily leave the room.
- For patients thought to be in the last hours or short days of life for whom we are unable to offer a side room, the visiting hours for their visitors can be extended up to 24hrs but please speak to ward nursing or medical staff first. Please also be aware of the needs of other patients for rest. The visitors will be encouraged to split the 24hrs between them, but it is accepted that there may be some overlap and in some circumstances one visitor may require the support of another.

Visiting the hospice can be a difficult and emotional time for a patient's loved ones, and we appreciate that these necessary remaining restrictions during the pandemic will not always be welcomed. We will do our utmost to show care and compassion for all individuals but cannot tolerate deliberate disregard for these measures. Visitors must respect and adhere to any specific instructions given by hospice staff during their visit. Management reserves the right to refuse entry if there is reasonable assumption of risk to the patients, visitors, staff, the hospice, or wider community.

These measures will be kept under constant review against latest NHS, HOSPICE UK and government guidance and are subject to change without notice.

A letter to visitors, explaining these protocols, is included at **Appendix A**.

2. Corresponding Policies

- Security Policy (*ref: 158*)
- Policy for Door Opening Alert System (*ref: 153*)
- Policy regarding Violence and Aggression towards Rowcroft Clinical Staff (*ref: 208*)
- Policy for the Management of Pandemic Coronavirus or Influenza (*ref: 351*)

3. Procedure

- 3.1. Although there are no fixed visiting times, patients' visitors are requested to visit routinely between the hours of **11.00 am and 9.00 pm**, except in exceptional

circumstances which is at the discretion of the ward staff.

- 3.2. All visitors must enter the buildings by the front door or if agreed a direct door to the patient's room. If accessing via the front door they need to sign in the visitors' book accordingly. All visitors must ensure they sign out on leaving.
- 3.3. Main House Reception should be informed of the arrival of other visitors by either email or telephone prior to their arrival.
- 3.4. Patient visitors are only allowed in the ward area and are not permitted in non-patient areas.
- 3.5. Other visitors are to be escorted to their specific meeting place or destination by an appropriate member of staff.
- 3.6. Staff reserve the right to assess the suitability of visitors prior to entry and may refuse entry if they deem the visitor unfit or inappropriate in behavior to visit.
- 3.7. The person in charge of the Inpatient Unit or any member of staff dealing with a situation has the right to seek the removal of any visitor whose presence constitutes a risk to the safety or well-being of any patient, member of staff or volunteer.
- 3.8. Any incident involving refusal of entry or the need to request the removal of any visitor should be reported immediately to the senior nurse on-call or Executive on-call and an incident logged as soon as possible.
- 3.9. If the staff are concerned at any point for their safety or the safety of the patients and visitors, then the Police should be called without hesitation, using the emergency number, 999.
- 3.10. All incidents logged will be discussed at Health and Safety Committee and/or Quality and Patient Safety Committee as deemed most appropriate. This will help identify any further action required.



Avenue Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ2 5LS

tel: 01803 210800
fax: 01803 299842
info@rowcrofthospice.org.uk
www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk

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Dear Visitor

As we continue to work through this Coronavirus-19 pandemic and establish the best ways of protecting your loved one, you, our staff, and volunteers from the transmission of the virus, we kindly ask you to bear with us. **Most importantly we continue to ask that if you have symptoms related to COVID 19 (or other respiratory infections) that you avoid visiting the Hospice.**

Following the government's guidance relating to COVID-19 we require the following restrictions to visitors. Patients can have 2 visitors to visit at the bedside at any one time. The exception to this is for a person in their last hours/day of life or, where care delivery by a family member is required.

To prevent the spread of infection and in line with the NHS guidance we ask **all visitors to the inpatient unit to wear a medical grade face mask for the duration of their visit**, unless medically exempt. If you do not have your own face mask, we can provide you with this on arrival during signing in, please wear it for the duration of your visit. We are not restricting the length of visits, but would appreciate your help wherever possible, to allow gaps between visiting so our staff and our housekeeping teams can continue to be vigilant in infection prevention precautions.

If your loved one can receive visitors outside, they may have up to 6 visitors around the bed/chair in the garden - if they can maintain a 2-meter distance from all other people. Please abide by this policy - so we can continue to enable all patients to receive visitors and keep everyone safe.

We ask that **Children under the age of 5 visit their relative outside in the gardens** (except in exceptional circumstances - please discuss with a senior member of the clinical team). This does not include babes in arms who can be counted with the adult they accompany.

Patients' pets may visit but ideally at 2m distance to all other patients, visitors, and staff. Please discuss this with a member of the medical or nursing team prior to visiting.

If you or a family member has symptoms of the Coronavirus or other respiratory infection, we would ask you to refrain from visiting as per the Government advice.

As the pandemic evolves, we may need to adapt or adjust this guidance but will inform Visitors always should this be necessary. **We ask you to continue to practice good hand hygiene practices, wearing a face mask and social distancing where appropriate to support us in keeping everyone safe.**

If your family member needs support whilst being cared for in the hospice to use face time, skype, or zoom to assist communication with you we can help and have iPads to enable this.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Bartlett".

Victoria Bartlett, Deputy director of patient care and CQC registered manager.