



Helen McArdle Wing In-Patient Visitor Guidance

Updated September 2023

COVID-19 (please note, this guidance is subject to change with immediate effect.

As we learn to live with COVID-19, our priority remains to protect our patients, their visitors, colleagues, and volunteers from the spread of infection.

The hospice Senior Management Team meet frequently to ensure that all necessary precautions are taken. We review Public Health England Guidelines, along with our local NHS Trust policies, and we encourage you to keep up to date by visiting - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>. You can find the Government's latest guidance on protecting people previously considered extremely clinically vulnerable from COVID-19 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk>

If you have any specific questions about your personal circumstances, please contact **Willow Burn Hospice Clinical Team on 01207 523 293 before visiting.**

There are currently no restrictions on visiting patients on the In-patient Unit, however where possible, planned visits after 10.30am would be appreciated to allow patients time to wake and be prepared for visits.

All **patients admitted from hospital** will have a test before or on admission to the hospice, which will enable us to manage anyone with a positive result will not prevent an admission.

All **visitors** (including those who may be providing personal care to a hospice patient) are no longer required to test or wear facemasks. However, in consideration of our vulnerable patients Infection Control remains a priority. Individuals who are symptomatic and/or feeling unwell should not visit, even if they provide a negative COVID-19 result from a test obtained privately, are fully vaccinated and have received their booster vaccination. Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to hospice patients as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest they may have other transmissible viruses and infections, such as a cough, high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid visiting, if possible, until at least 5 days after they feel better.

Visits at the very end of life, that is, the last few days or hours of life will continue to be supported where possible in all circumstances. Infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, for example providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and allowing visitors to go directly to the patient's room without accessing any communal areas, will help reduce transmission and visiting arrangements will be agreed in line with this on a case-by-case assessment. We can adapt and assist when visiting requires to be restricted with telephone calls and virtual visits.

Hand Hygiene is most important in reducing spread of infection - please utilise the hand gel and handwashing facilities and information to support effective handwashing.

Face Masks

The current position regarding mask wearing is that mandatory mask wearing is not required for everyone, including staff unless individual circumstances dictate or is a personal choice. Should this be the case the clinical team will discuss the plan with you and your co-operation will be required in order to prevent cross infection in the hospice. Although a facemask is no longer required to be worn these will still be available along with hand gel as you enter the hospice ward and in patient areas and there may be individual circumstances where we may require or choose to wear a facemask.

If your loved one or you, are displaying symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19, please contact the in-patient unit 01207 523 293 to discuss and agree a plan.

Please consider discussing visiting with family and friends to manage visiting to only those who are particularly important to the patient.

Parking

Adjacent to the Hospice is a designated car park with Disabled Parking identified at the front. Please consider our local neighbourhood and park responsibly at busy times.

Arrival

During working hours please arrive at Reception and sign the visitors book, the Receptionist will inform the Nursing Team of your arrival and will provide access to the ward.

Out of hours or when Reception is unmanned please ring the doorbell located to the right of the door in the entrance vestibule. This will be answered by ward staff but please be patient if there is a slight delay as they may be busy providing care to patients and unable to answer immediately. Please follow instructions given by staff when they answer.

Fire

Signing the visitors book at Reception on arrival and leaving, accounts for all visitors in the event of a fire. Our fire alarms are tested weekly and staff will inform you of any tests. In the event of the alarm sounding please assemble at the fire evacuation point outside the café marked by a sign and large carved wooden owl. Please leave immediately through the patio door - we will manage the situation requesting assistance only if necessary. It is important that we are able to account for you at the assembly point.

Facilities

You are welcome to use the communal lounge to make a drink or heat snacks if you are visiting for a while. Arrangements for food will be made for visitors staying with a poorly patient. We ask that you take into account that when visiting the café facilities this is a public space which is uncontrolled regarding COVID management. The staff will be happy to place an order from the café menu while you are visiting if you wish to have your refreshments in the ward area. Please speak to a member of the team if you need any help with any practical arrangements or advice.

You may meet Joanne our Family Support Co-Ordinator who will offer practical and other support you may require.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us to maintain a safe environment for our patients,
all visitors and staff at Willow Burn.

If you would like a copy of this guidance in large print or an accessible format please speak to a member of staff.