

St. Luke's General Hospital, Carlow-Kilkenny

Policy for Visiting St. Luke's General Hospital

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Table of Contents

Page

1	POLICY STATEMENT	1
2	PURPOSE	1
3	SCOPE	1
4	LEGISLATION/ OTHER RELATED POLICIES	2
5	GLOSSARY OF TERMS/DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS	3
6	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
6.1	SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM.....	4
6.2	WARD/DEPARTMENT MANAGERS.....	4
6.3	SECURITY STAFF.....	5
6.4	ALL STAFF.....	5
6.5	VISITORS.....	5
7	PROCEDURE	7
8	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	11
9	EVALUATION AND AUDIT	12
10	REVISION HISTORY	13
11	REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
12	APPENDIX I PPPG DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEMBERSHIP	15
13	APPENDIX II PEER REVIEW OF POLICY, PROCEDURE, PROTOCOL OR GUIDELINE	16
14	APPENDIX III KEY STAKEHOLDERS REVIEW OF POLICY, PROCEDURE PROTOCOL OR GUIDELINE	17
15	APPENDIX IV SIGNATURE SHEETS	18

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the HSE Cavan & Monaghan Hospital Group Visiting Policy which guided the development of this policy.

With grateful thanks to all those involved in the previous St. Luke's General Hospital, Carlow-Kilkenny Visiting Policy and to all who provided input into this policy.

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 St. Luke's General Hospital welcomes all visitors to our hospital. Visiting is regarded as an important part of the patient's day and enhances the healing process.

However the need for privacy, rest, recovery and meaningful engagement with the multidisciplinary team also plays an important part in the patient's recovery. Therefore continuous visiting hours are not in the patient's best interest and from time to time visiting may be further restricted to further prevent and control infection.

This policy document reflects a balance between the needs of patients, their visitors, hospital staff and hospital procedures.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 To provide a safe, secure and comfortable environment for patients, staff and visitors.
- 2.2 To enhance patient confidentiality.
- 2.3 To help prevent and control the spread of infection.
- 2.4 To help the hospital to organize the delivery of treatment and care by limiting the number of visitors and visiting time.
- 2.5 To allow for rest periods and protected meal times for patients, so as to enhance the patient's recovery.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, patients and visitors, unless there is prior agreement from the Nurse Manager on duty.

4 Legislation/ Other Related Policies

- 4.1 National Visiting Policy.
- 4.2 National Healthcare Charter-Your Service Your Say.
- 4.3 Health Service Executive/South/SE Acute Hospitals Transmission Based Precautions.
- 4.4 Outbreak Policy for the Acute Hospitals in the HSE/SE Hospitals.
- 4.5 St. Luke's General Hospital Safety Statement incorporating the template Department Safety Statement.
- 4.6 HSE Tobacco Free Campus.

5 Glossary of Terms/Definitions/Abbreviations

Abbreviations

AMAU	Acute Medical Assessment Unit
ASU	Acute Stroke Unit
CCU	Coronary Care Unit
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
SCBU	Special Care Baby Unit
SLGH	St. Luke's General Hospital

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Senior Management Team

- 6.1.1 It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to provide information on visiting times and to provide clear direction to staff and visitors. Visiting times will be clearly displayed at the entrance to all wards and will be displayed on the HSE Hospital website.
- 6.1.2 It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to provide support to Ward/Department Managers in dealing with difficult/complex situations and circumstances relating to visiting.
- 6.1.3 Provide advice and communicate any required alteration to visiting times to reduce the potential spread of healthcare associated infection especially during periods of any outbreaks.
- 6.1.4 Provide advice and communicate any required alteration to visiting times during medical and other emergency situations.

6.2 Ward/Department Managers

- 6.2.1 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to ensure all staff, patients and visitors in their area of responsibility are aware of visiting times.
- 6.2.2 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to ensure that hand hygiene facilities and advice are available to all at all times.
- 6.2.3 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to make informed judgements when extenuating circumstances require exceptions to the visiting policy.

- 6.2.4 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to ensure all visitors leave the ward at the end of visiting times.
- 6.2.5 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to ensure there is a system to monitor visitor numbers and compliance with visiting times.
- 6.2.6 It is the responsibility of all Ward/Department Managers to advise security in times of breaches of the policy which cannot be addressed at a local level.

6.3 Security Staff

- 6.3.1 It is the responsibility of security staff to respond to and support staff in requesting visitors to comply with visiting times and to seek assistance from An Garda Síochána if deemed appropriate.

6.4 All Staff

- 6.4.1 It is the responsibility of all staff employed in St. Luke's General Hospital to ensure that the visiting policy is adhered to and that visiting is only permitted between the designated visiting times.

6.5 Visitors

- 6.5.1 It is all visitors' responsibility to adhere to visiting times:
14.00 –16.00 hrs & 18.30-20.30 hrs daily.
- 6.5.2 It is the responsibility of visitors to discuss visiting outside of these times with the Nurse Manager on duty.
- 6.5.3 The recommended visiting time is 20 minutes and no more than 2 people should visit a patient at any one time.
- 6.5.4 Children under the age of 12 other than the patients own children should not visit the hospital. Children must be supervised at all times while in the hospital.

Visitors are expected to:

- Adhere to the following Infection Prevention and Control advice:
 - Use hand hygiene facilities when entering and exiting the hospital wards.
 - Do not visit the hospital if you have an infection or if you feel unwell e.g. sore throat, vomiting and/or diarrhoea or flu like symptoms.
 - Do not sit/lie on beds.

- Do not bring in cooked or perishable high risk foods (excluding items such as fruit). In exceptional circumstances, certain items may be allowed with prior permission from the Nurse in charge.
- If visiting a patient in isolation, comply with isolation signage and seek advice from a member of staff before entering the room.
- Do not use toilets used by patients. Ask a member of staff for directions to the nearest public toilet.
- Consider other patients needs for rest and privacy.
- Be polite and courteous, and comply with any request to leave the patients room/bedside to facilitate care.
- Observe confidentiality-you may see or hear things of a confidential nature.
- Help keep our hospital clean and inform staff of any hygiene concerns.
- Ensure any children visiting under your responsibility are well behaved and do not leave the ward unaccompanied.
- Be responsible for the safety and security of yourself and your belongings.
- Refrain from touching dressings, drips, catheters etc..
- Always enter and exit the hospital through the designated entrance and exit doors.
- Do not access unauthorised areas e.g. Ward Kitchens.
- Do not visit under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Do not smoke on the hospital campus.
- Follow hospital car parking regulations.

7 Procedure

- 7.1 St. Luke's General Hospital, Carlow-Kilkenny, welcomes visitors. Visiting is regarded as an important part of the patient's day and enhances the healing process.
- 7.2 A patient has the right to decline visitors.
- 7.3 The need for privacy, rest, recovery and meaningful engagement with our multidisciplinary staff means that continuous visiting hours are not in the patient's interests and, from time to time, visiting may be restricted as part of the patient's care plan.
- 7.4 Visiting is permitted at the following times: 14.00 – 16.00 & 18.30-20.30 hrs daily. Visiting is not permitted outside of these hours.
- 7.5 Recommended visiting time is no more than 20 minutes, and no more than two persons should visit a patient at any one time.
- 7.6 Children under the age of 12 years should not visit the hospital, other than the patient's own children. Children must be supervised at all times in the hospital.
- 7.7 Any staff member can request that visitors leave if the number present or the length of the visit is deemed excessive.
- 7.8 For infection prevention and control purposes, visitors are asked to use the hand hygiene dispensers at the ward entrances and to refrain from sitting or lying on beds. In instances where patients are isolated, visitors must seek advice from nursing staff regarding specific precautions to be taken.
- 7.9 Relatives and friends are requested not to visit if they have sore throats, flu, vomiting and/or diarrhoea or other infections, because of the risk of introducing infection to the ward.
- 7.10 Visiting restrictions during an outbreak of infection:
 - Visiting may be restricted or temporarily suspended in exceptional circumstances e.g. during outbreaks of

infectious diseases such as Norovirus (Winter Vomiting Bug) etc.

- Visitors are reminded that it is for the well being of patients, staff and visitors that such restrictions to normal visiting arrangements are implemented, often at short notice, and all requests by security staff should be complied with.
- Children should, where possible, not visit during an outbreak.
- Visitors who are ill themselves should not visit the hospital.
- In certain circumstances e.g. if a patient is critically ill, close family members will be allowed to visit with prior approval from the Ward/Department manager or nurse in charge.
- All local media will be utilised to communicate and update members of the public regarding visitor restrictions during an outbreak of infection.

7.11 Visiting may also be restricted in medical or emergency situations.

7.12 Visitors under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will not be permitted onto the wards.

7.13 Visitors must not bring alcohol or illegal substances to patients.

7.14 Visitors should adhere to the mobile phone use signage throughout the hospital.

7.15 All flowers must be enclosed in water tight containers as vases are not provided. Flowers are not allowed in critical care areas, for example, ICU and CCU and in some isolation rooms/Wards.

7.16 The bringing into wards of non-hospital cooked or perishable high risk foods (excluding items such as fruit) for patients is not allowed, e.g., take away foods, cream cakes, soft cheeses, dairy products, meat, eggs, fish, pates, cook-chill and frozen meals (this list is not exhaustive). In exceptional circumstances, certain items may be allowed with prior permission from the Nurse in charge.

7.17 Visitors are asked not use toilets used by patients. Ask a member of staff for directions to the nearest public toilet.

- 7.18 Visitors should contact the reception on arrival to ascertain the location of the patient they wish to visit to reduce inquiries in several different wards.
- 7.19 Visitors are asked to be courteous towards staff at all times, especially if asked to leave the ward. Acts of aggression or violence by visitors will not be tolerated and will be reported onward to An Garda Siochana.
- 7.20 Visitors are obliged to use the designated Visitors' Car Park. Failure to do so could lead to clamping. The Visitors' Car Parking facility is there to provide safe parking for visitors and also to keep access roads around the hospital free of parked vehicles which can cause obstruction in times of emergency. Visitors are asked to comply with all instructions in relation to parking while on the hospital site and may be asked to leave should they fail to do so.

Exceptions to the above:

- 7.21 Visiting hours may be extended for compassionate reasons or where relatives assist with patient care or to facilitate consultative, educational or treatment sessions with family members and staff. In these circumstances, visitors will be advised of canteen facilities by the nurse in charge. The Zen Café is open Monday to Friday 8 am to 20.00 hrs daily, Saturdays 10am –18.00 hrs, Sundays & Bank Holidays 10am-18.00 hrs. Vending machines are also available in the Radiology and Emergency Departments.
- 7.22 Acute Medical Assessment Unit (AMAU) & Emergency Department (ED) Visitors should note that these are restricted areas and permission must be sought to enter the units. Due to space restrictions, a maximum of one person may attend with a patient in AMAU and ED. If patients are admitted to ward areas during the night, visitors are asked not to accompany them, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.23 Acute Stroke Unit (ASU) – Visiting is restricted to immediate family members for short periods, with a maximum of two people at any one time. In the interest of patient safety, recovery and rest, visiting times are 14.30-16.30 and 18.00-20.00. Visitors who are travelling from a distance should contact the unit to confirm visiting times.
- 7.24 Coronary Care Unit – Visiting is restricted to immediate family members for short periods, with a maximum of two people at

any one time. All visitors should report to staff on arrival via the intercom system and await a reply before entering the unit. No visiting is permitted during the rest period (13.00-15.00) unless in exceptional circumstances.

7.25 Intensive Care Unit – Visiting is restricted to immediate family members for short periods, with a maximum of two people at any one time. All visitors should report to staff on arrival via the intercom system and await a reply before entering the unit. All visiting may be restricted at any time on the Medical Team’s advice, for example, during procedures/resuscitation or rounds being performed. No visiting is permitted during the rest period (13.00-15.00), unless in exceptional circumstances.

7.26 Maternity Department – One agreed birth partner may remain with the woman in the Labour Ward. The woman’s partner may remain with her outside of the normal visiting hours, between 11 am and 21.30, strictly no other visitors from 16.00-17.00 as this is a rest period for Mother and Baby. Only two visitors are permitted at any one time. Visitors are asked to cooperate by giving their places to those who arrive later.

7.27 Paediatric Unit – General visiting guidelines apply to the Paediatric Unit, 14.00-16.00 & 18.30-20.30 daily. Children under 12 years, other than the patient’s brothers or sisters, should not be brought into the unit. Siblings should be supervised by adults at all times. Parents or guardians can visit outside of visiting hours. One parent or guardian may stay overnight with the child. These arrangements may be altered in very specific cases.

7.28 Special Care Baby Unit – Only parents and grandparents may visit the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). A maximum of two visitors per baby will be allowed at any one time. A brother or sister over two years of age may visit if appropriate, especially if the baby will be in the SCBU for some time. However, no child should visit if they have had a recent infection. These arrangements may be altered in very specific cases.

8 Implementation Plan

- 8.1 St. Luke's General Hospital Deputy General Manager, Quality Office, Patient Liaison Officer and Head of Porter/Security will provide the local governance structure to support the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 The policy will be circulated in electronic format to the General Manager, Director of Nursing & Midwifery Services, Clinical Director, Medical Consultants, Senior Nurse Management Team, Bed Managers, Clinical Nurse Managers 3, 2 & 1 in all departments, Health & Social Care Professionals Department Heads, Support Services Department Heads and Clinical Risk Manager.
- 8.3 The policy will be made available on St. Luke's General Hospital intranet and internet site.
- 8.4 It is the responsibility of all Managers to ensure that all staff within their area of responsibility read and adhere to this policy.
- 8.5 Ultimately it is the responsibility of each staff member to read the policy and sign off that they have read and understood its contents.

9 Evaluation and Audit

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed according to the revision date or earlier if required.
- 9.2 This policy will be evaluated and audited intermittently at local level.

10 Revision History

Date	Review Number	Section Number	Change/s
Jan 2019	4		

11 References/Bibliography

The authors reviewed a number of Visiting Policies from other hospitals while compiling this policy, along with the HSE National Visiting Policy.

12 Appendix I PPPG Development Group Membership

Declan Kelly, General Services Manager

Signature: Declan Kelly

Ms. Mary Corcoran
A/Quality & Safety Office

Signature: Mary Corcoran
Date: 19-3-2020

Ms. Alison Mulloney
Patient Liaison Officer

Signature: Alison Mulloney
Date: 19/3/20

Mr. Paul Murphy
Portering/Security Services Manager

Signature: Paul Murphy
Date: 19/03/2020

13 Appendix II Peer Review of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline

Reviewer: The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation is circulated to a peer review (internal or external). You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have reviewed and agree the content and approve the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline for use within the organisation:

Policy for Visiting St. Luke's General Hospital

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document and agree the content
- I approve the Policy Procedure, Protocol or Guideline for implementation

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Ms. Joan Campion
Patient Partnership Forum

Please return this completed form to:

Ms. Mary Corcoran
A/Quality & Safety office

(To be attached to master Copy when completed)

Policy for Visiting St. Luke's General Hospital Document Reference No: SLGH GEN 004 Revision No: 4 Approval Date: March 2020

14 Appendix III Key Stakeholders Review of Policy, Procedure Protocol or Guideline

Reviewer: The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation is circulated to Managers of Employees who have a stake in the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have reviewed and agreed the content and approve of the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline for use within the organisation

Policy for Visiting St. Luke's General Hospital

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document and agree the content
- I approve the Policy Procedure, Protocol or Guideline for implementation

Signature: Helen Butler Date: 19/3/20
Helen Butler
A/Director of Nursing

Signature: Ms. Anne Slattery Date: 19/3/20
Ms. Anne Slattery
General Manager

Signature: Garry Courtney Date: 19.3.20
Professor Garry Courtney
Clinical Director

Please return this completed form to:

Ms. Mary Corcoran
A/Quality & Safety Office
St. Luke's General Hospital
Kilkenny

(To be attached to master Copy when completed)

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