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<th>Document Approved By</th>
<th>Responsibility For Implementation</th>
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<td>VP001</td>
<td>Mairead Richardson, CNM III, Sinead Finucane, A/General Service Manager, Bernadette Nolan, A/CNM III</td>
<td>G Shaw, Director of Nursing, Mark Sparling, A/General Manager, Dr Anton Dempsey, Clinical Director</td>
<td>Nurse Manager, Security Staff, Reception Staff</td>
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<td>Responsibility For Monitoring And Audit</td>
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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Mid Western Regional Hospital welcomes visitors. Visiting time is regarded as an important part of the patient’s day. However, the welfare of the patients must always be taken into consideration and certain restrictions may be imposed on visiting if the patient is likely to become unduly upset or tired.
The need for privacy and the potential for the spread of infection means that continuous visiting hours are not in the patients best interest, and from time to time visiting may be further restricted to prevent and control infection.
The Health Service Executive (HSE) Mid Western Regional Hospital has developed this Visiting Policy which is complimentary to and in line with the HSE National Visiting Guidance to protect our patients, their families and friends, and our staff.

2.0 PURPOSE

➢ To maintain a safe, secure and comfortable environment for patients and staff.
➢ To enhance patient dignity and confidentiality.
➢ To help the hospital to organise the delivery of treatment and care by limiting the timing and numbers of visitors.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Nurse Manager – Most Senior Nurse on duty on the relevant ward/unit on the day.

4.0 SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy refers to visiting arrangements in the Mid Western Regional Hospital, Limerick, HSE West.

This policy document should apply to all patients and visitors unless there is prior agreement from the Nurse Manager on duty.

Visitors of seriously ill patients and carers who are participating in the care of a patient will be dealt with sympathetically.

5.0 PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES

5.1 Visiting in General Ward Areas – (as per guideline)

A patient has the right to decline visitors

• Visiting is permitted at the following times:
  14.00 – 16.00hrs
  18.30 – 20.30hrs daily

• Recommended visiting time is twenty minutes, and no more than two persons should visit a patient at any one time.
- As a courtesy visitors must adhere to hospital restrictions on use of mobile phones.
- Ward entrance doors shall remain closed outside of visiting hours. A ward patrol will be conducted after visiting time has expired by Hospital Security to ensure the hospital's policy is adhered to.
- Hospital Policies are in place to allow the hospital provide the best possible care to our patients.
- Children under 12 years other than the patient's own children should not be brought to visit. By prior arrangements with the ward manager children may visit the ward and must be under the supervision of an adult at all times while in the hospital.
- Visiting hours may be extended for compassionate reasons or where relatives assist with patient care or to facilitate educational sessions with family members and staff.
- The Nurse Manager can request that visitors leave if the number of visitors present or the length of the visit is deemed excessive.
- Additional restrictions will apply during outbreaks of infectious diseases.
- All exceptions and restrictions are at the discretion of nursing staff on duty.
- 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.

5.2 Emergency Department
- Due to space restrictions within the Emergency Department a maximum of two persons may attend with a patient, subject to limitations imposed by staff.
- Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at all times.

5.3 Outpatients Department
- Due to space restrictions a maximum of one person may attend with a patient in OPD department, subject to limitations imposed by staff.
- Children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian at all times.
- In case of admissions to ward, patient should be accompanied by one person.

5.4 Intensive Care Unit, Coronary Care Unit & High Dependency Unit
- As many patients are seriously ill, visiting is restricted to immediate family members for short periods of time only, a maximum of two people should be present at any one time (local guidelines exist to guide families and staff in determining whether siblings should visit).
- All visitors are required to use the intercom/buzzer and await a reply before entering these units.
- Visitors may be requested to leave the unit during procedures. If so please be sensitive to the needs of patients, medical and nursing staff.
- Please be aware that some of these units have mandatory rest periods. Discuss same with Nurse Manager.
- Visitors may be asked to use protective clothing when entering this area.

5.5 Paediatric Unit

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General ward visiting guidance applies to children’s wards
Children under 12 years other than the patient’s own siblings should not be brought to visit. Siblings must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times
Parents /guardians may visit from 8.30am –9.00pm daily.
One parent / guardian may stay overnight with the child.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Visitors’ Responsibilities
As a visitor to our hospital we ask you to respect and follow this Visiting Policy, which applies to both public and private patients

Please:
- Use hand hygiene facilities when entering and exiting hospital wards.
- Consider other patients’ needs for rest and privacy.
- Have consideration for staff doing their job.
- Be polite and courteous, and comply with any request to leave the patient’s room.
- Observe patient confidentiality and dignity – you may see or hear things of a private and confidential nature.
- Stay away if you might be an infection risk to others or if you feel unwell yourself.
- Help keep our hospital clean and inform staff of any cleaning concerns.
- Ensure visiting children are well behaved, accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times.
- Be responsible for the safety and security of your own belongings.
- Comply with isolation policies and signage, especially if visiting multiple patients. When visiting an isolated patient this patient should be the last person visited rather than the first due to possible spread of infection.
- Refrain from touching dressings, drips, catheters etc.
- Always enter and exit the hospital through the main entrance doors or as specified.
- Follow hospital restrictions on the use of mobile phones.
- Do not sit/lie on beds.
- Do not bring in food/beverages for patients without prior consultation with Nurse Manager.
- Do not access unauthorised areas, e.g. Ward Kitchens.
- Follow hospital car parking regulations.
- Do not visit while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Flowers are not permitted in this hospital.

NOTE:
Please help to provide the world class service you deserve by letting us know your comments and complaints. There are a number of ways that you can make a comment or complaint.

Talk to a member of staff
Call 1850 24 1850
Fill out the form attached to the ‘Your service Your say’ leaflets

Email yoursay@hse.ie
visit www.hse.ie

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7.0 MONITORING

Compliance with the Policy will be monitored by Nurse Managers, Security Staff and Assistant Director of Nursing.

8.0 AUDIT

We will audit this policy by use of questionnaires (Appendix 1.1). One question will be added to the patients satisfactory survey. (Appendix 1.2) We will audit the level of complaints from 'Your service Your say' in relation to visiting time/arrangements.

9.0 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

References
1.1 HSE National Visiting Policy 19/06/06 - National Hospital Offices, Quality, Risk and Customer Care.

1.2 Patient Visiting Policy of Mid-Western Regional Hospital, November 2004.

1.3 Visiting arrangements @ St Vincents University Hospital, December 2008.

1.4 Your service Your say

10.0 APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

AUDIT TOOL

STANDARD STATEMENT

All Visitors are asked to visit the Mid Western Regional Hospital from 14.00 – 16.00 and 18.30 – 20.30 and observe visiting guidelines in each Ward/Department.

1. All Hospital employees are aware of the Patient Visiting Policy and local visiting guidelines in their area.

   YES  NO

2. Visitors are aware of the hospital policy and local guidelines for patient visiting.

   YES  NO

3. Patients and Visitors are aware of the procedure to review their visiting arrangements.

   YES  NO

4. All visitors apart from the 'identified visitors' leave when visiting time is over.

   YES  NO

5. Visiting times are clearly identified at Main Reception at each floor level on entry to ward unit and observation areas.

   YES  NO
Signature Sheet:

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the attached Policy

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