

# COVID-19: REGIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR VISITING IN CARE SETTINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

(REVISED FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE DECISION of 21.09.20)

***Anyone showing or experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 or any other infection should not visit, even if these symptoms are mild and unconfirmed. In these circumstances the individual should remain at home and follow the latest public health advice on self-isolation and testing***

***All people visiting/attending Health and Social Care Settings will be required to wear face coverings for the foreseeable future. Children under the age of 13 are exempt from wearing a face covering***

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

Date of Publication: 22 September 2020

Date of Implementation 23 September 2020

***This table outlines the restrictions which apply in line with current Regional Surge Level Position – we are currently at Level 4, but this is subject to change depending on the prevalent rate of transmission and will be reviewed frequently.***

***Local outbreaks in HSC Trust areas and Care Homes may occur which will require an additional specific local response.***

Surge Level	Level 4 - A high or rising level of transmission - enforced social distancing
Area Of Care	Visiting and accompanying of visitors will be limited as follows
<b>General Hospital (including ICU)</b>	<p>Only one family member or carer to be permitted access to visit, for up to one hour, once a week</p> <p>Where the person visiting requires assistance and is accompanied by a carer and this can be accommodated within social distancing guidance then a second person may be admitted (prior arrangement with ward staff is essential).</p>
<b>Hospice Facilities</b>	<p>One family member or carer to be permitted access to visit where the environment is COVID secure.(* see definition) for up to one hour daily</p> <p>Where the person visiting requires assistance and is accompanied by a carer and this can be accommodated within social distancing guidance then a second person may be admitted (prior arrangement with ward staff is essential).</p>
<b>Emergency Departments</b>	<p>One person only to accompany the patient where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.</p>
<b>Out Patient Departments</b>	<p>Where necessary for the patient to attend face to face appointment only one person to accompany where patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.</p>
<b>Paediatric/neonatal hospital settings</b>	<p><b>Neonatal unit:</b> One of two nominated parents/caregivers can be accommodated at any given time</p> <p><b>Paediatrics</b> - Any child admitted can be accompanied by one of two nominated parents/caregivers at any given time for the duration of the stay</p>
<b>X Ray Departments</b>	<p>One person only to accompany the patient where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.</p>

<b>Cancer/Burns/Renal Units</b>	<p>One visitor to be permitted to visit where the environment is COVID-19 secure (* <b>see definition</b>) for up to one hour per week.</p> <p>Where the person visiting requires assistance and is accompanied by a carer and this can be accommodated within social distancing guidance then a second person may be admitted (prior arrangement with ward staff is essential).</p>
<b>Day Procedure Units</b>	<p>One person only to accompany the patient where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.</p>
<b>Care Homes</b>	<p>Indoor visiting in residents' rooms – one person for one hour once weekly will be permitted where this can be accommodated within social distancing. This does not apply to care partner arrangements.</p> <p>Alternatives in line with Care Homes' visiting policies, e.g. outdoor visiting, virtual visits, designated visiting rooms etc. should be provided.</p>
<b>Maternity Units</b>	<p>Birth partner will be facilitated to accompany the pregnant woman to dating scan, early pregnancy clinic, anomaly scan, Fetal Medicine Department, when admitted to individual room for active labour (to be determined by midwife) and birth and, to visit in antenatal and postnatal wards for up to one hour once a week.</p>
<b>Mental Health Wards</b>	<p>One person to visit for up to one hour once a week, or more where deemed necessary to support the mental health and wellbeing of the patient.</p> <p>Alternatives in line with visiting policies, e.g. outdoor visiting, virtual visits, designated visiting rooms etc.</p>
<b>Learning Disability Wards</b>	<p>One person to visit for up to one hour once a week, or more where deemed necessary to support the mental health and wellbeing of the patient.</p> <p>Alternatives in line with visiting policies, e.g. outdoor visiting, virtual visits, designated visiting rooms etc.</p>

**\*COVID-19 Secure:** To maintain

- a social distance of 2 metres when possible
- Optimal hand hygiene and personal hygiene measures
- Good ventilation
- Use of PPE when required
- Face Coverings