



Visiting our wards during Covid-19 Pandemic

20th April 2020

Dear Visitor

Re: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

As you will be aware, we are currently experiencing a Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. You will understand we are trying to ensure we reduce the risk of our patients, their families and staff contracting the virus and we are endeavouring to ensure that patients remain safe in our care.

Following government advice, we have now reached the isolation phase of our contingency plan and we are putting into action measures to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus. It is with regret that we now need to ensure social distancing measures are in place. We ask you to support us in the difficult implementation of these measures to reduce the risk to all.

The actions we are taking are as follows –

- Families/carers should no longer visit their relative who is in our inpatient care in person. Alternative ways of being in touch are available, please ask us for details.
- We recognise that leave, (time off the ward, also known as Section 17 leave), is an important part of recovery. Ordinarily, leave would be approved by your family member's doctor, in consultation with other staff. We will continue to look at arranging leave however please be aware that social distancing and staff availability will mean that it may not be possible. We are sure that you will understand this is so we can keep your family member and our staff safe.

These measures are to be taken immediately, for the safety of everyone and will remain in place until further notice.

We fully understand that these actions are distressing for you and for your family member who is with us. We will do everything we can to ensure patients can maintain phone contact and we now have a range of other technological solutions in place that

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support maintaining contact. We are explaining all these measures to our patients and will provide relevant support to all of them. When there are very exceptional circumstances, the situation should be discussed on an individual basis with the medical and nursing team looking after the patient.

Please be assured that if your family member becomes physically unwell, we will talk to you immediately about how their care will be organised and we will keep you updated, with the consent of your family member. If we have any concerns that the illness is serious or that there is a risk it may become so, there are special arrangements so that one person will be able to visit each day. We will provide you with a mask, gloves and an apron and help you to use these. We understand it will feel odd to be wearing these things whilst you are visiting however we are sure you will want to help us keep you and your family member safe. If you have any concerns, please talk to your family member's care team by telephone first.

You can also contact our Family Support Service:
by email at bsmhft.family.support@nhs.net (please note the two full stops)
or by telephone on **0800 954 0045**

Our current opening hours are **Monday – Friday 08:00 – 16:00**, however we expect to be able to increase these hours in the next few weeks. If we are not able to answer your call, please do leave us a message and be sure to include your name and the telephone number you would like us to use to contact you.

We thank you for your support at this difficult time and assure you that we have all the necessary effective infection control procedures in place for the safety of your family member, you and our staff.

Thank you for your support.

Kind Regards