

Barchester Healthcare Ltd,
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Date: 12 January 2022

Dear patients and relatives

Visiting protocols from 12th January 2022

Happy New year from all of us.

We are wanting to update you on our latest thinking regarding visiting. As we promised we have been constantly reviewing the data, both our own in terms of our patients and staff, as well as Government data and what is happening in the wider community, and I am writing to let you know that we will be relaxing our visiting protocols, with the hope and plan being that this will go even further in the next couple of weeks.

We are very thankful for all your support over the last few weeks as we introduced restrictions on visiting, and whilst a large number of our patients and relatives have been aligned to our decision, we know that it has been a difficult time. We are pleased to see that whilst COVID case numbers in the community are still high, they are now starting to reduce. Because we took a more cautious approach we have been able to keep more of our services across Barchester Healthcare COVID free for longer, allowing both patients to keep healthy and well, and staff to continue caring for them, although we also appreciate that there are now a number of our hospitals that are closed to all but essential visits due to Public Health, and we hope that this will be for a limited period only.

In terms of our visiting protocols going forward we are moving to the approach we took for those 3 important days of Christmas which is outlined below:

1. Returning to visiting indoors for two named visitors to enable those closest to the patient to be welcomed to into the hospital to visit in the designated visiting area. We continue to ask that those visiting indoors are fully vaccinated including the booster dose, where eligible, and show proof of this.
2. We also ask that before entry to visit indoors, proof of a negative LFD test is shown, ideally taken at home before you attend for your visit.
3. We continue to balance the wellbeing of our patients wanting to see their family and friends outside of the hospital on a day out or something similar, with the risk of COVID-19. If this is something that you think is important to do or is part of a support plan, we will complete a robust Risk Assessment and discuss with you and the patient what is possible. There are certain types of activity where the risks may be higher and the advice is that, in these cases, the patient should self-isolate for 14 days on their return as well as take an LFD test every second day for 10 days following the trip out.



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4. Our visiting suite, continues to be available to individuals who are not fully vaccinated, and any others that are not named visitors, who can visit anytime, if they are booked in and there is no limit on the total number of visitors in the suite.
5. As always video calls will be supported, which we know is not the same, but many of you see as a good alternative.

All visiting options should be booked via our visitor booking system on our website, which we know many of you are very familiar with. Sadly, if there are any recent cases of Covid-19, visiting may be further restricted and will usually mean that visiting indoors needs to be postponed visit due to Public Health advice.

As is always the case please be assured that we will keep this decision under review during this time and we are hopeful that if the trend continues we will be in a position to open up even more to visiting, but as I'm sure you are aware COVID is still very prevalent in our lives and we believe we need to continue with a slightly more cautious approach.

As always we appreciate that there may be individual circumstances that mean we need to be flexible, and we will always try to support and do the right thing in those few cases and visiting options will be risk assessed where this is needed.

If you do have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me with your queries and concerns, or your gratitude and thanks, and we will continue to do our best to respond as quickly as we can. You can do this through myself or through our team at feedback@barchester.com. Our only ask is that you do this with kindness and courtesy to the teams that are doing their very best to help, and we know you will.

Sending my very best wishes to you and your families and wishing you all a Happy New Year.

