

SCDHB COVID 19 Visitor Policy

Purpose

- To protect staff and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic
- To ensure a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff at all times
- To ensure enactment of health and disability commission Code of Rights; Right to support.

Scope

All patients, their visitors, contractors and staff at SCDHB

Definitions

Patient: For the purpose of this policy, the term patient has been used to include the following terms: consumer, client, resident, customer, tangata whaiora or person receiving care from SCDHB

Patient's Visitor: Any person who visits SCDHB sites and has a close relationship with a patient.

Support Person: A person/s who is nominated by the patient to be present during discussions/procedures/treatment. Personal representation, see informed consent.

High Risk Area: Emergency Department (ED), Intensive Care / Monitored Care unit, Assessment (ICU/MCU), Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit (AT&R), Maternity ward, Neonatal unit, Oncology services (including chemotherapy areas), Talbot Park Dementia unit, and other outpatient areas that have high risk patients.

Staff Expectations

- Be aware of this policy and elicit outcomes across service
- Escalate visitor policy concerns to the IMT structure

Visitor Expectations

- Respect staff requests to initiate the COVID-19 Visitors Policy
- Respect staff and patients by refraining from any disruptive offensive behaviour or verbal abuse
- Maintain infection control principles as instructed.

Guiding Principles

There is an expectation that:

- all staff will maintain respectful communication with families/whanau, treating each person with respect and dignity
- partnership with families /whanau regarding this policy is required
- all staff will work to ensure cultural aspects of care are considered and actioned where appropriate
- Whanau liaison increases as the response level increases
- Alternative means of communication are encouraged and enabled (particularly digitally)
- workplaces will minimise the number of access points into their facility

Policy

This policy will be implemented with alignment with the organisations current status against the national hospital, and community response framework.

At the initiation of this policy all visitors / patients / contractors will enter the facility through the identified facility **single point of entry** (or CAT entry for COVID suspected/probable/confirmed patients if operational)

All visitors and contractors will be required to register their contact tracing via the QR code at the point of entrance to the facility, and register their details in the facility contact register.

This information will be used for the sole purpose of contact tracing should a patient, staff or visitor develop COVID-19.

The following visitor scenarios apply to all stages of the visitor response framework:

- **Visitors**, including those accompanying patients is limited to those residing in the patient’s household; however, consideration is required for those who live alone, or have limited access to support networks.
- **Visitors meeting the current COVID-19 case definition must not visit.** Staff should ask them to leave the facility, and seek advice from Healthline or their general practice.
- **Visitors in- self isolation** (due to overseas travel; close contact; COVID suspected or COVID probable or positive): are not permitted to visit until their self-isolation period has concluded as advised by CPH.
- **Suspected COVID-19 Visitors:** No visits will be allowed for suspected COVID-19 patients until diagnosis is made. If there is a high index of suspicion and test are negative, no visiting will still apply.
- **Confirmed or Probable COVID-19 Visitors:** No visitors allowed.
- **Exceptions:** Visiting patients who have been admitted with COVID-19 is permitted at the discretion of the CNM/DNM or SMO who is managing the patient for compassionate reasons only. In such case, staff facilitation of PPE processes must be adhered to, and minimisation of any risk of avoidable transmission must occur. Other methods of communicating with a patient with COVID-19 should be facilitated where possible, such as zoom or video conference.
- **NZ COVID-19 Alert Level:** Note, the Government COVID-19 alert level may trump the local triggers. For example, if the nation is at alert level 4, we will be at RED alert of this visitor’s policy. There will be a balance of our local triggers, and the national levels to guide the alert level of this policy.
The visitor’s policy alert level will be set through the COVID-19 IMT structure.

National Alert Level 1	National Alert Level 2	National Alert Level 3	National Alert Level 4
Use local Triggers outlined in policy	Use Local Triggers outlined in policy	Default to Visitor Alert Orange	Default to Visitor Alert RED

Readiness Phase (GREEN) Alert Level 1

Trigger: No COVID-19 Positive Patients in your hospital; no cases in your community; managing service delivery as usual with only staffing and facility impact being training and readiness purposes

Protect our vulnerable people by limiting the number of people coming into facilities (Timaru Hospital, Kensington and Talbot Park). The following actions occur:

- Limit visitor hours strictly to **1400 – 2000hrs** (1200-1800 Watlington Wing, Talbot Park)
- Visitors with no suspicion of COVID-19 will be able to enter, **a maximum of two visitors at any one time** may visit a patient
- Visitors with known COVID-19 contact or related symptoms will not be granted access and will be directed to ring Healthline or their primary care provider.
- Visitors completing self-isolation related to returned travel, awaiting swab results or contact tracing are not to visit until the self-isolation requirement is completed.
- No visitor or staff member should enter the hospital if they have cold or flu like symptoms (either tested negative COVID-19 or unrelated), they need to stay at home
- All visitors are required to use hand hygiene prior and after visiting patients and hospital facilities
- All visitors to be given instructions on infection control principles.
- All patients encouraged to bring their own mobile phone, laptop, and given the details for access to wifi.
- Limit entries into the facility to ONE entrance.
- No visitors under the age of 16 years unless deemed appropriate.
- Implement floor markings indicating a 2-metre boundary at reception / administration desks, with 1.5m foot marks or equivalent for visitors to line up on if waiting, indicating appropriate social distancing.
- Café, chapel and whanau rooms remain open with signage and information on social distancing.
- Large family/Whanau groups are not to occur within any environment.
- No pets

Additional Service Specific instructions include:

Jean Todd Maternity

- For maternity services where there is no suspicion of COVID-19 for either the patient or the visitors up to two visitors (one partner and one birthing partner) can accompany patients into the birthing suite
- Boarders must remain in patient room, and limit movement around the hospital facility.

All Outpatients Appointment (including mental health, radiology, medlab)

- ONE support person per visit

ICU/CCU

- One Visitor at a time for ONE visit per day

Emergency Department

- ONE support person ONLY to support people presenting to ED

Day Patient Services

- ONE named support person per patient, those receiving chemotherapy to be placed at geographic distance from theatre flow.

Paediatrics

- Parent or caregiver will be considered as 'one with the admitted patient'.

Neo-Natal Unit

- Parent visiting only. No children under 16 years.

Watlington Wing, Talbot Park

- One Visitor at a time for one visit per day as per national MOH guidance

Initial Impact “Keep it out” Phase (YELLOW) Alert Level 2

Trigger: One or more COVID-19 positive patients in your hospital; cases quarantined in your community; isolation capacity and ICU capacity manageable; some staff absence and some staff redeployment to support response and manage key gaps.

Risk to our vulnerable people is rising. The following actions are to occur in addition to Alert Level 1:

- Café and whanau rooms are closed to public.
- Large family/Whanau groups may only occur via telephone or Video Conferencing.

“Stamp it out” Moderate Impact Phase (ORANGE) Alert Level 3

Trigger: One or more COVID-19 positive patients in your hospital; community transmission/multiple clusters in your community; isolation capacity and ICU capacity impacted; significant staff absence, extensive staff redeployment, gaps not being covered

Risk to Vulnerable people is high. The following actions occur in addition to those outlined in Alert level 1 & 2:

- Limit all inpatient wards and services to a maximum of ONE visitor at a time from the patients extended bubble, for ONE visit per day.
- No non-essential visitors

Jean Todd Maternity

- Expectant mothers in the birthing suite will be allowed two support partners from their extended bubble

Watlington Wing, Talbot Park

- Visiting is restricted to family visits only for palliative care residents, discussed on a case by case basis. There will be no general family visits. This is in alignment with aged residential care national guidelines.

“Manage It” Severe Impact Phase (RED) Alert Level 4

Trigger: One or more COVID-19 positive patients in your hospital; community transmission/widespread outbreaks in your community; isolation capacity, ICU capacity at capacity; all available staff redeployed to critical care. National Alert Level 3&4

Risk to vulnerable people is considered VERY high. Following actions occur:

- No visitors in any area.
- No visitors in ED
- ONE named parent/legal guardian who has been screened support in paediatrics and neo-natal services.
- Maternity services: One named birthing partner from their bubble for duration of birth, and two hours after.

References:

Ministry of Health [MOH]. (2020). All District Health Boards; Visitor Guidance. Released 24 March 2020.

Ministry of Health [MOH]. (2020). Health and Disability services at Alert Level 3. Released 20 April 2020