

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

(REVISED 13 January 2021)

***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)

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***This table outlines the restrictions which apply in line with Regional Alert Level Position – currently at Alert Level 5 - this is subject to change and will be reviewed frequently. This summary MUST be read alongside the full guidance applicable in each setting.***

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

Alert Level	Level 5 - A material risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed - extremely strict social distancing
Area Of Care	Visiting and accompanying of visitors will be limited as follows
<b>General Hospital (including ICU)</b>	No face to face visiting – however following a risk assessment, and ensuring a COVID free environment, end of life visiting <b>only</b> may be considered.
<b>Hospice Facilities</b>	One friend, family member or carer may be permitted access to visit - where the environment is assessed as COVID secure (* see definition) - for up to one hour per day. Additionally, following a risk assessment and ensuring a COVID free environment, end of life visiting should be facilitated.
<b>Emergency Departments</b>	One person can be facilitated to accompany the patient <b>only</b> where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
<b>Out Patient Departments</b>	While it is likely that most OPD appointments will be cancelled, one person can be facilitated to accompany the patient <b>only</b> where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
<b>Paediatric/neonatal hospital settings</b>	Any child admitted can be accompanied by one of two nominated parents / caregivers at any given time for the duration of the stay.
<b>X Ray Departments</b>	One person can be facilitated to accompany the patient <b>only</b> where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.

<b>Cancer/Burns/Renal Units</b>	End of Life Visiting only.
<b>Day Procedure Units</b>	One person can be facilitated to accompany the patient <b>only</b> where the patient is unable to understand or communicate with staff.
<b>Care Homes</b>	Indoor visiting in resident rooms for end of life visiting. Where the home is not in an outbreak, visiting should be facilitated where there are well ventilated designated rooms/visiting pods. Alternatives to face-to-face visiting for all others should be provided ( <i>see main guidance - Appendix 5 Section 3</i> )
<b>Maternity Units</b>	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.
<b>Mental Health Wards</b>	One person to visit <b>only</b> where it is deemed necessary to support the mental health and wellbeing of the patient. Alternatives to face-to-face visiting for all others
<b>Learning Disability Wards</b>	One person to visit <b>only</b> where it is deemed necessary to support the mental health and wellbeing of the patient. . Alternatives to face-to-face visiting for all others

**\*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