



# Hospice visiting restrictions during COVID-19

Version 1.0

Updated 9/04/2020

We welcome your comments on this leaflet and the services we provide. You'll find comment boxes at reception, on the wards, in the Iona Café and in Day Therapies.

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Keep in touch with us online for our latest news:  
[stcolumbashospice.org.uk](http://stcolumbashospice.org.uk)

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# St Columbas Hospice Care – COVID-19 visiting restrictions

At St Columba's Hospice, the health and wellbeing of our community is always our number one priority and as a result of Covid-19 the hospice have implemented some safeguards. Please see our website for a full list of these.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I CAN'T VISIT SOMEONE IN THE HOSPICE?

The health and wellbeing of our community is always our number one priority, from our patients and their families, to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers. Because of this, we have had to make the very difficult decision to limit visits to the inpatient unit to two named visitors per patient and to stop visits from children under 12 years old.

We know that it can be very upsetting to be unable to visit someone who may be in their last days or weeks of life. We are truly very sorry that families find themselves in this difficult situation. If you are unable to visit in person there are some alternatives you might want to consider:

Ask whether you can speak to the person by phone. They may have their own phone with them in the hospice. Even if the person can't speak, they may still be able to hear your voice.

Consider making videocalls if you are able, so that the person can see your face. Try using FaceTime, Skype or Zoom on a phone or tablet to stay connected. Marco Polo is an app that lets you send video messages back and forward in the same way as you would if you were texting. This means the person can watch your video and reply when they are ready. If you're not too confident about using videocalls, ask someone if they can help you.

Check how the person is doing – stay informed. You could perhaps ask the people who are able to visit if they are able to keep you updated. It might be worth considering setting up an email or WhatsApp group, so that people who are visiting can update all the relevant people at once, rather than having to send multiple messages at what may be a very difficult time for them too.

Find out what you can send or drop off. Even if you can't visit, you might be able to cheer them up or make them more comfortable. Whether it's a knitted blanket, photos, items from their home, or letters. Think about stimulating the five senses – something that smells nice, something that feels comforting, something that tastes good, something to help keep them entertained...? For infection control reasons there may be some items which cannot come into the hospice at the moment, so it is best to check with us first. If all else fails, you

could consider sending emails or texts, including photographs of any cards or drawings, as well as voice messages, sending short videos etc.

Think of some ways to let the person know what they mean to you. For example, you could collaborate with others to create an 'ethical will' – this is where everyone shares something that they have learned from the person which will stay with them forever – this can be anything, from a favourite recipe, a skill they taught you, or a personal quality such as how to be optimistic or brave. You can record this in writing for the person or send it to them as a video recording.

You might not be able to visit in person, but you could find ways to use a phone or tablet so that you can read them a chapter from a book or sit down for a meal 'together'...

If you have children you can have a look at our guidance on how to explain why they can't visit just now ([Explaining Hospice Visiting Restrictions to Children](#)).

You might have lots of difficult feelings about being unable to visit. Remember, this situation is not your fault – the circumstances are outside your control. By staying away, as difficult as it is, you are helping to reduce the risk of infection for many very vulnerable and frail people.

If you would like further information or support for yourself or your family, contact us on **0131 551 7751** or by email [access@stcolumbushospice.org.uk](mailto:access@stcolumbushospice.org.uk) and the Access Team will direct you to the most appropriate services for your needs. Additional telephone support is available from:

## BREATHING SPACE 0800 83 85 87

Monday–Thursday 6pm–2am,  
Friday 6pm–Monday 6am.

## SAMARITANS 116 123

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St. Columba's Hospice Care  
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