
Visitors Policy in Care Homes and Hospital

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1 Introduction

As part of brainkinds commitment to security, it is our policy to ensure the safety of visitors, service users and staff enable flexibility to people visiting our services, whilst ensuring the dignity, privacy and safety of our service users is always maintained.

The purpose of this policy is to act as guidance;

- To ensure that there are systems in place to manage the safety of visitors and service users
- To offer guidance and support for staff in relation to challenges they may encounter from any visitors.
- To support service users to have choice and control over who visits them and offer staff guidance on how to manage situations where visitors are on the premises, but the service user does not wish to see them
- To offer all visitors the relevant support and information regarding their visit and outline our and their responsibilities in relation to health and safety.

1.1 Policy Statement

Brainkind recognises and values the important role family members, carers and friends play in our service users' lives. We want them to feel welcomed and supported by the services and its staff when they are visiting. With the individual service users' consent, we want family members to be involved in planning their care and welcome their feedback, both positive and negative.

1.2 Scope

Brainkind are aware that there will be other visitors to the service to include:

- visiting professionals
- contractors
- service teams
- inspectors and other stakeholders

We want all visitors to the service to have a positive experience, to feel welcomed and to understand how to maintain their own and others safety. All visitors to any



of our sites are entering our Service Users home and, as such, the health and safety, needs and wishes of our service users will always remain paramount

The policy will provide the framework within which all visitors to Brainkinds locations will be managed.

2 Content

2.1 Procedure and Implementation

It is acceptable to challenge anyone who is not known to the organisation and ask for identification. Staff and service users have a right to stop and talk to anyone visiting the service, to confirm their identity.

Visitors to the services may have their access limited to specific areas based on a local protocol / service guidance.

This may include only having access to:

- a family room
- communal rooms
- a relatives' own room

The local service will provide this information as required.

Visits may be supported by a staff member; this will be discussed with all visitors as necessary.

Children and Young people under the age of 18 (under 16 years in Scotland) must be supported at all times by an appropriate adult whilst in the services – this is in line with Safeguarding Children guidance.

Pandemic / Infection Control issues. At times when affected by a pandemic or local infection, guidance set by the Government, local authority and / or Public Health services will overrule any local protocols.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

All staff should be aware of visiting times, which should also be clearly displayed at the entrance of each of the separate units.

Staff are to follow the on-call policy and report any issues out of hours and seek advice and guidance.



Staff are to ensure that they are familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding of Children protocols and procedures and that they are current with their training.

If abuse of harm is suspected towards service users, this should be reported to the Team Leaders, Managers, On-call personnel and the safeguarding board via Datix to consider submitting a safeguarding alert to the local authority.

In the case of an emergency phone 999, alternatively for non-emergencies phone 101. If this is not possible to raise abuse issues with staff at the service, the Whistleblowing Line 01444 258599 should be utilised.

Brainkind operates a zero-tolerance policy in respect of violence or aggression; including derogatory, discriminatory and abusive language, against service users or staff. The policy expects that all visitors will treat service users or staff with respect and politeness. An acceptable standard of behaviour is expected and if this is not met the visitor may be asked to leave. If visitors become disruptive or do not leave, then the Police may be called to assist.

Appendix 1 shows the roles and responsibilities of various people in brainkind relating to this document. Therefore, App 1 will state who is responsible for what aspects of the policy, clearly stating what is meant by any terms involved.

2.3 Visits

2.3.1 Planned Visits

All workers, contractors, visitors should arrange a visit with the service directly before attending. Any pre-agreed visits made by staff and or services users, should be reported to the receptionists or Team Leaders to ensure they are prepared to accept a visitor.

Details should be explained in the booking as to:

- The name and role of the visitor
- The date and expected time of arrival
- The name and role of the person(s) that they are visiting
- Service specific issues – i.e. parking arrangements, access to the building etc.

2.3.2 Unplanned Visits

Visitors may attend the service locations unannounced and without prior notice. These visitors may be representatives from Regulatory bodies – i.e. CQC / HIS / CIS / CIW / OFSTED; Clinical commissioning groups; Local authority; Public Health; safeguarding teams and relatives.



The site / Service Manager has the right to refuse entry to any visitor if:

- they are unable to provide identification
- not deemed by staff to be in the best interests of a service user at a particular time
- the service user has requested that they do not wish to see the visitor
- the service users' condition is judged to be deteriorating / unsettled.
- the service user is involved in a clinical / therapeutic session.
- they need to maintain infection control procedures and in the event of an outbreak
- the visitor is suspected to be under the influence of drink and/or drugs
- it is deemed unsafe by staff for visitors to remain in the service (a full explanation may not be able to be provided due to confidentiality requirements)
- a person under 18 years (under 16 years in Scotland) attends the service unaccompanied.
- a visitor has attended against a prior agreement.

2.3.3 Upon Arrival for both Planned/Unplanned Visits

All visitors should:

- attend the entrance / reception upon arrival
- sign in and out of the service.
- wait in the reception area until supported by staff to enter the service.
- be informed of any local / current issues to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Staff should:

- greet the visitor, check their identity
- support the visitor to their relative / meeting / host

Staff must:

- ensure that the visit can be supported to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all in the service.

2.4 Children and Young People

Children and Young People are individuals under the age of 18 within England and Wales and under the age of 16 within Scotland.



Brainkind recognises and understands that visits by children to service users, is vital and central to the maintenance of normal, healthy relationships with parents, or other relatives/carers who are staying at the services for their care. It should however be recognised that at times due the nature of the service users with cognitive and behavioural issues that our service user group may present with behaviours that could potentially be upsetting to a child.

If children are visiting the service, they must be always accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult and without exception. They must be always observed and not allowed to walk around the service unaccompanied.

Please refer to the - Visitors Policy Children - Hospitals regarding York House and Graham Anderson House.

Visits with children should be arranged in advance with either the Team Leader / Nurse in Charge or Service Manager and where possible, a pre-agreed meeting room / space will be arranged for the visit.

Wherever possible, if a visit has been scheduled but it is not appropriate for the child to enter the services at the specified day/time due to an issue in the service, staff will contact the responsible adult as soon as possible and arrange an alternative visit.

The care, safety and wellbeing of the child is the responsibility of all – staff, service users, appropriate adults and brainkind, therefore restrictions to visits may be enforced to ensure this is managed.

The revision of the Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice 2008 and guidance in the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2003 / The Children’s (Scotland) Act 1995 state that all mental health hospitals should have a child visiting policy. A separate policy - Visitors Policy Children – Hospitals is available for these services.

2.5 Visiting Times

Each location may have a set structure, process regarding working patterns. Each location may have set visiting times, and / or this will be agreed in line with a service users’ individual planner.

However, if visitors are unable to visit at other times, they may communicate this with the Service Manager or Team Leader. Individual circumstances will always be considered, and a compromise found wherever possible and appropriate. The policy must also be applied with due sensitivity to service user and visitor needs and wishes, if there is no ill effect to the service user.

Examples of special circumstances may include:

- visitors who have travelled long distances to see a service user



- visitors who have childcare or other care commitments
- visitors who due to age or disablement cannot travel after dark
- visitors who can require a later visiting time due to other commitments.

All visits should be pre – arranged wherever possible to ensure that the service users are present and available to support a visit.

Normal visiting hours will be displayed on the visitor poster at the service. (Appendix 2)

2.6 Mobile Phones and Recording Devices

For reasons of confidentiality, privacy and dignity; cameras on mobile phones, cameras and camcorders are not to be used by visitors within the service without seeking permission from the Team Leader and with the understanding that any inappropriate use will be reported and addressed accordingly.

2.7 Alcohol, Illegal Substances and other risk items

Use of alcohol, illegal substances or other risk items may be both damaging to the health of the service user and disruptive to the programmes, which are in place to assist the service user to live as independently as possible.

Service users within the service may have ongoing alcohol or substance abuse issues. We recognise that service users have the right to be protected from exposure to these substances in the interests of their successful rehabilitation whilst they are resident in the service.

Therefore, the bringing of alcohol or illegal substances onto the service by visitors is strictly prohibited in order to maintain a safe environment both for the service users and staff. We also have a legal obligation regarding illegal substances.

Visitors are requested not to attempt to bring into the service:

- Alcohol
- Illegal substances
- Other risk items - see lists below

If staff suspect that a visitor is attempting to bring these items into the service, staff have the right in the interests of the safety and security of the service and a duty of care to our service users, to refuse entry. If it is found that a visitor has brought any of these items into the service, staff have the right to ask that visitor to leave the premises.



Use and/or intent to supply illegal substances are a criminal offence. Staff are obliged to contact the police at any time to investigate any criminal behaviour of this kind on the unit.

If it is suspected that a visitor is intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances whilst in the service, they will be asked to leave the premises. If they refuse to do so, then staff may contact the police to escort the visitor from the service.

There is a no smoking policy in place throughout all locations and visitors are reminded that smoking is only permitted in external smoking areas.

Service users will have specific items that are considered a risk for them. This may include but not exhaustive:

- Knives
- Weapons
- Food
- Aerosols
- Lighters
- Alcohol
- Drugs including prescription or shop bought drugs

2.8 Infection Control

Visitors will be asked not to visit a service if they have had;

- vomiting and/or diarrhoea and until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- coughs, colds or flu-like symptoms
- any infectious condition e.g. chickenpox, mumps etc.

All visitors should wash their hands/use the hand sanitizer/gels on entering and exiting the services if this is available.

Restrictions to visiting may be put in place for infection prevention and control purposes on the recommendation of the Management Team.

Visitors may seek advice of a Team Leader or staff member if they have any concerns about Infection Control.

Pandemic – Government and local authority guidance must be adhered to in these circumstances and the visitor's guidance will be shared. Local risk assessments will be written and approved by the organisation.



2.9 Special Occasions

We recognise that it is important to continue to share special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries with loved ones, our chefs will usually organise a cake to help celebrate an event such as these, if a visitor wants to help celebrate an occasion like this they must let the service users key worker, or the Service Manager know, what times, etc. that way we can ensure visitors are able to join in with the celebrations.

During the year, Brainkind recognises many different religious festivals, such as Diwali, Eid al Adha and Chanukah, in addition to Easter and Christmas. Visitors are asked to discuss with the Service Manager or Team Leader / Nurse in Charge if they have a desire to take part in or avoid a particular event.

2.10 Protected Mealtimes

In some locations within brainkind, we operate protected mealtimes to maintain the privacy and dignity of all service users and therefore, visitors may not be permitted to eat in the dining room during mealtimes.

Visitors are welcome to join their loved one for a meal, although these must be booked at least 24 hours in advance and a small fee may be payable. This can be organised via the Team Leader/ Nurse in Charge or Service Manager and where possible a private area will be arranged

2.11 Associated Policies and Procedures

Other policies and procedures linked to this document:

- The DT Safeguarding Policy
- Visitors Policy Children – Hospitals

2.12 Overnight Stays

The organisation respects the wishes and needs of all its visitors and service users and this includes overnight visits. We support people in a number of housing options and the views and dignity of all people living in a home must be respected.



- No children to stay overnight in any service.
- Hospitals and Registered Care Homes – No visitors to stay overnight, unless a dedicated guest room is available or in exceptional circumstances i.e. in the case of End of Life- or life-threatening serious illness. The exceptional circumstances would need to be agreed and approved by the Service Manager; this may include a discharge planning process.

3 Appendices

Appendix Number	Title
1	Roles and Responsibilities
2	Visitor Posters
3	Service Information Leaflet

4 References

Legislation and Regulatory Guidance:

CQC – Roles and Responsibilities in Safeguarding children and adults The Children’s Act 2004

The Care Act 2014 – Safeguarding Adults ISO 27001 Standard

Mental Health Act 1983 – Code of Practice 2008 The Children’s (Scotland) Act 1995

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment – Scotland) Act 2003

Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

Professional Role Responsibilities



Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Is ultimately responsible for ensuring effective corporate governance within the organisation and therefore supports brainkind-Wide implementation of this policy.
Director of Governance and Quality Assurance	Developing, reviewing and monitoring this policy.
Director of People and Organisation Development	Providing training and education to support implementation of this policy. This will be delivered via e learning, in person training and case specific training
Regional Managers	Ensuring this policy is implemented within regions
Registered Service Managers and Area Managers	Ensuring all members of staff are aware of the policy and its guidelines, monitoring its operation, implementation and responding to any complaints.
Trust Health and Safety Team / Advisor	Responding to all incidents of intentional or unintentional violence and aggression towards self, staff and other service users; assisting in providing advice and guidance to employees who are victims of intentional or unintentional or unlawful violence and aggression. Ensuring that any reported incidents in relation to visitors that fall under H&S are reviewed and necessary advice given, and lessons learned are evidenced and shared.
Senior Staff, Team Leader, Nurse in Charge	Ensuring every effort is made to resolve queries or complaints at the time, within the bounds of confidentiality. Should the matter require further input from management this must be communicated to the complainant and referred without delay.
All Staff	<p>All identified staff, having contact with or involvement in the care of the service-user, are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring the principles outlined in this policy are adhered to and applied; also<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensuring they behave in a courteous manner at all times and visitors are made to feel welcome○ Ensuring that careful explanations are made to visitors or service users who are cared for under infection control restrictions and that any warning advice is clearly visible <p>To ensure service users care is continuous through visiting times and that the safety, privacy and dignity of any service user are not compromised by visitors</p>