

Frequently asked questions about visiting our hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. How do I book a visit?

- A member of the ward staff will contact the person identified as the designated visitor to book visits for a specific patient.
- Designated visitors will be identified when a patient is admitted.
- Current inpatients will be asked to nominate a designated visitor.
- Please see points 6 and 12, regarding exceptional circumstances.

2. What timeslots are available?

There are four time slots for visiting:

- 1.00– 2.00pm
- 2:15 – 3:15pm
- 3:30 – 4:30pm
- 4:45 – 5:45pm

3. Can I choose a time to come?

- We will do our best to accommodate your request but we can't guarantee that this will be possible. The number of slots available on each ward will vary depending on how many beds there are so that we can ensure appropriate social distancing.
- We realise these times may not be convenient for those with work or childcare responsibilities. Please be assured we will keep our visitor guidelines under review, but we will only be able to ease restrictions when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

4. What can I do if I cannot make any of the time slots?

- If it is not possible for a designated visitor to attend, then the ward can offer the opportunity to have a 'virtual' visit.
- Or you can also use our 'Letter to a Loved One' service to keep in touch

5. Why can I only visit for an hour?

Safety is our priority and we need to limit the number of visitors in our hospitals to minimise the risk of infection. By limiting visiting to an hour, we keep the number of visitors to a safe level and it also ensures that everyone gets an equal amount of time.

6. Does the same visitor have to come each time?

- Yes, only one visitor per patient and it must be the same designated visitor for every visit made.
- Unfortunately, children are not allowed and cannot accompany the designated visitor.
- If there are exceptional circumstances, please discuss these with the ward manager.
- By limiting the number of people visiting our hospitals it will reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

7. Do I need to bring any personal protective equipment (PPE)?



- Yes, in line with national guidance, anyone entering our hospitals is required to wear a face covering at all times.
- As a designated visitor, before you can enter the visiting area, you will be asked to sanitise your hands and be given a surgical facemask to wear. You do not have to wear gloves.
- For your own safety and that of our patients and staff we will not allow anyone onto our wards who is unable, or who refuses, to wear a facemask – there are no exceptions.
- We will ask you to use hand sanitiser before you enter and after you leave the visiting area.

8. Is visiting allowed on all wards?

- Visiting will not be allowed on certain wards where patients are more vulnerable, for example on cancer care wards, or where there is an increased risk of infection.
- When a patient is admitted to hospital, they will be able to nominate a designated visitor if visiting is permitted.

9. I know two patients who are in the same hospital. Can I visit them both in my one hour time slot?

Unfortunately not, we are working to the ‘rule of one’ – so one visitor, for one patient, for one hour.

10. Can I bring gifts or presents?

We know that many people wish to bring gifts or other items to people in hospital, but it is important to be mindful of infection control.

- Please try to limit items you bring for the patient you are visiting.
- Please do not bring food parcels, flowers, balloons or similar items.
- We try to keep the areas around patients’ beds clear to make sure it is kept as clean as possible.

11. I am a carer, does this affect the existing visiting arrangements I have in place?

- No. We understand and recognise that carers are central to the care and well-being of our patients and provide essential support and reassurance to patients especially when admission to hospital is needed.
- If you already have a visiting plan in place, continue to follow it. We encourage all carers to discuss specific visiting arrangements with the nurse in charge.

What are the exceptions to the ‘rule of one’?

Exceptions to visitor restrictions detailed above are in place for those:

- who have a learning disability, autism or a cognitive impairment including dementia
- with mental health problems
- with communication challenges including hearing or visual impairment
- for whom English is not their first language
- visiting patients receiving end-of-life care;
- visiting our children’s wards;

- visitors to our spinal unit.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances in your case please talk to the ward manager or nurse in charge to make a case-by-case assessment.

12. I don't think I'll be able to visit my relative or friend. Are there other ways I can keep in touch with them?

- Yes, the ward can offer the opportunity to have a 'virtual' visit via a video link using iPads.
- You can also use our 'Letter to a Loved One' service to keep in touch.
- Please discuss these options with the Ward Manager

On the day of your visit

13. Do NOT come into hospital if you are feeling unwell, please contact the ward to let them know.

14. Where do I park?

Please use the visitor car parks on all sites. Car parks are monitored, so please only park in designated spaces and only when you are visiting.

Please see our website for parking information for all sites:

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/Parking

15. Where do I go when I arrive?

Entrances at all our hospital sites have been restricted. Please use designated public entrances when visiting your relative or friend.

- Please refer to our hospital location maps for Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Wycombe Hospital and Amersham Hospital (Please find these at the end of this document). For Buckingham Hospital please use the main entrance.
- If someone else has given you a lift to the hospital, then your driver needs to remain in their car if possible and will not be able to enter the hospital building.

16. Will I be given personal protective equipment to wear?

- Yes, as a designated visitor, before you can enter the visiting area, you will be given a surgical facemask to wear and be asked to sanitise your hands. You do not have to wear gloves.
- For your own safety and that of our patients and staff we will not allow anyone onto our wards who is unable, or who refuses, to wear a facemask – there are no exceptions.
- We will ask you to use hand sanitiser before you enter and after you leave the visiting area.
- In line with national guidance, anyone entering our hospitals is required to wear a face covering at all times.

17. How do I get to the ward?

- If you haven't visited our hospitals before, please make sure you get directions to the ward when you make your appointment.

- Building plans of Stoke Mandeville, Wycombe and Amersham hospitals are available from our website: www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/maps
- Please refer to directional signage in the hospital
- Please keep left in corridors and on the stairs.
- If you wish to use a lift please note the restrictions, limiting the number of passengers, posted by each lift. An exception is for NHS staff escorting a patient. Patients should be given priority. It may be quicker to use the stairs, if you can.

18. What do I do when I arrive on the ward?

- As a designated visitor you will be asked to sanitise your hands, be given a surgical facemask to wear before you enter the ward. You do not have to wear gloves.
- Once you are on the ward please make your way to your relative or friend's bedside.
- You will be asked to stay in place for the duration of your visit, unless you need to use the toilet.
- Please keep your mask on at all times.
- Please do not sit on your relative or friend's bed.
- Please sit on chairs provided.
- Please do not sit with any other patients on the ward. You may only visit the patient you are the designated visitor for.
- At the end of your pre-booked time slot, you will be asked to leave the ward.

19. Can I use the toilet during my visit?

Yes, please use public toilets. Do not use toilets reserved for patients or staff.

20. Where shall I sit?

- Please sit on chairs provided.
- Do NOT sit on your relative or friend's bed.
- Do NOT sit with any other patients on the ward, you may only visit the patient you are the designated visitor for.

21. What happens when I leave the ward?

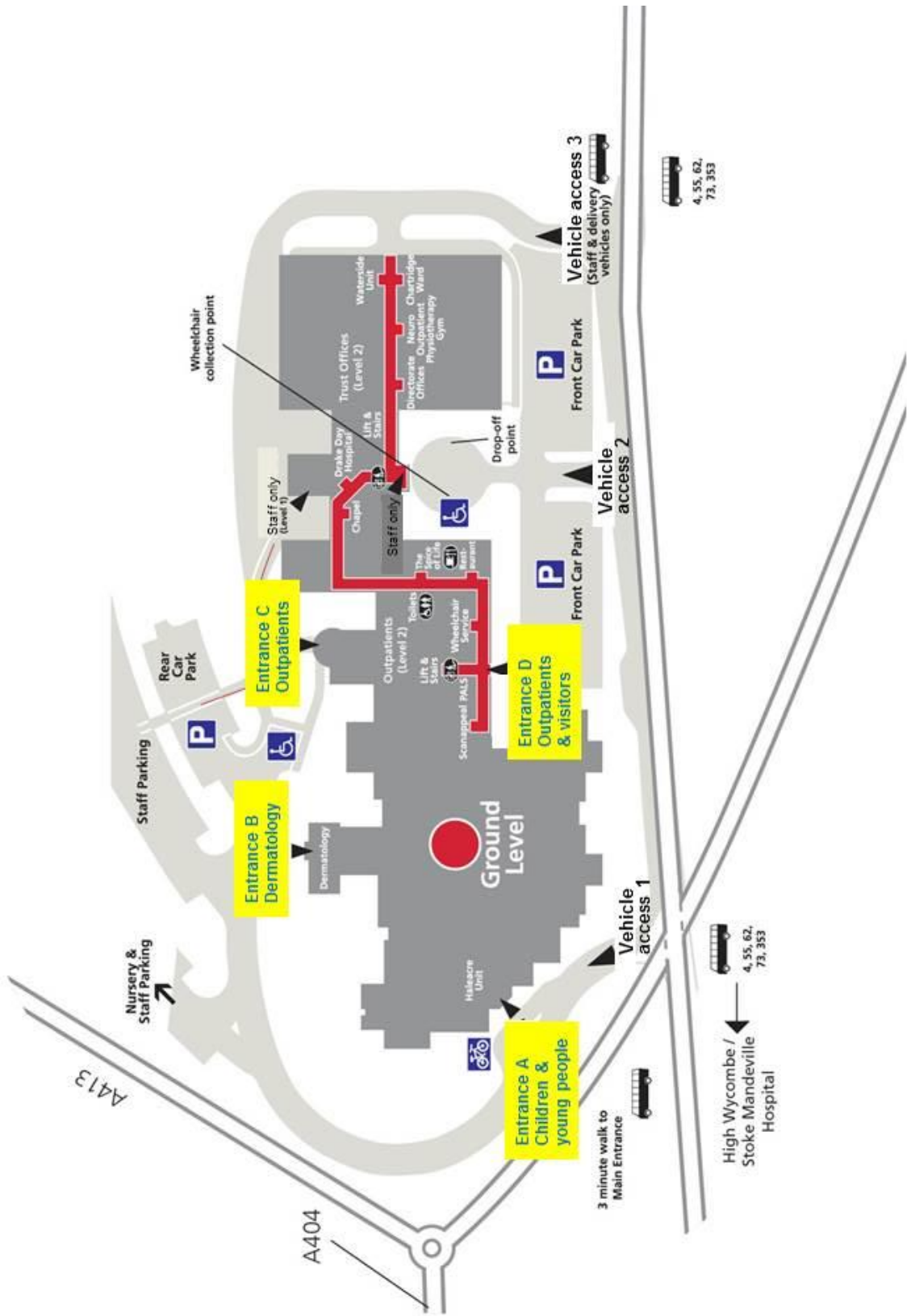
Please make your way back to where you entered. When you reach the entry point, please sanitise your hands, remove your mask and place it in the bin provided, and sanitise your hands once again.

[Service specific variations](#)

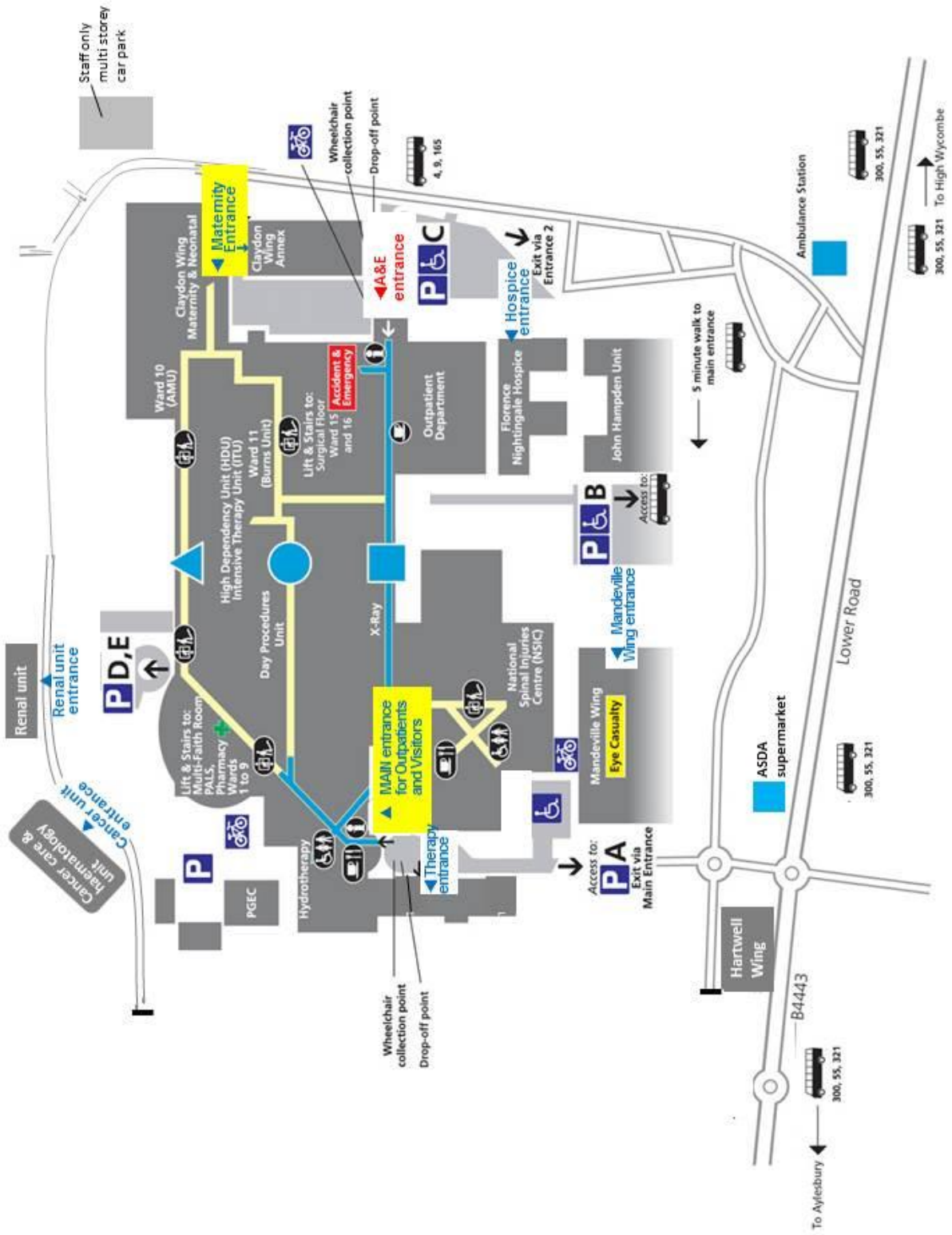
Please refer to specific guidelines regarding: maternity visitors; visiting our children's wards and visitors to patients in our spinal injuries unit (National spinal injuries centre – NSIC).

[Maps of our hospital sites](#)

Amersham



Stoke Mandeville



Wycombe

