**Birthing Companions Staying Overnight Information**

**Code of Conduct**

**We recognise that for some families, it is supportive for a birth companion to stay overnight.**

However, we also know that due to the lack of sleep and relative comfort associated with an overnight stay, it is often helpful for the birth companion to return home to sleep and come back in the morning.

If you decide to stay overnight, we anticipate that you will provide support with elements such as:

* Obtaining refreshments
* Supporting to the bathroom
* Supporting partner during the early stages of labour i.e., back massage, coaching through contractions.
* Supporting with care for baby, including changing, feeding, comforting.

If you are staying overnight, you will need to agree to the conditions set out in this booklet. This is to ensure we can maintain an environment that is suitable for everyone.

**If you cannot meet the conditions outlined in this booklet, we will not be able to support you to stay overnight and you will be asked to leave when daytime visiting ends.**

We are mindful of enabling a comfortable, secure environment for all service users who are admitted with us on the ward. To support this, we request that you respect the principles of ‘Night Mode’ to enable us to provide the most suitable environment we can, to permit rest.

**Please review of the following requirements which will be in place for your overnight stay**

**Night Mode**

Please refrain from leaving or wandering around the ward between 22:00 and 08:00 unless directed by a staff member or in the case of an emergency. If you smoke or vape and cannot go without these activities overnight, please plan accordingly, as you will not be able to leave the ward during these hours. The Robert Watson Garden/Maternity Observation Ward outside area are designated no smoking/vaping area. Additionally, not all women/birthing people have companions with them overnight and may find it uncomfortable if strangers are wandering around.

Between the hours of 22.00 and 06.00:

* All electronic devices must be on silent mode.
* Loudspeaker is not to be used for phone calls.
* Calls must be taken in the ‘family room’.
* Headphones (not provided by the hospital) are to be used when watching or listening to media on devices.

While you are on the ward, please ensure you remain fully clothed (not in nightwear), including shoes, at all times. It is advisable to also wear non-slip shoes.

**Facilities**

We are unable to provide facilities such as beds including pillows and blankets, showers or food for birth companions who choose to stay overnight. Please be aware there is limited space around the bed area and access will be required to perform care duties by staff at all times.

The facilities which are available include:

* Dedicated toilet which can be used by birth partners during the hours of 22.00 – 08.00. Toilets located off the ward **must** be used outside of these times.
* A chair within each bay space for you to rest in.
* Refreshments, which are available from the drink station.
* Hospital restaurant and food outlets in the main entrance where you can purchase refreshments (not available between 22.00 and 08.00).

**Infection control**

While you are staying with us, **please do not sleep in any of the beds**, these are for service users only. This includes co-sleeping with your partner or sleeping in another bed which may be empty on the ward.

Please use the hand gel and wash your hands when entering and leaving the ward.

If you have been ill or in close contact with someone who has diarrhoea or vomiting, a flu-like or contagious illness in the last 48 hours, please do not come into the maternity unit.

**Safety**

There are some visiting conditions you should be aware of:

* This Trust operates a zero tolerance for aggressive and disruptive behaviour.
* We will ask you to leave if you make anyone within the maternity unit feel unsafe or if we consider you to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We have an onsite security team who will be asked to attend if we require support.
* If the fire alarm rings, please remain in your bay area and wait for instructions from the staff.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of staff on duty.

**Birth Companion Identification**

You will be provided with a coloured wrist band to wear throughout the woman/birthing person’s stay on the ward. This band **must** be worn at all times to ensure the safety and security of both the patient and their baby. If, for any reason, the band comes off, please immediately request a replacement from a member of staff.

To ensure correct identification, the patient's notes will be reviewed, and you may be asked to confirm your identity as the allocated birth partner. This process is essential in maintaining a secure environment.

**Please Remember:** The wrist band is crucial for the safety of women/birthing people, their babies, and our staff. At **discharge**, the wrist band must be handed back to the staff upon leaving the ward for the final time.

This procedure is part of our comprehensive safety protocols to ensure that all overnight visitors are accounted for. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

**Recording audio or visual footage is not permitted in clinical areas**

We kindly request that our patients and visitors do not use mobile phones for recording in clinical area within the hospital, without specific consent.

Recording in clinical areas increases the risk of breached of confidentiality where information of a sensitive nature can be captured.

Should you wish to record your procedure e.g., video record a birth for your own personal use, please speak to a member of staff.

Where patients or visitors are thought to be recording outside of these guidelines, staff will ask them to stop and delete the recording. If they fail to do so, security can be called and where appropriate to do so, they may be asked to leave the premises. We thank you for your understanding.

**General**

Our staff are here to provide care for mothers and babies and so must prioritise the care they give. On occasion you may have to wait a few minutes to have your call bell answered, however we endeavour to do so as quickly as possible. Please be patient but also alert a member of staff if help is required urgently.