

# Caring for people with dementia in hospital during COVID-19 pandemic: Top Communication Tips from hospital staff and carers



## DO...

Keep up to date with **NHS visitor guidance**: 5 June guidance allows arrangements for a familiar carer/supporter to be in attendance, who is not counted as an additional visitor.

Proactively **liaise with carers/family**: consider scheduling time to provide routine updates to family members/carers and ensure they have a point of contact at the hospital upon admission. This could save time, as ward staff have less of a burden answering calls and ultimately provides better care information.

**Communicate** clearly about the **rules for visiting** and the reasons behind them. Explain clearly to visitors what the risks are and any isolation measures they will need to take. Also inform carers/family members what contact will be arranged including virtual contact.

Ensure **discharge planning** starts from the point of admission, **involves carers/family members** and that care needs are identified at outset so that they inform the plan.

When wearing PPE **use laminated photographs** and include your job role (e.g. nurse) to help the person with dementia understand who people are.



## DON'T...

**Assume** that patients with cognitive or memory problems have been able to **share information** with their families about their treatment, discharge or COVID status.

**Exclude the carer/family member** who is the main support for the person with dementia, where they are able and willing to provide this support during the admission, unless there is absolute need. This can result in the person experiencing more distress, needing 1-1 care or sedation is then used.

**Expect** that the person with dementia will be able to make **use of technology** such as video or mobile calling without support.