

Theatres Department Standard Operating Procedure		 Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	
Control access of Non- Essential Individuals in the Operating Theatre HH(3)SURG(SOP)924/25			
Replaced documents:	Visitors and External Contractors SOP 141/2	Number of pages:	5
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Expiry Date:	1 st March 2027	Authorised by:	Amy Kerr
Review Date:	1 st March 2026	Date Authorised:	1 st March 2025
This SOP is not valid unless, or until the master copy is appropriately authorised			

Implementation Summary

1. Purpose/Objective

- 1.1 To ensure that there is a system in place to ensure that a patient's right to privacy is respected at all times.
- 1.2 To provide staff with a written process to follow when allowing Non- Essential Individuals in the Operating Theatre

2. Scope

- 2.1 This document applies to all Non- Essential Individuals in the Operating Theatre including:
 - Students
 - Medical representatives
 - Medical and Nursing personnel
 - Interpreter services
 - Cares
 - Security services

3 Process /Procedure

- 3.1 Only visitors who have obtained permission for definite supportive and / or educational reasons should be allowed into the theatre environment during a patient's surgical care pathway. Patient's consent must be obtained for the presence of visitors or external contractors during the patient's surgical care pathway.

- 3.2 The number of visitors permitted to the theatre environment should be kept to a minimum at all times.
- 3.4 Upon arrival visitors and external contractors must report to the appointed person. This may be the receptionist in the first instance who will provide them with a visitors' badge. This applies to all visitors, representatives and includes students and observers.
- 3.5 All non-essential visitors are required to read a copy of this SOP prior to admittance to theatre.
- 2.5 All non-essential visitors are required to complete the induction document and sign the Confidentiality Agreement prior to admittance to theatre (Appendix A)

1 Duties

- 3.1 The receptionist or theatre co-ordinator will ensure all visitors in the visitors register and will book them out as they leave and hand in their visitor's badge. All visitors will be provided with the necessary clothing and be shown how it should be worn.
- 3.2 All non-essential visitors should be made aware of the theatre etiquette, confidentiality and should be introduced to the staff working in that area. They will also be nominated a chaperone and instructed on what to do if they feel unwell during their time in theatre. A Risk assessment will be carried out if needed,
- 3.5 All non-essential Medical, Nursing and Technical personnel who are not normally employed in the theatres of this Trust, who wish to visit theatres during a procedure will have their professional status / qualifications and health status endorsed by the HR department and theatre manager or designated deputy prior to their visit.

4 Special considerations

- 4.1 The patient will be informed of why the non-essential visitor will be in attendance and asked for consent for their presence, This is the responsibility of the team supervising the visitor eg: Team Leader/ Surgeon/Anaesthetist If the patient refuses this consent, their decision should be respected. Any objection should be recorded in the patient's notes or theatre register.
- 4.3 Patients with individual needs may require a support person to be present during the early stages of the visit to theatres. They may not be required to stay during the surgical pathway but may be needed after completion of the surgery to be present during recovery.
- 4.4 Children who are undergoing surgery may be accompanied by their parent a relative or a nurse who is familiar with the child to the anaesthetic room and they may be permitted to remain with the child during the anaesthetic phase. The accompanying escort will be required to adhere to policies and protocols and may be required to leave when the patient is asleep. At this point, if it is the parent present, there must

be a designated person to accompany the parent from the anaesthetic room. This is usually the nurse who accompanies the child to theatre.

- 4.5 It is important to respect the wishes of the parent or carer and this SOP supports this initiative. Parents or carers are a useful asset and will be encouraged to be present in the recovery area
- 4.6 Women who are taken to theatre for an elective Caesarean section may be accompanied in the theatre by their birth partner if the patient wishes. This applies to all categories of caesarean deliveries or instrumental deliveries unless a general anaesthetic is being administered, in which case they may accompany the patient into theatre but will need to be escorted out prior to the GA being given. There must be a designated person to accompany the birth partner from the theatre.

The birth partner should be appropriately prepared in the protocols to be observed during surgery. The preparation of the birth partner is a joint responsibility of the midwife looking after the patient as well as the anaesthetic team (anaesthetist & nurse) looking after them.

- 4.7 Patients with additional language or communication needs may be accompanied to theatres by an interpreter, or where appropriate a relative or friend who can interpret for them. Checks should be made to ensure that the consent form/process has been carried out with an interpreter and not a relative as per policy. Please refer to Consent to examination or Treatment policy.
The accompanying escort may be required to leave when the patient is asleep. There must be a designated person to accompany the interpreter or relative from the anaesthetic room.
- 4.8 Confused patients may be accompanied by someone they know and as with children may be useful during the recovery stage.
- 4.9 Psychiatric patients may be accompanied by a registered mental health nurse.
- 4.11 Relatives and friends should not wait within the operating theatre department whilst the procedure takes place. Main Theatres BNHH – this should include the area immediately outside the front doors. It's a restricted area where patients can be seen coming in and out of the dept.

5 Security

- 5.1 Royalty, VIP and patients in police custody may require having an officer with them and consideration should be given to accommodate them. As with all accompanying escorts they will be required to adhere to policies and protocols and may be required to leave when the patient is asleep. There must be a designated person to accompany the officer from the anaesthetic room. If deemed necessary, they are allowed to stay within the department until required post operatively.

6 Medical Device Representatives and other Health Care Professionals

- 6.1 The risks involved with the visit should be assessed prior to the visit and the company or organisation concerned made aware of the risks involved.
- 6.2 Medical device companies have a duty of care to provide the theatre manager with an appropriate risk assessment for the device and instructions on how it should be used and where appropriate how it should be re processed.
- 6.3 If the representative is pregnant, the company must advise the theatre manager prior to the visit.
- 6.4 Medical representatives act only as a resource for their product and may not scrub or actively participate in patient care.
- 6.5 Other health care professionals may not scrub or participate in patient care in the theatre department unless specifically trained in Theatre practice/competencies.
- 6.6 Medical device representatives should register into the department using MIA before being permitted to access the theatre area.
- 6.7 Demonstrations of new technology should take place in workshops or laboratories and theatre staff should be familiar with the technology **prior** to direct patient use.
- 6.8 The operating surgeon should inform the theatre team leader of the date, time and procedure where a medical device representative has been requested to attend.
- 6.9 Visiting students should have gained permission of the operating surgeon and consent from the patient prior to arriving in department, whilst also informing the team leader/co-ordinator to make them aware.
- 6.9.1 Medical Device Representatives should read this Visitors SOP prior to being allowed into the theatre environment.

7 Work Observation Students

- 7.1 The Health and Safety (Young persons) Regulations clearly states, “An employer shall not employ a young person unless a risk assessment has been carried out or reviewed in relation to the risks to health and safety of young people”. This includes visitors or external contractors to the organisation’s premises for example less than 17 years of age. Such visitors are deemed to be employees of the Trust.
- 7.2 The employer has a responsibility to:

Assess all risks to young people before they start work. Ensure that risk assessments have been carried out and documented, taking account of their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience and lack of awareness of existing potential risks. Introduce control measures or minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practical.

- 7.3 Please refer to Work Experience Students in HHFT Theatres HH(3)SURG(S)779/23 SOP for further specific information around work experience students.
https://extranet.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/application/files/8616/9338/7036/Work_experience_students_in_HHFT_Theatres.pdf

8. Data Security and Protection

The Trust is committed to ensuring the security and protection of all personal information that we store, record, process, share and access and in all of our activities to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data privacy and confidentiality. The Trust fully recognises our obligations in meeting the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Trust is dedicated to safeguarding the personal information under our remit and in ensuring that our data protection regime is robust, effective, fit for purpose and demonstrates an understanding of, and appreciation of the current legislation.

The Trust's Data Privacy Notice can be accessed at the link below:

<https://www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/how-we-use-your-information>

9. Explanation of Terms

MIA- Medical Industry Accredited booking system.

10. References (refer to policies / documents used within the Foundation Trust that support this SOP)

[Consent to Examination or Treatment Policy - HH1CL51721b.pdf \(hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk\)](#) .

HCPC Standards of conduct performance and ethics 2016

Human rights Act HMSO 1998c

NHS code of practice - The Health Act 2008- Criterion 6

NMC code of professional conduct 2015

HMSO1999c Health and Safety Procedures / Regulations. 1974 / 1992/1997/2023

Work Experience Policy- HH(1)/HR/769/21a [Work Experience Policy- HH1HR76921a.pdf \(hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk\)](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This Confidentiality Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into on [Date]
between:

NHS Trust: [Full Name of NHS Trust], having its principal office at [Address] (“the Trust”),

and

Observer: [Full Name], of [Address] (“the Observer”).

1. PURPOSE

The Observer is granted access to NHS premises, including operating theatres, for the purpose of [e.g., observing clinical practice for educational/media/non-clinical reasons]. This Agreement governs the Observer’s obligations regarding all confidential information seen, heard, or otherwise obtained.

2. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

“Confidential Information” includes, without limitation:

- Information relating to any patient (identity, condition, treatment);
- Any oral or written communications concerning patient care;
- Staff identities, records, or conversations;
- Any proprietary, internal, or operational information of the Trust.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF THE OBSERVER

The Observer agrees:

- a. Not to disclose or discuss any Confidential Information with anyone outside the Trust;
- b. Not to record, photograph, or film within clinical areas without written permission;

- c. To comply with NHS policies, including those on confidentiality, data protection (GDPR), and safeguarding;
- d. Not to interfere with or participate in any clinical activity;
- e. To report any accidental access or disclosure immediately to Trust staff.

4. EXCLUSIONS

This Agreement does not apply to information that is lawfully in the public domain or required to be disclosed by law, subject to notice to the Trust where possible.

5. DURATION

This Agreement takes effect from the date above and continues indefinitely in respect of any Confidential Information obtained.

6. BREACH

The Observer acknowledges that a breach may result in removal from NHS premises, reporting to relevant authorities, and potential legal action. The Trust reserves the right to seek injunctive relief or damages.

7. GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement is governed by the laws of England. Any disputes shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England.

SIGNED:

Observer:

Signature: _____

Full Name: _____

Date: _____

For the Trust:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Minimum Local Induction for HHFT Theatres

This introduction programme is intended to assist in the introduction of visitors to the theatre environment and should be completed, signed, and kept with the Practice Development Team.

Name of Visitor:	
Job Role:	
Usual Area of Work:	
Date of Visit:	
Has read the SOP for visitors:	
Email Address:	
ID checks / presented: ID badge easily visible & a true likeness of the working attending the shift – failure to complete this will result in being unable to attend theatres	Staff Signature: Date:

Signed (Visitor): _____ Print Name: _____

Subject	Contents	Date	Notes
Introduction to work area	-Tour (including facilities) -Introduce to staff -Dress code -Theatre etiquette -What to do if feeling unwell		
Fire procedure	-Location of Fire Points/ Panel/Extinguisher/Exits -Evacuation Procedure		
Confidentiality	Agreement		Sign attached agreement
Medical Emergency	-Summoning help -Resuscitation equipment		
First Aid procedure	-Explanation of procedure -Report to team leader and complete an In Phase		
Mobile phone usage	-Appropriate areas and times for usage		
World Health Organisation (WHO) patient safety checklist and NatsSSIPs	-Team Briefs -Explanation of checklist and processes (NatSSIPs steps) -Use of documentation -Debriefs		

Signed (Staff): _____ Print Name: _____