

### Guidance for visiting ministers and faith leaders

- John Radcliffe Hospital
- Churchill Hospital and Sir Michael Sobell House Hospice
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
- Horton General Hospital, Banbury

The Trust welcomes responsible ministers and faith leaders who come to visit members of their own community whilst in hospital. Like any other member of the community, visiting ministers are expected to put the needs of patients and carers first, and to respect the procedures of the hospital which are in place for their protection. We recognise the unique pastoral relationships which are often established over many years, and will do everything possible to facilitate visits from a known minister who is the best placed person to offer spiritual, religious or pastoral care.

This guidance relates to clergy and faith leaders who have a pre-existing relationship with a patient, and not to those who are asked to visit by the chaplaincy team to perform a function on behalf of the Trust.

### Information governance

The fact that a person is in hospital, and their whereabouts within the Trust, is a private matter which is governed by legal frameworks of Data Protection. Hospital staff and receptionists will not release this information to any member of the public; and visiting ministers or faith leaders are no exception.

If you are asked to visit a member of your congregation or community, then it is wise to check with them or one of their close contacts to ascertain their whereabouts before you travel to the hospital. Many patients bring a mobile phone into the hospital, and it could be helpful to speak directly with them in order to plan the best timing of your visit.

If for some reason you have not been able to confirm the whereabouts of a patient, then you may seek the assistance of the chaplaincy office. If a chaplain is available, then they will try to contact the ward on your behalf to ask whether a patient wishes to receive your visit.

## Identification

It is good practice to identify yourself to hospital staff as a visiting minister or faith leader so that they will appreciate your relationship with the patient. Please be aware that staff will not give privileged information to you because you are identified as a minister, or are wearing clerical dress.

It is not advisable to introduce yourself to hospital staff as a 'Chaplain' unless you have been formally trained, vetted, and appointed by the Trust and have been issued with an OUH security badge confirming this role.

## Ward protocol

Many clergy and faith leaders are experienced hospital visitors and understand the importance of ward protocols for infection control. If your visit to a patient may entail sacramental care, for example the administration of communion or an act of anointing, then it is essential to check with the responsible nursing staff that the procedure can be followed without risk of infection or other hazard. You must follow all instructions given by the nursing team and fully observe the routine procedures for hand cleansing, infection control, and protection of meal times. Under no circumstances should candles be lit on the ward.

## Liaison with the Chaplaincy department

The hospital Chaplaincy team is available to provide pastoral, spiritual, and religious care to patients and families from all faith backgrounds or none. We are happy to take referrals from local clergy and faith leaders to help in the ongoing support of members of your congregation or community, but we will not normally contact you to pass on information about people we have cared for unless this is expressly requested by a patient.

The chaplaincy team is staffed by ministers of Christian and Muslim faith, supported by a team of trained volunteers and the assistance of a network of faith advisors representing a wide range of traditions.

**Chaplaincy main office: 01865 857921**

**For Roman Catholic chaplains: 01865 221732**

**Email: [chaplaincy@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@ouh.nhs.uk)**

**For emergency or out of hours referrals, call the switchboard on 01865 741166 to radiopage the on-call chaplain.**