If you require this flyer in large print or any other format, then please contact Nicola Morrison on (01463) 704862.

Advances in surgical techniques, medical care, and treatments have resulted in many patients having a much shorter stay in hospital. During a stay, however, it is important that patients have the opportunity to rest and recover from operations or other forms of treatment, and that they are well nourished – another essential part of the healing and recovery process.

Visitors are also hugely important to aid the recovery of patients, bringing needed company, news from home and helping to combat isolation and loneliness.

There is a need to find a reasonable balance between these factors in order to promote good recovery.

To help achieve this, hospitals generally have a policy which limits visiting times, typically creating visiting periods in the afternoon and evening. In view of the changing nature of hospital care, Raigmore Hospital plans to change visiting times with the aim of providing patients with a safe, comfortable environment in which they can receive care, take meals, have adequate rest, and receive visitors.

It is recognised that there will always be special circumstances for some patients, their families or carers, and these will continue to be considered on an individual basis through discussion with Ward staff. In particular, it is recognised that some patients require support, encouragement or assistance with their meals and staff will work with families to involve them in this.

Any changes to visiting hours will not affect the Children’s Ward, Critical Care / High Dependency or primary supporters (eg fathers, partners) visiting the Maternity Ward.
There are a number of factors driving this change, namely:

♦ Many patients are in hospital for short stays – during a stay it is essential patients have time to rest and recuperate. The proposed changes will create additional rest times between visiting hours but still enable patients to prepare for bed and settle down for the night at a reasonable time.

♦ NHS Highland wishes to achieve Protected Mealtimes for patients. Often even simple care needs cannot be met with dignity when neighbouring patients have visitors present. It should be noted that ALL 6-bedded areas in our hospitals are same-sex areas.

♦ Having scheduled visiting hours in place and limiting the number of visitors per bed contributes significantly to minimising the spread of infection. Visitors may need to be encouraged to meet their responsibilities in the control of infection (see Rights & Responsibilities Sheet attached).

No one likes to be watched or interrupted as they take a meal, so Protected Mealtimes would mean patients would receive and eat their meals without interruption from external visitors (relatives, friends, neighbours) or from internal visitors (chaplain, nurses, doctors). This will help patients to complete their meal while it is still hot and welcoming. There are national standards for good nutrition in hospital which NHS Highland wants to meet for our patients.

♦ The presence of visitors has a direct impact on patients’ privacy, particularly in the 6 bedded rooms. The status quo is an option that must be considered. NHS Highland has to state clearly that it is not the option we would prefer to see in operation, principally for the reasons given above.

As a result, a number of other options are being proposed, and we would welcome your views on these.

Working with you to make Highland the healthy place to be
**REVIEW OF VISITING HOURS – RAIGMORE HOSPITAL**

**Proposed New Visiting Times, Raigmore Hospital**

**Afternoons:**
- 1400 - 1600 hours
- 1430 - 1630 hours

**Evenings:**
- 1900 - 2000 hours
- 1830 - 2030 hours
- 1900 – 2030 hours

**Additional Developments**
Patients who are well enough to move around can receive visitors in the ground floor coffee lounge (by the main entrance). Patients could meet friends and family in the coffee lounge outwith agreed visiting hours, however, patients would be requested and encouraged to return to their ward to receive meals and be present during drug rounds.

We all have a responsibility to play our part in the recovery of patients. As part of the consultation on the review of visiting hours, NHS Highland is also keen to receive your comments on the attached Rights & Responsibilities paper. Please use the questionnaire to record your comments.

A team of individuals, including staff, Patients' Council and public participants have been involved in developing both the visiting time options and the Rights & Responsibilities paper.

**We want to hear from you**
Whether you are a patient, a visitor, a member of staff or simply someone with an interest, we are keen to hear from you.

A very short questionnaire is attached to this flyer and it would be appreciated if you could take a couple of minutes to complete this. If you require any assistance in completing the questionnaire, then please call Nicola Morrison on (01463) 704862 or speak to a member of ward staff.

The questionnaire can be returned in the freepost envelope provided (if appropriate) or ‘posted’ in the two comments boxes provided – these can be found at the Reception desk of the Hospital’s main entrance and the WRVS Welcome Point in Outpatients.

Members of Raigmore Patients’ Council may also approach you, as a patient or a visitor, to gather your views. If you have already completed a questionnaire then please just let them know.

The closing date for submitting your questionnaire is **Friday, 14th December 2007**.

NHS Highland will undertake a comprehensive informing exercise, for patients, visitors, staff and the general public before any changes are made to the current visiting hours.

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