

## Giving information & Updating relatives

Keeping relatives up to date with a patients care and treatment whilst also safeguarding confidentiality is important though can be difficult and is further challenged by reduced visiting as we continue to emerge from the pandemic restrictions. The following guidance is provided to ensure confidentiality is maintained and that consent for the sharing of information is given. Relatives and families can experience increased anxiety about their loved one in hospital if they cannot get regular updates and we know our patients also want their families updated and may forget key things or be overwhelmed leaving them unsure how well informed their relative is. In addition our patient feedback has told us that a simple '*he/she is ok*' can leave callers dissatisfied as they wonder what constitutes '*ok*'. Giving relevant but meaningful updates and information can be done safely with the patients consent and with assurance that the person being spoken to is the right person.

1. When patients are admitted ask them to confirm who their next of kin or who they want to share information with is and ask that this be a single nominated contact who can then, if they agree, pass on updates to other family members.

NB – this nominated person may not necessarily be the named next of kin and therefore asking the patient is critical. The next of kin actually has no legal powers unless they have a Power Of Attorney (POA); if a person has capacity they can choose someone other than their named next of kin.

2. Ask the patient to create a password – a word of their own choosing that the nominated relative will use in identifying themselves to ward staff. When ward staff call they will ask the person on the other end to quote the password.
3. For patients who lack capacity, are unable to communicate who their next of kin / named person is or are unable to call this person to inform them of a password choice then ward staff will contact the named person as recorded on Medway, establish their relationship with the patient and agree a password.
4. It is advised that a new password is created on each admission.
5. Where Power of Attorney is in place and there is not currently a copy in the patient's record then staff must ask that relatives scan and email this to a named person on the ward to enable it to be printed and placed in the patient record.
6. It is important to ensure that the named contact and password is clearly documented within the patient notes and that all staff are aware of who they can give more detailed information to over the telephone.

Use this form to document named contact and password. Keep securely in the patient records.

<b>Date completed:</b>		<b>Ward:</b>	
Affix patient label below:		Nominated contact name & relationship to patient:	
		Contact details:	
		Chosen password:	
Completed by: Name (Print)	Role:	Signature	