



HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH

This leaflet provides ideas of different ways to communicate and stay in touch with loved ones while they are in St Andrew's Hospice.



How to stay in touch with loved ones whilst they are in St Andrew's Hospice

There may be times that you are unable to visit your loved one, family member, or close friend whilst they are an inpatient at St Andrew's Hospice for a variety of reasons and this can cause upset and distress.

Even though the staff at St Andrews will be gently caring and supporting your loved one, it can be very hard to be apart from them.

It is important that the staff understand how they can support you and other important people in the lives of your loved ones to communicate with them and to stay included when you are not able to be with them.

We would like to offer you some suggestions of how you can feel closer together, even when at a distance.



“Life becomes a celebration when friends keep in touch, so let's celebrate our life by keeping in touch with each other.”

enkiquotes

Phones and tablets

If your loved one has a phone or tablet please try to make sure, it is with them. Don't forget the charger and if needed don't forget to unlock or to share the pin with the staff so they will be able to help your loved one make or receive a call or video chat when you are not present. For those patients who don't have access to a tablet, the inpatient unit has one to support the facilitation of video messaging.

If children in the family will be speaking by video with the person, remember to prepare the children or what they may look like, particularly if there have been any changes since the last time they saw them.

If they are very poorly and you do not want children to see them like this, you could consider a phone call instead. If children are talking on the phone or video call, when they have finished encourage them to say goodbye at the end of the conversation. A simple “say bye now” as you would normally do when finishing a call is sufficient. This is to make sure they have said goodbye just in case they do not get the chance to do this again.



Record a Message

If you are not sure about what to say on the phone, or the person is too poorly or tired to speak to you, you could record a voice or video message. You could share some special messages about how much you love them and how you are thinking of them. Maybe share some family jokes or memories or read them a story. You could just tell them about your day, what you have been up to, what you had for dinner, who you have spoken to that day.

Children in the family could record individual messages and then a joint one. When you send the message to their phone, they can listen or watch it as often as they want. Maybe include the dog barking or the cat meowing if they have been an important part of their lives.

Listening to music

If you have a special family song or piece of music, you could ask that it is played during the day or if there is a favourite CD you could bring it in and it can be played for your loved one to listen to or have as soft background music. You may gain a feeling of connection if you also play it during your time at home knowing they too will be hearing it.

Writing a message

You could send in a letter or card for the person to read, or for someone to read out to them. It could just be a chatty letter, or it could include important things you would like to say to them.

If you are writing a short message, you could write it in a card, or if you are good at crafts, you could make something that you could write your message in.

Children could draw pictures for the person, and you could make a collage of family photos. Rather than posting things in, you could take photos of them and send them via phone or tablet. We also have an email set up that you can send these into and we can print them off here at the hospice to give to your loved ones:

standrews.letterstolovedones@nhs.net

Items that are important to you and your loved one.

This could be something to hold, a special cuddly toy, a special blanket or jumper that may be comforting to touch. A special photo or photos, which could be positioned in the room, so they are close and in easy view for your loved one.

There may be a favourite book or poem that the staff could read to them in your absence. Other ideas are favourite scents/aftershave that they like or one that reminds them of you. We could spray this on a hankie or a material heart and this could be close to them. Scents can be powerful reminders and will keep thoughts of you with your loved one close when you are not together.





Pairs of things

If you have two of the same thing, you could keep one at home and send one to be with the person. In the hope it will bring some small measure of comfort we can offer a pair of small pocket size crochet hearts – you can choose to take one while the other stays with your loved one. A physical symbol of your enduring connection to each other despite the physical separation. We also have a small selection of paired painted pebbles that can be a means of comfort. One for you and one for your loved one.

Please remember the staff at St Andrew's will do their best to keep you and your loved ones connected during these difficult times. If they can help in any of the ways above or if you have any other thoughts on what would

help you please speak to a member of the nursing team either in person or by telephone, who will ensure this information is documented.

Contact us

You can get in touch and find out more in a variety of ways. Call the hospice on 01472 350908.

Alternatively, visit our website, www.standrewshospice.com. You can also find us on Facebook, at www.facebook.com/standrewshospice, and Twitter, at www.twitter.com/helpstandrews

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this leaflet or you would like the information in a different format or language, please contact us.

Contact Information



St Andrews Hospice
Peaks Lane
Grimsby
DN32 9RP

Registered Charity No: 101117
Company No: 2710865



T: 01472 350908

E: hello@standrewshospice.com

