

News Release

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Hospital backs new online patient visiting room

Dorset County Hospital has endorsed a new website which is helping hospital patients and people who are housebound and their families and carers keep in touch.

Justvisiting.com is a free confidential social networking site designed to support not only people in hospital or recovering at home but particularly their families and carers.

Patients visiting the site from their hospital bedside or home benefit from more social contact and interaction while family and friends can log onto the site to view updates of the patient's progress - saving nursing staff and family members from sharing the news via costly phone calls.

The online service was created in the North East and with NHS backing is already being successfully used in numerous hospitals throughout the UK.

Dame Christine Beasley, chief nursing officer and world-renowned author Bill Bryson are patrons of the website.

Pam O'Shea, Patient and Public Engagement Lead at Dorset County Hospital, said while patients can use justvisiting.com at the bedside, it is also useful for the relatives who may prefer to post updates for a wider circle of friends and family when they return home after visiting time and print out messages to bring onto the wards.

"Being in hospital can be a lonely time for anyone and those feelings of isolation can affect a patient's mental wellbeing and in turn their recovery," said Pam.

"Justvisiting.com enables them to have invaluable contact with their friends and families as often as they like, from the comfort of their beds. It also helps the main family members keep an extended social circle updated and informed.

"Many people have access to the internet these days and it clearly has a role to play in helping patients and their loved ones communicate directly."

Justvisiting.com is a not-for-profit website which is built around a secure interactive message board which creates online visiting rooms where hospital patients and carers can meet up and talk to their friends and family.

There are currently more than 15,000 users world wide with 175 active rooms, where users can access news about a friend or family member 24/7 and support the patient's main carers.

The site is free to use and offers links to complementary advice and information from established web services such as NHS Choices, NHS Direct and Patient UK.

The website address is www.justvisiting.com

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