

Rowans Hospice is a voluntary and independent hospice which exists to provide the highest quality specialist end of life care to patients with life-limiting illnesses living in the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire area.

We guide and support patients and those closest to them through the journey of their illness every step of the way.

We offer specialist support wherever it is needed, at the Hospice, at home and in the local community.

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Rowans Meerkat Service

*Worried about
your child
visiting
Rowans Hospice?
Some guidance*



We are often asked by family members how appropriate it is for children to visit Rowans Hospice to see a patient on the ward. This uncertainty is usually due to worrying that the experience of coming into the hospice and seeing someone very unwell may cause additional distress for children.

Parents/guardians are the experts on their children. But sometimes when things are feeling tough, decisions such as 'should my child visit the hospice?' can feel unclear. We hope this leaflet will offer some guidance and reassurance.

With support and the provision of age-appropriate information, children are able to make informed decisions. Explaining what a hospice is and what Rowans Hospice looks like (e.g. showing pictures of Rowans Hospice) can assist in creating a visual image for children.

The opportunity to understand more about the environment in which someone is being cared for can be hugely comforting. Without this information, children may imagine all sorts of different things which may not be true, these might be more frightening than the reality.

Offering information about any changes in the person's physical appearance will help children to feel further involved and empowered to make a decision about visiting. This is particularly important if the person looks more unwell or, for example, they are sleeping a lot more.

Children might find it difficult to spend long periods of time in a patient's bedroom. Bringing toys/arts and crafts/their tablet into the hospice will encourage a child to feel safe and will offer valuable distraction if needed. If possible, limiting the amount of time children are here for can help too, e.g. just 30 minutes might be enough.

As adults, it is natural to want to protect children from difficult experiences such as serious illness. But in this situation, often the 'not-knowing' is more worrying for children. If a child is upset after visiting, please know this is a very normal response, the situation is probably upsetting for everyone.

Sometimes, after hearing all of the relevant information, children decide they do not wish to visit Rowans Hospice. This response is perfectly okay too as the child will have felt consulted and supported to make this decision. Instead of visiting, they might want to send a card or a picture to the person who is unwell.

If you have any questions or if there is something the staff at Rowans Hospice can do to support a child visiting, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the nurses or ward staff.

*Here to support
children,
young people
and their families*